

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE,
AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

June 30, 2011

Council Chamber

CONVENE: 9:04 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:
Councilmember Mike White, Chair
Councilmember Elle Cochran, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Donald G. Couch, Jr.
Councilmember G. Riki Hokama
Councilmember Joseph Pontanilla

EXCUSED: Councilmember Gladys C. Baisa
Councilmember Robert Carroll

STAFF: Scott Jensen, Legislative Analyst
Tammy M. Frias, Committee Secretary

ADMIN.: Patrick T. Matsui, Deputy Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Bradley M. Pierce, Parks Maintenance Superintendent, Parks Maintenance Division,
Department of Parks and Recreation
Douglas E. Myers, Golf Course Maintenance Supervisor, Parks Maintenance Division,
Department of Parks and Recreation
Jeffrey T. Ueoka, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation Counsel

PRESS: *Akaku--Maui County Community Television, Inc.*

CHAIR WHITE: . . . (*gavel*). . . Good morning, Members.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Good morning.

CHAIR WHITE: The meeting of the Economic Development, Agriculture and Recreation Committee will now come to order. . . . (*Scott Jensen adjusts Chair White's microphone*). . . . Sorry about that. Thank you, Scott. Before we begin, please turn off or silence your cell phones or other noisemaking equipment. I will do the same. And with us today, we have Elle Cochran, Committee Vice-Chair.

VICE-CHAIR COCHRAN: Aloha.

CHAIR WHITE: Morning. Don Couch.

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COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Good morning.

CHAIR WHITE: Mr. Riki Hokama.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Chairman.

CHAIR WHITE: And Joe Pontanilla --

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Good morning.

CHAIR WHITE: --Council Vice-Chair. And excused for today are Gladys Baisa and Bob Carroll. And this morning we have, with the Administration, we have Pat Matsui, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation. And seated to his right is Brad Pierce, the Parks Maintenance Division Chief. And with us in the audience today is Doug Myers, the acting Golf Course Superintendent. So welcome to all, the three of you from Parks. And from Deputy, or from Corp. Counsel we have Deputy Corp. Counsel Jeffrey Ueoka--welcome--and our Legislative Analyst Scott Jensen, and Committee Secretary Tammy Frias. So without objections, Members, I would like to open public testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR WHITE: And we still have no one signed up, is that correct? Okay. So without objection, we'll close public testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

ITEM NO. 13: OVERALL CONDITION AND OPERATION OF THE WAIIEHU MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE (MISC)

CHAIR WHITE: Members, this morning we have an item that was sent to us by the Budget and Finance Committee, as you may recall. And it was the result of a recommendation included in Budget and Finance Committee Report No. 11-45 and adopted by the Council. And during the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Session, you'll recall that the Committee focused primarily on the rates and fees associated with the golf course. And today's discussion will encompass a, a wider discussion regarding the condition of the golf course. And, of course, that, that will include a discussion about where they are with the rates and when we can, when we expect to get the golf course up to a level of condition that will allow us to increase the rates a bit. So with that, read the description from the agenda, which is the Committee is in receipt of a Miscellaneous Communication, dated May 24, 2011, from the County Clerk, referring the matter relating to the overall condition and operation of the Waiehu Municipal Golf Course. And we may receive a

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presentation from the Parks and Recreation Department with respect to the Golf Course. And no legislative action will be taken today. So with that, we will take a brief recess to reset the room for the presentation of a PowerPoint. In recess. . . . (*gavel*). . .

RECESS: 9:08 a.m.

RECONVENE: 9:10 a.m.

CHAIR WHITE: . . . (*gavel*). . . The Committee on Economic Development, Agriculture and Recreation is back in session for a presentation on the Waiehu Golf Course. Mr. Matsui, please proceed.

Note: Computer-generated presentation from Mr. Matsui.

