

GOLF COURSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

In accordance with Chapter 164 of Acts of 1998, An Act Relative to the Financing and Operation of a Golf Course by the Town of Natick, the Town Administrator made appointments to the Golf Course Oversight Committee.

The appointments were filed with the Town Clerk's Office on July 5, 2000.

On July 7, 2000 Mr. Paul Cohen, Acting Town Administrator, appeared before the Board of Selectmen to request a confirmation of the appointments as required under Section 4 of the Act.

Mr. Cohen advised the Board if no action was taken, within 15 days or July 20th, the appointments would become effective.

The Board with four members in attendance voted 2 to 2 to reject the recommendations.

No further action was taken prior to July 20th, as such the appointments stood.

The charge of the Oversight Committee under Section 4 of the Act states "It shall be the responsibility of the Oversight Committee to monitor the operation and financing of the Natick Golf Course and any contracts with any agencies for the operation or enhancements of the facility. The Committee shall accomplish that task by advice and recommendations to both the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen".

A review of Oversight Committee suggests that the Committee is making every effort to follow the charge set forth in the Act.

The Committee has met and continually meets with Sterling Management concerning matters related to operation.

Although the Committee is involved in discussions relative to the rounds of golf and revenues generated, more emphasis and attention needs to be directed toward the overall financial aspect of the Enterprise Fund.

It is our understanding that the Oversight Committee is meeting more frequently with the Town Administrator to address the financial portion of the operation.

Also attached herein are reports of the Golf Course Oversight Committee for Year 2000-2001 and Year 2002, as well as Sterling Golf Management, Inc.'s Year to Date Summary through August 2003.

Chapter 164 of the Acts of 1998

Golf Course

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE FINANCING AND OPERATION OF A GOLF COURSE BY THE TOWN OF NATICK.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. The town of Natick is hereby authorized to design, develop, construct and equip a municipal golf course, including a clubhouse and related structures, and other recreational facilities on land owned by and located in the town and on land located in the town of Sherborn acquired by purchase or long term lease for up to and including 99 years. The provisions of section 16 of chapter 30B of the General Laws shall not apply to the purchase or lease of any land by the town of Natick in the town of Sherborn. Said land is located southwest of the Natick/Sherborn town line and northeast of Rockwood Road, and is a portion containing approximately 20 acres of the land shown on the town of Sherborn assessors' maps as Map 10, Lot 5.

SECTION 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 44 of the General Laws to the contrary, the maturities of bonds issued by the town of Natick for the golf course project shall either be arranged so that for each issue the annual combined payments of principal and interest payable in each year, commencing with the first year in which a principal payment is required, shall be as nearly equal as practicable in the opinion of the town treasurer, or shall be arranged in accordance with a schedule providing for a more rapid amortization of principal. The first payment of principal of each issue of bonds or of any temporary notes issued in anticipation of the bonds shall be not later than five years from the estimated date of commencement of regular operation of the golf course, as determined by the town treasurer, and the last payment of principal of the bonds shall be not later than 30 years from the date of the bonds. Not more than 10 per cent of the principal amount of the bonds issued for the project may be used to establish a debt service reserve fund. Any net earnings derived from investment of the proceeds of the bonds may be expended by the town treasurer to pay interest on the bonds but otherwise shall be used only for construction, equipping, operation or maintenance of the golf course. Except as otherwise provided in this act indebtedness incurred by the town for the golf course project shall be subject to the applicable provisions of said chapter 44.

SECTION 3. The vote of the town passed under article 13 of the warrant for the October 1, 1996 town meeting, authorizing bonds for the golf course project, is hereby ratified, validated and confirmed.

SECTION 4. There shall be established a Natick golf course oversight committee consisting of five members to be appointed by the town administrator, two to serve for one year, two to serve for two years, and one to serve for three years, and thereafter until their successors are appointed by the town administrator. These appointments shall be confirmed as provided in section 4-2 of the Natick town charter by the board of selectmen.

It shall be the responsibility of the oversight committee to monitor the operation and financing of the Natick golf course and any contracts with any agencies for the operation or enhancements of that facility. The committee shall accomplish that task by advice and recommendations to both the town administrator and the board of selectmen. Contracts for the construction, maintenance and operation of the golf facility shall be awarded by the town administrator with the approval of the board of selectmen.

September 25, 2000

To: Natick Board of Selectmen

From: Golf Course Oversight Committee

Re: Selection of a Management Team to Manage the Natick Golf Course

The Natick Golf Course Oversight Committee's first and most important responsibility is to recommend to the Office of the Town Administrator of Natick a management team to run the Natick Golf Course, now under construction. The management team will tend to the daily operation of the golf course beginning with the grow-in phase.

