

RICHTER PARK AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING
November 18, 2008

The regular meeting of the Richter Park Authority was held on Tuesday, November 18, 2008. Chairman Al Mead opened the meeting at 6:00 PM. Members present: Al Mead, Leroy Diggs, Jean DaSilva, Len Cagianello, John Priola, Bob Eberhard, and Chris Marano. Felix Bonacci was asked to sit in for one of the vacancies on the board. Frank Russo was absent.

Also present: Maria Sanyshyn, general manager and Rob Dorsch, golf course superintendent and Ralph Salito, head golf professional.

Chairman's report

- **Public participation**
None
- **Approve minutes of previous meeting**
A motion was made by Mr. Cagianello and seconded by Mrs. Marano to accept the minutes. Mr. Priola requested that the Arts report show that a meeting was requested, in August, between Musicals and the Arts to discuss the possibility of both groups using the house in June and that Musicals and the Arts minutes should be included in the Authority packet each month. Corrections were noted and the minutes were passed unanimously.
- **Comments/reports**
2008-2009 committees were appointed with one correction-Mr. Priola replaces Mr. Cagianello on the GM Evaluation Committee.

Mrs. Marano made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Eberhard to accept the FORe Incorporators who will apply for incorporation at the state level for approval of a 501c3 status. Motion was passed unanimously.

- **Correspondence**
A letter was received from the Hanahoe Children's Clinic thanking the authority for its contribution of \$8,000 which was earned from the Danbury Amateur Tournament.

Mrs. Marano made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Priola to go into executive session regarding communication from Café on the Green because of possible litigation. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Mead congratulated Ralph Salito on being elected the Connecticut Section PGA President.

Financial report

There is nothing new to discuss in financials. All topics remain consistent with previous discussions.

Mr. Mead asked why the Richter house was not included under fixed assets. It is included in the item called land. During the next audit the placement of the house in the budget will be discussed.

Mr. Eberhard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cagianello to accept the financial report. Motion passed unanimously.

The draft of the 2009 budget was presented.

Based on the master plan it was suggested that a one dollar surcharge be charged on all rounds and placed in a master plan/capital improvements account. The money would be used only for items in the master plan.

Mr. Priola went through major items in the proposed budget and explained the projected amounts.

A change was proposed for the use of senior passes. No rate change was proposed but it was proposed that senior passes be used only on Monday through Friday. This proposal would make the senior pass rate consistent with the regular senior rates (i.e. – no weekend discount)

A proposal was made to have a renewable non-resident pass. Eight were sold last year. These would be renewed at the same terms they have always had. Twelve additional passes would be sold at \$2,750 and max at 50 rounds. An additional pass would be sold at \$3,500 with unlimited rounds.

The importance of the master plan as a guide to the improvement of the whole park was emphasized. Savings toward the improvements will be a top priority.

Mrs. Marano made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eberhard to accept the proposed 2009 budget. Passed unanimously.

Arts association report – see attached

Mr. Priola suggested some ideas for the Arts to partner with other organizations for the purpose of strengthening the arts organization.

Grounds and greens report-see attached

Richter house report

Three art historians are in contention for the research into the house. They will be looking into the significance of the architect of the house, the significance of the family or events that took place at the house. There is much competition for funding from sources that we would be using. It could be at least 18 months before we know if we will be on the state registry.

Twenty-four architects showed up for the needs assessment preview. The group will be narrowed down based on qualifications and the house committee will interview to select the final firm.

The house will be closed this week.

Mrs. Sanyshyn read the attached letter she wrote to Mrs. LaGanza after her visit and at Mrs. LaGanza's request.

Manager's report-see attached

Old Business

The restaurant lease committee asked that their recommendation for issues involving the lease be referred to executive session

New business

Mr. Priola, as a new member, has read the By-laws/Deed/Ordinance and pointed out that the only specific information regarding the arts was that a member of the Richter Association for the Arts is to be a member of the authority board.

Mr. Priola also pointed out that the authority has the power to charge fees and rents to pay operating and maintenance expenses. This item is related to discussions that have recently occurred related to the house expenses. He also mentioned that the deed stipulated that the land was to be used for recreation for the citizens of Danbury. No specific activities were suggested.

Executive session

At 8:15 Mr. Eberhard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Priola to go into executive session to discuss evaluation with Ralph Salito.