MR. MATSUI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're doing a brief visual PowerPoint presentation. Unfortunately, we do not have the before pictures, but these were taken a couple of days ago. So I'll go through it. Yeah, first section is the facility's improvements that we've recently done. First one on No. 3 tee, we've put up the protective netting. This is so that the errant balls from the golfers who's aiming for the No. 2 green goes off and hits the guys teeing off on No. 3. Okay. Okay. The next was some improvements to the pump house that's located next to the pond. We refurbished, upgraded the building, repainted it, installed new air conditioning, new stainless steel electrical boxes and then reroofed. And then at the entry to the golf course, we replaced the guard rail, which had been run over and had fallen over. And we put in a new golf course sign. Okay. These are some of the scheduled improvements: cart paths, we're opening bids mid-July. And these are some areas we're gonna improve with concrete. No. 12 cart path, looking up toward the tee, there's a section coming down the hill that's pretty bad. No. 16, we're replacing the, pretty much the entire cart path from the top of the green to the bottom of the tee. There's another shot of that, and the No. 5 cart path, coming down the hill from the tee, and then the wash-down area next to the cart storage. Okay. The other one is replacing the fuel tank. That's the condition of the fuel tank. We're getting a new fuel tank. Okay. Now, moving on to the grounds improvements that we've done. We've done some at the entry feature. If you notice some of the trees, the short trees are ones that the trees had been run over and we replaced it with newer trees. And then we also cleaned up the banks, embankment along the entry. Okay and then we cleaned up the banks of the pond. And then going through the golf course, we've done, the greens has improved. This is No. 1 green. If you notice around the fringes, the, the light-colored area is the herbicide. That grass had...recently been herbicided. Again, No. 1 green, looking toward the clubhouse. No. 2 green, there were patches that we needed to replace, which we did. Okay. No. 4 green, this was I guess the biggest improvement at, prior to January. The green was in really bad shape and it's pretty much recovered. And No. 6 green, if you notice the white spots along the fringes, we've concentrated on that, herbiciding, getting rid of the goose grass around it. No. 7 green, same thing . . . more of No. 7; No. 11th green, and No. 12 green. There's a worker on your left. And No. 14 green. If you notice at the bottom, there's some weeds that's on the green that is being slowly eradicated. Here's more of the same 14th green. And there's a close-up of the weeds that are on the green. For the green, our first priority

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was to get the grass healthy. And once that's done then, then we can start herbiciding. If we herbicide too soon, you know, we'll kill the grass if the grass is not healthy. So we've gone through that, and the greens are stepping up. Okay. This is what was recommended by the PGA study that we convert our greens, and tees, and fairways to Seashore Paspalum. There's a number of varieties of Seashore Paspalum. So we started with the practice green. If you look at the lighter shaded area, that's your common, our Bermuda. That is throughout the course, the greens throughout the course now. The darker shade, that's the Seashore Paspalum. And this is again the practice green. This is the Bermuda. The patch on your left was what we had harvested to patch other greens. Okay. Now going on to the fairways - this is No. 1 fairway. No. 1 fairway...you can see the lighter color is herbicide that's been working. Here's more, a close-up. You can see where some of the goose grass has died and some has, is kind of weakened and will die. No. 2 fairway, the light portion is the portion that was herbicided. These are the spot sprayed. We're spot spraying the goose grass. No. 4 fairway, looking down, it is lighter colored. It was herbicided. We're using a different mixture of herbicide that, through a study by the University of Hawaii that they had conducted on the course, they had come up with a different mixture. And, and so we're trying that and modifications of that. No. 7 fairway again. You can see the light color. That's the results of the herbicide. Okay. No. 10 fairway, this is a project that EKO Compost has...the company had approached us doing a pilot project. They brought the compost over at no cost to us. So we tried it on No. 10. If you can see the, the kind of brown area, that's the compost showing through. This is one where we would put on the compost, get the grass healthy, and then start herbiciding more. So you can see that the grass is starting to come back. But again, it's a pilot project. The compost is pretty expensive. But, you know, we're still looking at that; might be a long-term solution. Again, No. 10 fairway. And there's a close-up of the compost. Okay. No. 11 fairway and then the distance markers. We've replaced all of the distance markers throughout the course, also the rope, ropes that mark off the cart paths. There's No. 12 fairway. And this is No. 18 fairway, looking toward the green from the tee area. Again, 18th, this is looking at it from the rough side. And No. 18 fairway, the tee. This is still just compound, just Bermuda grass. Okay now, the other recommendation of the USGA was to concentrate on the tees and to start converting the tees to Seashore Paspalum. So this is No. 1 tee, where we've done that. No. 2 women's tee, we're done. That's Seashore Paspalum. It's, the men's tee, again, that was converted to Seashore Paspalum. The white is sand from divots from the golfers hitting, digging up the turf. Okay. No. 4, men's and women's tee, it's Seashore Paspalum again. No. 6 women's tee is Seashore Paspalum. The men's tee is still Bermuda. Closer look, No. 6 tee. And then No. 8 tee is Seashore Paspalum towards the back of the green from, that's farther away from where we're standing, and closer to us is Bermuda grass. So you can kinda see the difference. The Seashore is a lot greener, is a lot fuller. Okay. No. 10 tee, this is a rebuilt tee, and we've planted Seashore Paspalum with, with this. That's a close-up. You can see some of the stolons coming through. No. 14 tee, this is just the common Bermuda. These are the tees that we will be converting to Seashore Paspalum. So No. 15 women's tee is Seashore Paspalum. It's pretty green. This is the men's tee on No. 15. It's not Seashore and that's the condition of it. No. 16 tee is Bermuda. No. 17 women's tee, Seashore Paspalum. Men's tee is just common Bermuda. No. 18 men's tee is just Bermuda. And that's the end of our slideshow.

