

COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
July 23, 2019

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors convened a special meeting on Tuesday, July 23, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., in the County Manager's Conference Room, Administration Building, Henrico County Government Center, Parham and Hungary Spring Roads, Henrico, Virginia.

**Members of the Board Present:**

Tyrone E. Nelson, Chairman, Varina District  
Patricia S. O'Bannon, Tuckahoe District  
Daniel J. Schmitt, Brookland District  
Frank J. Thornton, Fairfield District

**Member of the Board Absent:**

Thomas M. Branin, Vice Chairman, Three Chopt District

**Other Officials Present:**

John A. Vithoukias, County Manager  
Joseph P. Rapisarda, Jr., County Attorney  
J.T. (Tom) Tokarz, Deputy County Attorney  
Barry R. Lawrence, CMC, Assistant to the County Manager/Clerk to the Board  
Tanya B. Harding, CMC, Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant  
W. Brandon Hinton, Deputy County Manager for Administration  
Anthony E. McDowell, Deputy County Manager for Public Safety  
Randall R. Silber, Deputy County Manager for Community Development  
C. Michael Schnurman, Legislative Liaison  
Steven L. Knockemus, Assistant Director of Public Relations & Media Services

Mr. Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. He announced Mr. Branin was sick and unable to be present for the meeting.

The Board recessed for dinner at 6:04 p.m. and reconvened at 6:09 p.m.

**Belmont Golf Course Update**

Mr. Vithoukias explained for the audience that this special meeting was an informational session and an opportunity for the Board to ask questions of staff and not a forum for public comments or input. He thanked Mr. Thornton and Mr. Schmitt for attending three community meetings held in April and May of 2019 that led to the recommendation being presented by staff regarding the future of Belmont Golf Course.

Neil Luther, Director of Recreation and Parks, narrated a slide presentation on this item. Mr. Luther began by sharing aerial photographs depicting the front nine holes and back nine holes of the course. He provided a brief history of the course, which first opened in 1917

under the ownership of Hermitage Country Club and was the site of the PGA Championship in 1949. The County of Henrico began leasing the course in 1976 after Hermitage Country Club moved to Goochland County and purchased the course in 1977 with general obligation bonds approved by Henrico voters. Operational and maintenance costs associated with the course were moved from the County of Henrico's general fund to an enterprise fund beginning in Fiscal Year 1985 (FY85). The course sustained substantial damages in 2003 and 2004 from Hurricanes Isabel and Gaston. Mr. Luther displayed a graph illustrating Belmont's annual net operating income and retained earnings since FY85, including an annual decline in both from FY02 to FY17. Mr. Vithoukaskas pointed out financial issues pertaining to Belmont were discussed at the Board's January 2019 retreat and the continuation of general fund subsidies to Belmont's enterprise fund could negatively affect the County's triple-A bond ratings. He advised Mr. Nelson that Mr. Luther and the Division of Recreation and Parks have been working on options for making the course financially sustainable.

Mr. Luther continued his presentation by providing statistics relating to comments received by his department from the spring 2019 community input meetings. He pointed out there is a strong desire by the community to keep Belmont in use as a golf course. County officials also heard from citizens that they want the bunkers fixed; the course operated professionally with a nine-hole rate option, alcohol sales, golf leagues, and aggressive marketing; the course supported by the County's general fund rather than the enterprise fund; and walking and biking trails for Lakeside included on the Belmont site. Mr. Luther provided a graph depicting the 10-year history of rounds played at Belmont, an overall decline that reflects a national downward trend in golf course traffic but is also partly attributable to the course's poor condition and the County's policy prohibiting the sale of alcohol there. He advised the Board that staff was recommending the privatization of Belmont Golf Course under a long-term operating lease subject to the following conditions: the County will make a \$500,000 general fund contribution towards a bunker renovation project to be managed by the operator; the County will make a \$250,000 additional capital contribution, spread over lease years two through four, to establish a dedicated capital maintenance reserve fund; the operator will also make an annual contribution to this capital reserve beginning in year five in lieu of any operating revenue split; the operator will be solely responsible for all course operations and maintenance; the operating agreement will include specific performance measures to support and grow youth golf in Henrico at no cost to the program participants; and the Board will appoint and establish an advisory commission to apprise the lease operator of all golf operating issues and concerns.

Mr. Luther concluded his presentation by reviewing how the solution identified by staff responds to the comments that County officials heard at the community meetings. It does so as follows: public golf remains at Belmont on park property, bunker conditions are addressed immediately, the private operator is fully empowered for market success, the enterprise fund structure is removed, the operating structure prioritizes capital reinvestment, the lease requires the creation of additional public value through youth golf access and development, and concurrent efforts to provide bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in Lakeside are not impacted. Mr. Vithoukaskas clarified that the County is not looking to dissolve its ownership of Belmont but favors having a third party run the golf course and increase the revenues. Under this scenario, the County will continue to maintain the parking lots and tennis courts.

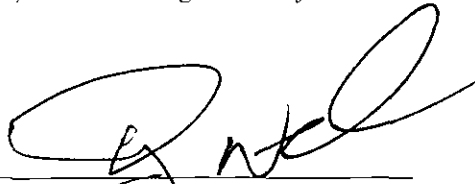
Mr. Vithoukaskas responded to a question from Mr. Nelson pertaining to opportunities under the new arrangement for heavier youth use of the golf course through partnerships with the Police Athletic League and Henrico County Public Schools. After thanking Mr. Thornton,

Mr. Schmitt, and Mr. Luther and the Division of Recreation and Parks for working with the community, Mr. Nelson asked Mr. Luther to advise the Board of the next steps in moving forward with the proposed solution. Mr. Luther explained the plan is to issue a Request for Proposals in August with a recommended lease coming to the Board for consideration in late October or early November. The County will cease operating the course at the end of December, and the course will reopen under the third-party operator in April 2020. Mr. Luther confirmed for Mrs. O'Bannon that the private operator will have the authority to establish new fees that are competitive with the market but that will ensure sufficient revenues to make the operation successful. Mr. Schmitt and Mr. Thornton expressed their appreciation to staff for working with the community on a solution and noted their support for the approach outlined in Mr. Luther's presentation.

### **Regular Meeting Agenda Items**

Mr. Vithoukaskas briefly reviewed the agenda for the 7:00 p.m. meeting. He advised the Board that a substitute ordinance would be brought forward at the meeting for Agenda Item No. 165-19, which would amend the zoning ordinance to allow master-planned communities in the R-6 General Residence District. Mr. Vithoukaskas also informed the Board that Mr. Rapisarda would be explaining all five of the ordinance introductions from the dais. He alerted the Board to a recommendation to add an item to the general agenda by unanimous consent in order that a change to the polling place for Lakewood Precinct can be approved at the Board's August 13 meeting and implemented for the November 5 general election. The proposed change will move the polling place from the Beth Shalom senior living community to Cambridge Baptist Church. After a review of the Board's procedures and the Code of Virginia, Mr. Rapisarda concluded this item could be added by a unanimous vote of the members present but suggested Mr. Lawrence contact Mr. Branin to gain his approval for introducing the ordinance before placing the newspaper advertisement for the August 13 public hearing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.



Chairman, Board of Supervisors  
Henrico County, Virginia