

Background of the writer:

I have been a Member for 39 years and during that time I have served the Club for 18 of those years in the following capacities: 8 years as its Honorary Treasurer, one year as Vice Captain, 2 as Vice-President, 2 as President and 5 as Chairman of the Premises and Property Committee.

Things to remember: The First Reality: my Club is a small, 18 hole country golf club with a couple of hundred family members where we get to play golf about seven months of the year.

In its 104 year history, it has been successfully operated on some very simple but consistently followed principles. First Principle is that its membership is its most important asset. The Second Principle is that we never forget the past and what we have been entrusted with for those that will follow us. The Third Principle is that we never rush into anything, which we lovingly refer to as the McNally rule. The Fourth Principle is we have always run the Club on a pay as you go basis (with one exception when the original Clubhouse burned down). In the most simple of terms, we don't borrow money on a long term basis. If we do not have the money to do something, we do not do it until we are sure we have it in hand or commitments from the current Members that we will have it in hand.

History of the Plan's Evolution:

An excellent architect was engaged, a Committee was formed and a considerable amount of work was undertaken. The First Principle was breached when the Committee decided to keep the Members effectively in the dark during the process and until a very short time ago. This was a mistake as it allowed all sorts of extraordinary rumor's to ferment unabated. That mistake should not be fatal to the Plan, but it is a bad start. The Second Principal was breached when the Committee, in its understandable enthusiasm as the Plan developed, seems to have lost sight of the First Reality. The Third Principle has not been breached as yet, but the Fourth Principle has been totally ignored. What we need now is a Plan B which is faithful to the First Reality and the 4 Principles, using the relevant parts of the Plan on the table to our advantage, but a seriously reworked implementation schedule over much more than two or three years.

The essential elements of a Plan B:

Redo the bunkers incorporating the Staples recommendations, upgrade the Practice Area as proposed and continue our ongoing tree culling work, again incorporating the Staples suggestions. Start the work on the first two of these in September of year one and finish the work no later than May of year two. Both of those items can be accomplished in that time frame. The tree work can be done at any time.

We have the money now to accomplish all three.

Parcel up the remaining Staples recommendations into bite size chunks, and prioritize them, with a 5-6 year time frame. After all, it is a long term plan. Use the time starting next year to create a special Staples Capital Account, with a three goal to raise between 3-5 million dollars from the current members. When the money is in hand, start on the high priority first, for example, implement the work on # 3 and # 8 greens. Defer any and all other work on the fairways, greens and tees for at least 4 years, no burning of the grass any where until a viable work schedule can be agreed upon that allows golf to be played thereafter on an 18 hole course for at least 5 months each year. If that cannot be achieved, strip those elements out of the prioritized items that would cause that time frame to be unworkable.

Please review every Staples recommendation, for example, it calls for 25 new tees, 12 of which are new Blue tees, and the repositioning of 10-12 existing tees, some of which would move less than 10 yards to the right or left. I don't think it is unreasonable to ask what price perfection?

Humbly submitted,

Doug Deruchie