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CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Matsui. Before we open for questions, we'll take a quick recess to reset the room. Recess. . . . (*gavel*). . .

RECESS: 9:24 a.m.

RECONVENE: 9:25 a.m.

CHAIR WHITE: . . .(*gavel*). . . This meeting is back in session. The Economic Development, Agriculture and Recreation Committee, discussing the Waiehu Golf Course conditions, and, Mr. Matsui, I'm wondering whether you would like to add any additional comments. I think one of the questions that came up that we might want to address to start with is that, it looks to me like you all have made some good progress on, on replacing the Bermuda with the Seashore Paspalum. Could you give us somewhat of a rundown, or maybe Mr. Pierce can give us a rundown on the, how many holes out of the 18 we have taken care of, tees, fairways or greens? You know the Seashore Paspalum, I don't believe you've put in the fairways at this point. Is that correct?

MR. MATSUI: Yeah, I think we have, like, 45 tees. And we've done 13 of them, converted to Seashore Paspalum. It's an ongoing program we intend to keep going during the course of the year and eventually have all of the tees. And then after the tees, we'll continue into the fairways. But, you know, that's a bigger job. It's more expense. And as far as the greens, we still haven't decided whether we want it to go to Seashore Paspalum. We've had some complaints from golfers that it's bumpy, the Seashore is bumpy, and it's harder to putt on. It's not as smooth. But although the PGA did recommend that we go to Seashore Paspalum, so it's something we're still looking at. And we did do the practice green. So we still haven't decided to go full speed on that. One of the things I didn't mention that I wanted to was, you know, since January, we've had a lot of good comments from the public. I think we had, recently had a letter from one of the women organization, Dorothy Hughes. And during my tour, which was on Monday, I was there for two hours taking pictures. And two people just walked up to us and said, thank you very much, you know, the course is looking a lot nicer. And they commented on the improved condition of the course. So yeah, I really wanna thank Doug Myers and Bobby Alo. They've stepped up to the plate as far as supervising. And, and from what I've seen, 'cause I did visit the course in January when I first came on board, you know, it looks a lot better. And one of the things we're doing is, Doug did do kind of an assessment of all of the greens and tees, kind of gave percentages on the weeds and the condition. And he's gonna follow up actually taking pictures so we can document. And this will be like our baseline that we'll continue on. So that we can look at...overall they've stepped up all of, you know, all of the, the fertilizing, the, the herbiciding. They've added pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicides to it. They've, they've experimented with the mix and then, like, we've done No. 10, the EKO Compost, so. And there's a whole bunch of things that we're moving ahead on. And, and you'll continue to see the course get better.

CHAIR WHITE: Okay. Thank you. Members, any questions? Mr. Pontanilla?

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COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Thank you. Thank you, Pat, for that overview. And yeah, you know, I've talked to some of my friends that golf there weekly, and they see the improvements. They see people working on the golf course, trying to, you know, improve it. One of the things that, just a question, in regards to the Seashore Paspalum, when you guys do the tee, you scrape off the existing grass or, or you just plant the Seashore Paspalum and have the Seashore Paspalum overtake the goose grass and the Bermuda grass?

