

To: The Course Planning Committee and the Board of Directors

Thank you for the in-depth presentation given Saturday October 15th, it was very interesting. Also, many thanks for the time you have spent on the project over the last 3 years.

Here are a few ideas and thoughts that maybe could help the membership in their decision process. The three items below could be done in the next few days and weeks, while the plan presentation is still fresh in our minds.

- 1) **Conduct a survey** with as many questions as possible to understand what are members needs, priorities, desires. Greens, bunkers, practice area, trees, fairways, tees (back tees, women par 72 vs 70), level of play disruption tolerance, budget willing to support, probability of leaving the membership, etc.
- 2) **Estimate the number of members we will lose.** If we lose 40 seniors (12K per year in 2023) and 15 spouses (8K per year) and are not able to replace them, it means a 600K headwind per year, so 12 million dollars (+ inflation) over the next 20 years. This is more than the current 11.7m budget for the project. Having a better estimate of potential membership attrition would likely ease the project financing evaluation.
- 3) **Engage with the city of St-Bruno to get a better idea if it is possible to cut all these trees.** This will significantly modify landscape, not only around the greens but in many areas near fairways and bunkers. Trees are being cut far from the greens on Holes #1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18.

Financing:

- 1) Call potential new members to see how many would like to step in and pay 40K now and support 2-3 years of intense construction. Advising them that post renovations the initiating fee would move to 60K might stimulate demand to come in early, even if it means playing 9 holes for 2 years.
- 2) Intermediates: 90% of annual dues paid (I am told) are used to offset the initiation fee when they graduate to senior member, meaning they basically don't have much to pay at that time if they have been at the club for 10+ years. Do we have to apply 100% of annual dues as an offset or a lower % (let's say 50%) would be enough to keep attracting **new** young members?
- 3) Spouses: I think bringing the fees to 68% of men's fees is fair. I am not sure if it would be fair to add an initiating fee, especially if spouses lose access to the club in case of a separation or divorce.
- 4) Members who pay upfront the project capital should get a kickback if they leave the course in the next 15 years. If not, there is no incentive (other than savings on interests) to help the club lower the total amount of debt.
- 5) Houses/Condos on Rang des Vingt are being sold at 1 million dollars with a view on the BMR. Have we thought about selling real estate on that road?

- 6) Voluntary donations: Are there members that love the project so much that are willing to personally contribute above their share?
- 7) Contingency: Evaluate the impact on the membership of a project that would be 25-50% above budget (and the financing of it). Explain the level of comfort with a 1m contingency (less than 10%) vs previous Andy Staples realizations and vs other recent golf course renovation projects in the area.

In order to increase approval of the plan and keep 90%+ of actual members, I think the 11.7m must be reduced (optimal level to be determined in surveys). Here are, in my mind, a few ways to reduce the bill.

- 1) Tees: Removal of proposed back tees. They would be played by only a few players (at 6888 yards, most of the golfers playing back tees today would not continue). I am not a golf architect in any way, but I noticed that the 14th tee box is in the middle of the 12th hole. Could this be risky and reduce pace of play? We could probably argue for similar security issues on the new 2, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 18 tee boxes. Their removal (or modification) would allow us to cut less trees (savings + helping the planet) and therefore improve our chance of approval with the city of St-Bruno. Also, I think we should make sure that our women members are really interested in converting to a Par 70. I am confident that most are happy with four par 5 and want to keep the beautiful view from the new 18th tee. We are talking about lowering the tee offs on several holes, do we really need to spend on that?
- 2) Current fairways are incredibly nice, do we really need to convert them to bent?
- 3) Tree management: On top of the difficulty of having the permit, I think keeping trees is great for the planet and is a differentiating factor vs Scottish golf courses which our out of town members appreciate (following discussions at the Residents vs Non-Residents event). Trees are very good for the environment and combat climate change. [Trees and Climate Change - One Tree Planted](#). On one hand we talk about sustainability and using less chemicals but on the other hand we are doing the opposite in cutting trees in a big way.
- 4) Irrigation: The presentation mentioned "managing to the second vs to the minute". Do we need to be that precise in terms of watering our greens and fairways?
- 5) Greens and fairways size: We could marginally reduce the size of the expansion (+37% for greens and +33% for fairways) without changing the look of the project and save some money.
- 6) Car path and maintenance road. I know it would look better with the new maintenance road but is it worth it to cut all these trees (and \$\$\$) in order to connect to the road?

Other comments:

It is a great idea to extend the practice area with artificial turf. This section should be used for all tournaments and during wet days in order to maintain the natural area in good shape. For maintenance and construction costs savings, do we need all these bunkers 100 to 250 yards away?

I totally agree that greens and bunkers come as a package, it would not make sense to do the bunkers near a green and keep the original green.

I think 9 holes per year is the right recipe (although doing 18 in one year would have been perfect but not feasible). Doing 2 holes per year for the next 9 years would not work out well, playing different styles of greens, bunkers, etc.

I like the rerouting of the back 9 but the return to the clubhouse is complicated... You need to walk in front of the 13th tee and between 2 greens while foursomes are playing.

Questions:

Does the 11.7m budget assumes at least 5% inflation per year from 2022 level?

You have talked about 8 tee times per day during week days at other clubs for a total of 160 rounds per week, how would it work?

We are adding 54% more fescue, have we found a magical formula? I was told it was tough to grow fescue in our climate.

Do you lessen the hump on the 13th green (to have more pin placement)? Do we really need to create a ditch in the middle of the 9th fairway because it was there in the past?

Conclusion:

The presentation was very thorough and exposed future risks with our greens, something we will need to address (and something that members need to digest). I think it would be a good idea to take a step back and conduct a survey across membership, estimate the number of members we will potentially lose and how many new members could join. Engaging early with the city of St-Bruno is also crucial to see if the plan is realizable. Performing more analysis on the financing side and add sensitivity tables (project cost, interest rates, number of members) to better understand all the financial implications is necessary.

Most importantly, listening to members and finding a solution/compromise that assure the sustainability of our great golf course and that is endorsed by the vast majority of members is paramount to make this journey a success. No matter how great the golf course is (or become), we have to remember that our biggest asset is our members and we need to embark in this new adventure in unity. That is the only way to maintain MBCC culture.

Jean-Philippe Choquette