The requirements of the Request For Proposals (R.F.P.) were carefully and explicitly laid out to each proponent so that there would be no misunderstandings as to what the Town of Natick expected of the management company selected to operate the town's precious asset. The committee held five meetings that included extensive interviews with each of the following companies: Arello, Inc., Environmental Golf, Environmental Landscape, Executive Decisions, and Sterling Management, and members of the committee surveyed individuals who played golf or had knowledge of the courses managed by the five proposing companies.

After much discussion, it is the unanimous decision of this committee that the Town of Natick hire Sterling Management to oversee the daily operations of the Natick Golf Course. Their approach was highly professional and they demonstrated an enthusiastic willingness to work with Natick to make the golf course a success. Sterling has taken over the management of several popular golf courses in the Greater Boston Area bringing success to difficult situations. These are courses which due to poor management had deteriorated to a point where play had diminished. We are referring to Putterham Meadows in Brookline, Newton-Commonwealth in Newton, Chelmsford Golf Course in Chelmsford, and Franklin Park in Boston.

It is vital that the Natick Golf Course be managed by an experienced team with both the necessary skills and the resources to back them up so as to assure the Town of Natick that it will have a financially successful facility that golfers will find both enjoyable and challenging. We believe that a partnership with Sterling Management will insure both of these requirements.

We would also like to thank Acting Town Administrator Paul Cohen for all his hard work and assistance to help us reach an informed decision.

Respectfully submitted,



Edward Salamoff, Chairman

David Baier

Barbara Chinetti

Michael Dank

Peter Garland

Sterling Golf Management, Inc.
Sassamon Trace Golf Course
Projection vs. 2003 Greens Fee & Cart Revenue
Year to Date Summary

Month	Greens Fees			Cart Rentals			Season Ticket 2003**	Combined Monthly Projection	Combined Monthly Actual	Combined Monthly Variance	% Change
	Projection	2003 Actual	Variance	% Change	Projection	2003 Actual					
March	2,360.40	4,356.00	1,995.60	84.5%	-	287.00	287.00	2,360.40	4,643.00	2,282.60	96.7%
April	33,334.81	29,938.29	(3,396.52)	-10.2%	2,011.20	3,394.00	1,382.80	35,346.01	36,653.72	1,307.71	3.7%
May	51,658.72	41,959.00	(9,699.72)	-18.8%	4,432.80	6,059.00	1,626.20	56,091.52	51,339.43	(4,752.09)	-8.5%
June	65,945.36	54,620.14	(11,325.22)	-17.2%	8,548.80	8,578.00	29.20	74,494.16	66,519.57	(7,974.60)	-10.7%
July	78,257.08	65,902.50	(12,354.58)	-15.8%	10,783.20	9,509.00	(1,274.20)	89,040.28	78,732.93	(10,307.35)	-11.6%
August	71,957.42	63,892.83	(8,064.59)	-11.2%	10,464.00	9,694.01	(769.99)	82,421.42	76,908.27	(5,513.16)	-6.7%
September	57,501.94				7,740.00			65,241.94			
October	29,791.87				4,567.08			34,358.95			
November	11,868.38				1,437.60			13,305.98			
Y-T-D Ttl	402,675.98	260,668.76	(42,845.03)	-14.1%	49,984.68	37,521.01	1,281.01	452,660.66	314,796.91	(24,956.88)	-7.3%

Total Projected 2003 Revenue is \$452,660.00 (an increase of \$75,443.41)

* Projection based on 20% increase over 2002 (10% due to better weather & 10% due to increased marketing)

** Actual Y-T-D Season Ticket Revenue collected is \$23,250 & posted evenly over 7 months (April - October)

Month	Rounds			Y-T-D Ttl
	Projection	2003 Actual	Variance	
March	131	256	125	95.7%
April	1,951	1,990	39	2.0%
May	2,798	2,828	30	1.1%
June	3,660	3,572	(88)	-2.4%
July	4,248	4,307	59	1.4%
August	3,943	4,308	365	9.3%
September	3,308			
October	2,393			
November	871			
Y-T-D Ttl	23,304	17,261	(5,261)	-22.6%

Sterling Golf Management, Inc.
Sassamon Trace Golf Course
Projection vs. 2003 Greens Fee & Cart Revenue
Year to Date Summary

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May	51,658.72	41,959.00	(9,699.72)	-18.8%	4,432.80	6,059.00	1,626.20	56,091.52	51,339.43	(4,752.09)	-8.5%
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Y-T-D Ttl	23,304	17,261	5,529

Sassamon Trace Clubhouse and Maintenance Building Committee

On Tuesday, May 15, 2001 the newly-appointed Clubhouse and Maintenance Building Committee met in the town administrator's office at 7:00 pm for its initial meeting.

