



Parks and Recreation Department City of Bellingham

MEMORANDUM

To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members
From: Steve Janiszewski, Park Operations Manager
Subject: Proposed Golf Course Facility Reinvestment/Water Conservation Fee
Date: May 10, 2023

Background:

The Lake Padden Golf Course is now just over 50 years old, built in 1972. Other than a major expansion and renovation of the Clubhouse in 1995, the City has not had the capacity or capital funding in the Enterprise Fund to reinvest in the aging infrastructure which is starting to show signs of failure. While we continue to be financially sustainable, we have a goal to be more proactive than reactive in our approach to managing golf course assets. Premier Golf Centers LLC has just completed their 5th year as our managing partner of the course. In 2023, they set records in total rounds played and total revenue collected. We feel that now is the time to act by adding the new Facility Reinvestment/Water Conservation fee to our current golf rate structure.

Capital Reinvestment Priorities:

Our highest priority is the irrigation system which has reached the end of its useful life. Each year for the past several years, the golf course maintenance staff has had to repair multiple breaks in the lines caused by deteriorated pipe and failing valves. When this occurs, the repairs disrupt normal irrigation schedules which causes deteriorated turf conditions, extra labor and material costs, and reduced playability of the course. The full replacement of the irrigation system with advanced technology, efficient heads, and rain sensors will also allow us to save approximately 20% in overall water use.

Our second priority is to replace the existing maintenance shop building with a larger modern facility. Currently, there is not enough covered storage for all the golf course maintenance equipment. In addition, the shop work-space is very small and undersized for the amount of equipment that needs to be maintained and repaired. Last year, we were able to replace a deteriorated roof and failing gutters on this structure, however we need to double the existing storage space for equipment, tools, and supplies.

Conclusion

While we do believe this new fee will help to raise funds to start addressing our most critical capital projects, the City will continue to look at other means to raise funds through capital contributions by Premier Golf LLC or other funding mechanisms.