Executive session ended at 8:51. No action was taken.

At 8:52 Mr. Cagianello made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eberhard to discuss the restaurant lease for purpose of litigation.

Executive session ended at 9:45. No action was taken.

Mrs. DaSilva made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Cagianello.

Meeting adjourned at 9:46.

The next meeting will be held on December 16, 2008 at 6PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean DaSilva
Secretary

Richter Park Authority Meeting—November 18, 2008—Arts Liaison Report

On November 11, 2008 a meeting was held which included board members of the Richter Association for the Arts, Musicals at Richter, and the Richter Park Authority.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss payment of rent and maintenance of the Richter House. The increased cost of utilities to keep the house open has placed an additional burden upon those who are using the house. The Arts season has been shortened to April, May, September and October. If the Arts Association is to have a season, it will need to find a way to raise funds to pay for heating the house and the electricity used. This will be discussed with the arts board at our next meeting.

If we are able to find the needed funds, we need to see itemized bills regarding the amount of oil we are using and the bills for the electricity used.

The meeting was a good one. Perhaps the three groups should meet for the purpose of discussing issues at least once a year. We feel that the lines of communication between the general manager and the Arts Association need improvement in both directions.

VIA EMAIL and US MAIL

October 14, 2008

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Laganza
PO Box 10789
Jackson, WY 83002

Dear Ann and Bob:

I am so happy that I had the pleasure to meet you both. Thank you for taking the time to stop by, visit the house and spend so much time with me. It was an enlightening day for us both! I know you enjoyed lunch at Café on the Green and Carol and I in turn enjoyed Harry's company while you ate! I hope that you will be able to join us for the Authority meeting on October 21st at 6pm. You will be a wonderful surprise guest speaker. However, in the event that you are unable to attend, I offer to read this letter to the members of the Authority and those present at the meeting.

I trust by now that you have had the opportunity to review the binder I gave you including the deed and RPA By-laws, grant applications, structural engineering reports, termite and asbestos assessments and photographs. As we discussed and I know you now understand, the present members of the Authority are not the same Authority that watched the decline and deterioration of your grandmother's home, affectionately called Richter House. Quite the contrary, in fact, these individuals have inherited a nightmare, both emotional and financial. They are charged with doing the right thing for the park, the city and those who use it. A task much easier said than done given its current state. I speak only for myself when I say I am more comfortable working toward the future, now that I have learned the real wishes of your family from you directly. Up until our visit, I was guided merely by hearsay.

A dozen years ago the Richter House needed simple upkeep and repair. But because of years of neglect by those who managed it and those who continue use it, as you witnessed during your visit, today the house needs more than just a little TLC. In fact, those in the construction industry with whom we have consulted agree that it should be stripped to the studs and reconstructed. But, contrary to what you have been told never, not ever, has there been an agenda to tear the house down and replace it with additional golf facilities. Discussion, has centered on whether or not it would be a more financially prudent to rebuild the house (up to code and ADA compliant) rather than to repair it as it stands today. It is my opinion that these discussions have been hampered not knowing your true wishes. Having had the opportunity to spend this valuable time with you I can now report your thoughts back to the members of the Authority. Until now I believe the wishes of your family have been misrepresented by a well-intentioned few. While I am certain you were disappointed with the condition of Richter House, I no longer believe your expectation is that we simply keep the house at all costs if once presented with the facts the prudent decision is to rebuild. I also learned from our discussion that your

family never requested that the house be reserved for any one particular organization. I think that given that information, the Authority can consider alternative revenue generating uses for the house. This is of particular interest to me. As the manager of Richter Park I am concerned with the future economics needed to sustain a facility – new or repaired – of this magnitude. The current model is not an option.

Allow me to circle back to Bob's question as to why the RPA was concerned and continues to concern itself with the golf course. The golf course is the "cash cow" of Richter Park, if you will. It generates and spends 99% of the money. Following with the requirements of the deed, a recreation facility was built within the three year time frame allotted, preventing the property from reverting to a Nature Conservancy. In the early years, the house served as a clubhouse and even after the current clubhouse was built, the bedroom suite of Stanley Richter was used as the reservations hub for the golf course. Since 1971, the golf course grew from a 9-hole course to an 18-hole best in class golf facility attracting people from all over the tri-state area. Maintaining a facility with these credentials costs money, but as I pointed out not only the house has been neglected. The infrastructure of the golf course is aged, equipment needs to be replaced and every building requires repair and updating.