MR. PIERCE: Thank you, Councilman Pontanilla. Right now, our process is to remove the existing Bermuda, and then use stolons to plant. It's quicker and it gives a better, a better transition. And, and we can afford to do that because there's typically a men's tee and a women's tee. And then we can, we can break them up, and we can make a temporary tee if necessary to facilitate that.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Okay. What's the possibility of maybe just experiment, experimenting just a section of the fairway to see how this Seashore Paspalum, you know, overtake the goose grass? And I think, looking at the audit report that was done on the golf course, he had indicated that the Seashore Paspalum could do that, so. You know, you know, just on the side, experiment so that we can see how that Paspalum does overtake the, the goose grass as well as the Bermuda grass.

MR. PIERCE: Any, any grass, Seashore or Bermuda, the hybrid that we use will have a problem with weeds. And so our goal right now is to diminish the strength of the weed population and get the Bermuda up and running. And then we do have plans, either next growing season, because we're in the middle of this growing season, and so next growing season, to look at the possibility of introducing Seashore into the fairways. But that is a, it's a very expensive and the way to do that is with seeds. And it's a very expensive transition. Most golf courses will actually, like down in Makena, they'll actually, they have two courses, so they were able to actually take one off of service and redo two holes all Seashore. And they're very happy with those two holes, but they were able to do that through sodding and through stolons. And we, we basically don't have that opportunity unless we wanted to shut down half the course, which we do not.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Yeah. You know, we support EKO Compost, yeah, for the last eight-and-a-half years that I, I'm here. And when you buy compost, you know, does the County get a break on that? We provide the greenery, we provide the, the solid waste, you know, to, to create this compost. But, you know, it seems like when you say very expensive, you know, I would assume that we get some kind of a break from EKO.

MR. MATSUI: Yeah, that's a good question. We've kind of asked that, too. In the past, the County had an agreement with EKO where they would give us 10 percent of what they produce. And so our expense was just to haul it. But since then, currently, they've changed the contract, so we have to pay for it. And it's, what is that, \$38 per ton?

MR. PIERCE: Yard.

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MR. MATSUI: Per yard. Oh. Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Who changed the contract?

MR. MATSUI: Pardon me?

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Who changed the contract? Who agreed to that?

MR. MATSUI: Well, that would be with, with the, yeah, Solid Waste people. They negotiate the contract.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: I guess they weren't looking at you folks when they did that, yeah, because we provide the land, we provide all the materials. And here we are, paying \$38 a yard. And that's too expensive. Yeah, you know, like I said earlier, you know, I do have golfing friends that golf there on a weekly basis. And they see the improvements, big improvements. They see people working on the golf course and, you know, I just wanna commend you guys for looking at the USGA audit report and taking action on, on some of the items that can improve this golf course. So thanks again, and thank your, thank your crew out at Waiehu Golf Course. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

CHAIR WHITE: Go ahead.

MR. MATSUI: Thank you for the comments. And yes, I would like to commend our crews out there, the actual guys that are out there doing the work every day. They've really stepped it up, too.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: One more question.

CHAIR WHITE: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: I, I know the carts, you know, travel on the fairway constantly, yeah. And there's thousands of seeds, I guess, in those goose grass. And as the carts go back and forth, they spread the seeds even further, you know. What's the possibility of taking a look at roping some of the areas so that, you know, we can control, I guess the growth of, the goose grass?

MR. MATSUI: Yeah. We do rope off areas. I don't think you can go close to the greens. And, and you're correct in that we do need to put in more cart paths so, you know, the golfers can stay off of the fairways as much as possible. So it's a program that we're looking at long term.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Yeah. If, if you could communicate that to the golfers such that, you know, with all of this improvements that we doing as a County, you know, maybe the golfers can help by not, you know, going on the fairway, yeah. So continue to communicate with the golfers, too. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

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CHAIR WHITE: Ms. Cochran?