Present were :Edward Salamoff, Michael Dank, David Baier, Peter Garland, Mysore Ravindra, Frank Pepi and Paul Cohen. Absent: Barbara Chinetti.

After some short comments by Paul Cohen, the committee formerly organized with Ed Salamoff as Chairman, Michael Dank as Vice Chairman, and Barbara Chinetti as Secretary.

Paul Cohen announced that the bids from the architectural firms would be opened on Friday, May 18,2001 at noon. Michael Dank and Ed Salamoff said that they would be present for on that occasion.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 22,2001 at 7:00pm in the town administrator's office for the purpose of reviewing the proposals and setting up an interview schedule for the architects.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Salamoff, Chairman

Handwritten notes and stamps in the bottom right corner, including a date stamp that reads "MAY 15 2001".

The Golf Course Oversight Committee 2000-2001

The Golf Course Oversight Committee was established in accordance with Chapter 164 of the Acts of 1998 enacted by the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate. The committee's purpose is to monitor the operation and finances of the Natick golf course. In addition, the committee will monitor all contracts with agencies that concern the operation or improvement of the golf facility. This task will be accomplished by providing advice and recommendations on construction, maintenance, and operation contracts to the town administrator, who will award contracts subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen. The Oversight Committee consists of five members who will initially serve as follows: two for one year, two for two years, and one for three years. Upon the completion of each initial term, subsequent terms will all be three-year terms.

The oversight committee was temporarily appointed by the acting town administrator, July 2000. The committee organized: Edward Salamoff, chairman; Michael Dank, vice-chairman; Barbara Chinetti, secretary; member's David Baier and Peter Garland.

The first and most important duty was to select a management team for the daily operation and maintenance of the golf course. In August, the committee interviewed Environmental Landscape Management, Arello Inc., Environmental Golf, Sterling Management, and Executive Decisions. The committee unanimously recommended Sterling Management, Newton, MA headed by Kevin Osgood. Sterling met all the criteria of the proposal request and had, by far, the most experience working with Massachusetts municipal golf courses. They currently manage and maintain Newton-Commonwealth; Chelmsford; Franklin Park, Boston; and maintain Putterham Meadows, Brookline, MA. On September 25, 2000, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the committee's recommendation to select Sterling Management, Newton as the management company.

The committee meets monthly with the management team and more often if needed. Meetings cover course status and course related topics such as buildings, fees, golfer services and other issues.

On December 19, 2000, after much deliberation, the Natick golf course was named "Sassamon Trace Golf Course" in keeping with Natick's Native American Heritage. The course logo was chosen to reflect the name. Winter meetings dealt with course status, the clubhouse, the maintenance building, golf carts, signage, personnel, and marketing.

In April 2001, Peter Meagher was named golf professional. He had been employed in Orlando, FL in a similar capacity. Michael Murphy was named course superintendent having served as assistant superintendent at Pine Brook Country Club in Weston, MA.

In May, the Board of Selectmen voted to appoint a committee for the selection of an architectural firm to design the clubhouse and maintenance building with membership to include an architect.

In June, the request for bids went out for the golf cart contract. Ez-Go, Yamaha,

and Country Club Enterprises (Club Car) all submitted bids. Country Club Enterprises best met the specifications and was recommended for the contract. Club Car is the cart of choice on 85% of the golf courses in Massachusetts. All carts will be electric and thus environmentally friendly. The Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the contract. Also, discussed in June were the high school golf team, golf instruction, and utility hookup for temporary structures.

In July, the date for the grand opening of the course was set for September 1, 2001. The timing provides the benefits of the fall growing season, which will allow a new course to more quickly recover after play and at the same time allow for further growth in areas that were subject to severe rain washouts. The opening day's ceremonies are now in the advanced planning stage.

