

Germantown Athletic Club Advisory Commission

Minutes

**Tuesday – May 1, 2012
Great Hall – Conference Center**

Members Present: Chairman Garth Thompson, Mr. Joe Denton, Mrs. Dee Dee Duneheew, Mr. Bill Erskine, Mr. Ron Fittes, Mr. Jim Hastings, Mrs. Kelly Nanney, Mrs. Kristin New, Mr. Ron Rossman and Mr. Ric Wolbrecht

Members Absent: Alderman Chism

City Staff Present: City Administrator Mr. Patrick Lawton, Mr. Phil Rogers, Ms. Carrie Corbett, and Ms. Debbie Powers

Call to Order

Chairman Garth Thompson called the May 1, 2012 meeting to order. The meeting was held in the Great Hall.

Approval of the Minutes

Chairman Garth Thompson asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion to approve the April minutes was made by Mr. Bill Erskine and seconded by Mr. Jim Hastings and all were in favor.

Club Report:

The City Administrator, Mr. Patrick Lawton opened the meeting introducing himself, and discussing the history of the Club and the Ordinance passed by the Mayor and Board of Alderman to establish the Germantown Centre Advisory Commission in September 2007, and on September 8, 2008 after the rebranding of the club, to amend the Ordinance for the Advisory Commission to the Germantown Athletic Club Advisory Commission.

Mr. Lawton touched on the history of the facility, and explained how the facility went through hard times about 6 or 8 years ago, and how the Mayor and Board of Alderman decided to make some changes at the Centre. The City looked at contracting out to Life Time Fitness along with other options. During that time the tax payers were paying to subsidize the facility. The Centre was a great amenity to the City and the residents wanted to sustain the facility. Mr. Lawton also reminded the Commission members, this facility was formed under an Enterprise Fund, meaning it is expected to cover its cost and be self sustainable. He added the City doesn't expect it to make a large profit, but to stand alone. Mr. Lawton explained how the Mayor and Board of Alderman decided to maintain the building and refocus their direction in the fitness industry. He stated we made the improvements, we made the adjustments, the facility was rebranded and now it is turning a small profit. Since the total shift, the hiring of professional fitness staff and refocusing our direction in the fitness industry, the facility is now making money. We ended last year in the black at the Club, and we expect to end this Fiscal Year in the black. He explained how the Director, Mr. Phil Rogers reports directly to him and he reports directly to the Mayor and Board of Alderman.

Mr. Lawton explained when they were making the changes, with the rebranding and hiring of a professional fitness staff, the City Administration felt it was important to establish the Commission to help in an advisory capacity. The role of the Advisory Commission is to be the eyes and ears of the membership and to bring back recommendations to the staff. He added the City has many commissions and volunteers in the community, and there are not many communities that offer as many levels of community involvement. He stated a lot of the success of the Club, has been the involvement of the Commission and recommendations they have made over the years. The professional staff brings recommendations to the Mayor and Board of Alderman, and they engage enough with the staff to understand what is taking place, so seldom are there surprises when they go into a board meeting.

Mr. Lawton apologized that with the school issues in the city; he is late getting out to all the Commission Meetings, and meeting the new members and explaining the roles of the Advisory Committees and the City's established policy on Ethics. Mr. Lawton thanked the Commission Members for all of the work they provided every day, and added the Mayor and Board of Alderman are truly the policy makers, and the Commission is an advisory committee. He added the Mayor is very involved in everything, and she looks to her staff to advise her and the board.

Mr. Lawton asked if there were any questions from the Commission Members. Mr. Hastings thanked Mr. Lawton for coming to the meeting, and for the City's backing of the Club over the years.

Mr. Lawton noted that Phil has been working very hard at getting his staff together, working on team building, and getting everyone focused like a fine tuned machine in the right direction. Mr. Lawton also discussed working with Phil on long term planning and the importance of sustainability and strategic planning. He referred to the City's Triple Bottom Line and the 3 elements that make up that bottom line; Economic, Environmental, and Social Sustainability. Mr. Lawton talked about how the Club certainly contributes in 2 of the elements of the City's Triple Bottom line. He added the whole thing about sustainability for the City is defined as "Doing things today, as to not compromise the future generations". As an organization that is what the City is focused on.

The Commission Members asked about the process that involved making requests to the management, administration and or Board of Mayor and Alderman.