In 1971, the Richter Association for the Arts was created, although there was no mandate for an arts association in the deed left by your grandmother. 1985, also without mandate, Musicals at Richter was formed and utilizes the house for rehearsals and dressing rooms and the back lawn for performances.

Since 1971, golfers have continued to financially support Richter Park, paying increased fees in concert with the increased cost of operating the golf course. In stark contrast, the Arts Association boasts today that their membership fees remain unchanged. In addition, on their website they claim "In accordance with the wishes of the Richter family...all programs are open to the public free of charge or for a nominal fee." But through our conversation you both made it very clear to me that this is simply not the case. So you can understand why I was not only confused but quite pleased to hear you say, "There is no free lunch – make them pay!" Currently, both the Arts and Musical organizations pay \$2,000/year in rent. Neither organization pays utilities, or maintenance and upkeep. The revenue generated from these organizations doesn't come close to covering the basic annual upkeep; forget about repair to the extent warranted. It is my understanding that both organizations are holding funds ear marked for the Richter House restoration, however none of these funds have been reported on at any meeting. They have not been turned over to RPA nor have they been made available to the RPA for general maintenance and upkeep.

So, where do we go from here? Currently, we are working with CT Trust and a \$20,000 grant for a needs assessment and application for historic landmark status. Once that is complete and based upon the findings, we *could be* eligible for a \$400,000 matching grant from the same organization. It is worth noting again that this is a matching grant which means there must be \$400,000 coming from somewhere else in order to capitalize on it. Also out there and again based upon the findings of the needs assessment, is a

potential \$50,000 from the City of Danbury and \$300,000 from the State of Connecticut. These funds, should they become available to Richter, are not eligible for the matching funds from CT Trust. An all out fundraising assault must begin and in this economy, asking for money may not be so easy. I know this concept is not lost on you as you mentioned that you have spoken to Jean DaSilva about fundraising – the arts associations at Richter are simply reluctant to do so.

Again, it was wonderful to meet you both and I expect that you won't be strangers the next time you are in town. Enjoy your weddings in New Hampshire and Rhode Island and have a safe trip back to Wyoming. And, if you are interested in knowing exactly what is happening at Richter Park, please let me know. I will always be honest and although it may not be exactly what you hope to hear, it will be truthful.

You should be very proud to know that your grandmother's gift in her husband's memory has become a hub of economic development for the City of Danbury. Forty years later, hundreds of thousands of visitors have found joy and entertainment on their beautiful estate. On behalf of everyone – the Authority, the employees, the golfers, the arts, the musicals, the hikers, the skiers, the tennis players and dog walkers, too – thank you to you and your family for this wonderful gift to the City of Danbury, Richter Memorial Park.

Sincerely,

Maria Sanyshyn
General Manager

Richter Park Authority Meeting November 18, 2008 Managers Report

Round Summary

Total rounds for October are 4,160 up 13 rounds from last year (vs. 4,147 rounds in '07),. Rounds through October are 42,100.

Leagues for 2009

The following recommendation is made regarding Leagues in '09:

Dusty League – Mondays beginning at 4:30PM (Maximum 9 foursomes)

Boehringer League – Tuesdays beginning at 4PM (Maximum 5 foursomes)

- Leagues run 16 weeks
- Rate is \$28/golfer... guaranteed
- When Dusty League cannot play on Monday due to Tournaments, they will play on Tuesday *after* the Dusty League
- Total guaranteed revenue is \$25,000

Sale of Tee Times

In an effort to continue to raise funds toward the Master Plan, it is proposed that we sell five Saturday and five Sunday tee times. Making it available to Danbury Residents and Non Resident Season Pass holders only, this will not only bring up to \$35,000 in additional revenue to the course, but will also provide a fixed tee time option for those who want one, potentially release 20 golfers from the lottery process and guarantee the sale of times each week.

RICHTER PARK GOLF COURSE
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT
MONTHLY STATUS REPORT
11/18/2008

- Aerification takes place over the next three days.
- H2O System is blown out and winterized for the year
- Winter dog walking plan