In reviewing the first year of the Golf Course Oversight Committee, the course is developing into playable shape under the management of Sterling Mgt. Kevin Osgood and his staff. They have accomplished everything we hoped for and more. They are helpful, friendly, and always available. Between meetings they are in regular contact with the committee and the town administrator. As a result, Natick will have a fine golf facility of which the residents can be proud. Play will commence on Labor Day Weekend and continue through October. The course and all the facilities will be ready for a full year of play next spring with complete golf services available to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Salamoff, Chairman
Michael Dank, Vice Chairman
Barbara Chinetti, Secretary
David Baier
Peter Garland

Report of the Golf Course Oversight Committee
2002

This was the first full year for the Sassamon Trace Golf Course, and despite a considerable amount of inclement weather early in the golf season and excessively hot temperatures during the summer, it was a good first season. After a slow start in April, May and early June, we realized that we were going to have to get far more aggressive in our promotional program. With the assistance of Pat Berger of Sterling Management and Natick's Chief Financial Officer, Bob Palmer, we embarked on a promotional campaign that advertised the course in golf magazines, newspapers, and occasionally over the airways as part of promotions with radio stations. Coupon promotions were twice sent (June and August) to some 30,000 households in communities contiguous to Natick. The response was better than we dared hope for based on the historical response. Our Golf Professional, Pete Meagher, put out weekly promotions on the website. Special senior citizen discounts were offered during the weekdays. When the golf season ended about 20,000 rounds of golf had been played. This number should increase during our second full season when we are looking for 25,000 rounds. To achieve this goal we again offer promotions, continue our advertising campaign, add some more leagues, schedule family golf events, and have more tournaments.

Youth play is on the increase and Sassamon Trace is placed well to attract new golfers. To assure that regular golfers are not slowed down by the play of the novice golfer, Pete Meagher will require new golfers to take a lesson in golf etiquette. This is to ensure the expedient movement of golfers around the course.

Sassamon Trace is currently the home course for Natick High, Dover-Sherborn

Regional and the Rivers School. Rivers and Dover-Sherborn pay for their practice and match time, while the Natick team is not charged. Natick players help out with divot and ball marks after their practices under the eye of the Pro or the Greens Superintendent.

Thanks to the fine work of our Greens Superintendent, Mike Murphy, the course continues to mature. Tees and greens have remained in excellent condition and the fairways are thickening up as the root systems expand. Sand traps are well manicured and provide a good test of your golfing ability. The signage and yardage markers add to the enjoyment of play. We will add another water station this coming season.

It is hoped that the maintenance building will be constructed early this season so that daily maintenance can be carried out in a clean environment. The size of the building and it's amenities have been greatly scaled back so that this will be possible.

The Natick Recreation Department will continue to sponsor it's Wednesday morning Womens League and the Friday League with mens and womens divisions. Both were successful this year and increased participation is expected. Recreation Department Head, Dick Cugini, has been most active in promoting various golf programs.

It is hoped that local groups will hold golf outings at the course during the coming year. Remember, this course belongs to the Town of Natick and we of the Oversight Committee want you to enjoy it.

The Committee has reorganized for the coming year as follows;

Chairman	David Baier
Vice Chairman.....	Barbara Chinetti
Secretary.....	Paul Power
Members.....	Ed Salamoff
	Steve Carty


We eagerly look forward to the upcoming golf season with new and exciting events. We invite those of you who have not yet played the course to come out and see the challenge our course has to give.

Respectfully sbmitted,

Ed Salamoff.....	Chairman
Mickey Dank.....	Vice Chairman
Barbara Chinetti.....	Secretary
Members.....	Paul Power
	Dave Baier

May 30, 2001

TO: Sassamon Trace Golf Course Designer Selection Committee

FROM: Paul Cohen, Deputy Town Administrator 

RE: Next Meeting

The meeting to interview the architects will be held on Wednesday, June 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the **School Committee Meeting Room**, which is located on the 3rd Floor of the Town Hall.

The firms to be interviewed are:

6:30 p.m.	Daniel Architects
7:30 p.m.	CSS Architects
8:30 p.m.	Weaver & Associates
9:30 p.m.	Line Company Architects

I have compiled the list of questions that will be asked of all architects. The list has been condensed in order to assure that we address all of the subject areas during the allotted time periods.

**SASSAMON TRACE GOLF COURSE
DESIGNER SELECTION COMMITTEE**

Questions for the Architects

1. Comments on the proposed design of clubhouse and maintenance building
2. Comments on project budget
3. Suggestions for cost reduction (modular?)
4. Staff to be assigned to this project
5. Comments on the geotechnical challenges
6. Preparation of cost estimates
7. Construction administration services
8. Change order history
9. Project schedule for design, bidding, construction
10. Any other thoughts or concerns