Mr. Lawton responded there is a government process, and certain things are approved by the budget. The budget process is a group of recommendations brought to the Mayor and Board of Alderman. He mentioned as an example, some of the drawings he and Phil had drawn up, to look at different concepts of improving the usage of the space at the Club for staff programs. First he and Phil identify the long term projects, bring them to the Financial Advisor Commission and from there it will go to the Mayor and the Board. Mr. Lawton stated he meets with Phil at least once a week to discuss issues and plans for the Club. The Mayor and Board do not typically get involved in day to day operational decisions.

In an open discussion members of the commission responded that they had never discussed any of the plans being designed, and never had any input on the plans for renovations of the facility, or even hiring someone to look at a concept. Mrs. Duneheew stated the news paper even stated that the money had been allocated and approved. Members asked whether the Club could expect possible space from the Great Hall in the near future. Mr. Rossman requested that staff do a better job of educating the citizens before they read things in the paper.

Mr. Lawton responded no one had been hired yet, Phil did speak to someone who walked through the building and listened to staff, to design a concept for staff programs. But stated there has not been an engineer hired for designing those plans. Mr. Lawton explained the Great Hall is making great strides in their revenue, and he would have to say it is off the table. There is no place in Germantown with space like the Great Hall. Mr. Lawton said that is why he and Phil have looked at how the club could expand and better utilize the space available, and brought someone in, to give them ideas of where they could expand. He added that yes, there have been projects identified and taken to the Board, but the money hasn't even been appropriated in the budget. Once this is approved, the City will hire and set specs for bids for contractors and engineers. Charrettes and town hall meetings with members of the Club and Commission Members will take place in the design phase. Mr. Lawton stated he is thrilled that the Financial Advisory Commission agrees this would be a good investment, and the Alderman agree we need to make some internal improvements in the facility. Mr. Lawton commented as a member, and members of the Commission, we are going to be bombarded with questions at the Club, and this will be addressed as we proceed.

Chairman Garth Thompson added that speaking as a former member of the Athletic Club Advisory Commission, originally the taskforce formed 3 -4 years ago, from this advisory group looked at the Great Hall and agreed it would never make money, but the City decided that was a valuable amenity for the City.

Mr. Rossman stated the City wants the Commission Members to express and bring to the table concerns, that as a member and citizens they may hear, and asked in return, that they are better educated and informed on what is going on, so the Commission Members are prepared for any questions, members may have.

Mr. Lawton responded that one of the things that would help too, is the City has as one of its performance measures, a turnover in members, in the Advisory Committees, to bring in young people. But on the other hand, continuity on the Commission Committees brings a better level of educated informed members. He added that it is a learning curve, but he knows, Phil and other staff members or the Chairman would be glad to answer any questions they may have. Mr. Lawton also encouraged them to call him anytime, and he would be glad to answer their questions. Mr. Lawton said that one of the things that make the Commissions work so well is the relationship of the staff and members working together. Mr. Lawton reminded them that Mr. Rogers answers to him, and there are things he is looking for. Mr. Rogers gets his directions from him, and the Mayor and the Board.

Mr. Rogers added this is a Customer Service Facility and he wants the members to feel free to call him or come see him anytime they have questions or concerns.

Commission Report:

Mr. Rogers addressed the Commission Report where the members sent in questions and request:

1. Signage - Mr. Rogers responded that when he first came to the club, there were paper signs everywhere and he and his staff are working together to cut down on the signage. Where signs are needed, staff is placing more professional permanent signs in the building.
2. Oily and Squeaky Machines - Mr. Rogers explained there is a contract on the equipment for repairs, and he and other staff are certified to make repairs. He stated that staff welcomes members letting them know when there is a machine not working or squeaking because they don't always see them immediately. Also Amy and her staff have a log book, on repairs for the equipment that require contracted help. He added staff makes repairs immediately depending on parts available.
3. Lack of exercise space in the weight room area – Mr. Rogers agreed, we need more space, and this is something he is hoping to address with the proposed space renovations.
4. Request for allocated time in Commission Meetings for addressing concerns - Mr. Rogers agreed the members can plan for more time in the meetings.

Chairman Garth Thompson reminded everyone we have the Grill and Chill on May 19, and asked if we had any volunteers. Mr. Rogers added staff and Mr. Lawton will be grilling that day and volunteers are welcomed.

Mr. Joe Denton asked how the Club expects to cover the cost of the plans of possible renovations.

Mr. Phil Rogers responded, we have accumulated a working capital fund; we pay ourselves depreciation on the building, along with any profit, we may have. At this time the Club has approximately \$1.3 million in working capital. He added it will not be an increase in taxes, or a rate increase, the money is there. Unfortunately the newspaper article sounded like we were asking for more.

Adjournment:

Meeting Adjourned