VICE-CHAIR COCHRAN: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Parks and Rec, for being here. I guess my, my comment on this golf course was heard during the Budget Session. And so, I mean it's wonderful. I appreciate all the work you folks are doing. I know it's a lot, trying to be ahead of the ball with the weeds and what have you. But I just want to know when this course is gonna be revenue generating? You know, I know these improvements are leading towards that, but you, I know you don't have the answer. But I just want it to be said again that, as a non-golfer, and no offense to people who do golf, I think it's a wonderful open space use of the area, although I do have concerns about golf courses and the herbicides and fertilizers you folks need to use on these courses. You have no choice. I understand. You know, I went to the wellhead protection plan meeting, and golf courses, unfortunately, are high on the list of contaminants. So, yeah, I know you don't have answers right now, but I, I hope perhaps you can shed light on what really, you know, expeditious steps, I guess, we're taking to hopefully make this a revenue-generating thing for our County.

MR. MATSUI: As far as revenue generating, you know, you can look at it both ways. One is the number of rounds that people use. And the past few years, we've seen a decline. I'm not sure. I think part of it was the condition of the course, but the other part was the downturn in the economy. And so if we increase the number of rounds, we increase our revenues. The other part is increasing the fees, and we have different categories for that. And again, the fees are what we can propose, but it would still need the Council's approval. And it's an annual fee. And while we are with the golf course now, we weren't ready to go ask for more fees. We thought the first thing to do is get the golf course in a better condition where people would have better enjoyment and then be willing to pay more for their using the course.

VICE-CHAIR COCHRAN: Yeah. Thank you. I mean I appreciate the steps you folks are taking. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR WHITE: Mr. Couch?

COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Thank you. Mr. Matsui, that, that brings up a, a question as to how many people per day use the course?

MR. PIERCE: Over, it would be over 200. We do over 200 rounds.

COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Two hundred rounds? So, that times four is—

MR. PIERCE: Six.

COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Six? You can go up to six?

MR. PIERCE: Up to six.

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COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: So it could be potentially up to 1200 people a day? And we talked about...I know...

MR. PIERCE: Two hundred, about 200. Yeah, 200.

COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Oh. Oh. Okay.

MR. PIERCE: That's each, each individual.

COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Oh, a round is one player? Okay.

MR. PIERCE: A round. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Okay. Okay. Sorry. We talked about at, at Budget, and I just wanted to find out if we're going to continue on with that I guess through either the Budget Committee or this Committee, is the sliding fee for the, the non-residents because you mentioned that you can't attract visitors if it's cheaper to go to Wailea or some of the other courses because of the, because they dropped their rates. Have, have you pursued that, or have you brought that before us yet?

MR. MATSUI: I think this idea of giving us the ability to move the rates up and down was just proposed by Mr. White. And it's something that we look forward to doing, if we could. I'm not sure if we can do it, because I think the rates are set annually. But we would welcome doing that so that we could react to, you know, the different sales from the competing golf courses.

COUNCILMEMBER COUCH: Mr. Chair, I'd like to see if we can pursue that. I, I don't know if it would be through your Committee or through Mr. Pontanilla's Committee on that.

CHAIR WHITE: It would be through Mr. Pontanilla's Committee. The intent of, of this Chair was to review the condition of the golf course and see if there was a, an improvement to the point where it may be opportune to look at the rates again. And that, that discussion of whether the non-residents have a sliding, we give them an adjustable number or not, is in the purview of Mr. Pontanilla's Committee. And, and so we'll look to his guidance in, in addressing that if it, if it is appropriate to do so. Thank you. Mr. Hokama, you look like you have a question.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Chairman, thank you very much. I would say, just from seeing the, the photographs this morning, Chairman, and it's kind of hard because it's two-dimensional and, and you know, it makes a lot difference when you're onsite. But from what the Committee was able to see through the presentation, I would say the, the operation has done a great job under this new directorship and deputy directorship. So I appreciate the operations and the Department moving forward. And like Mr. Pontanilla, I've had, you know, people who use the facility commenting on the improvements that they have seen recently. But it begs the question of why weren't we able to do this before? Why now? So, I would think it's partly, I'm hoping, I think it's part of the audit. I think it's part of the, the leadership within the Department and

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Administration that has made a point. And I think it's people listening during the Budget Session of the amount of money it takes for this one golf course. And, of course, we have access to compare it with other public courses, our sister courses on our sister counties as well as we know what some of the private courses have to deal with regarding financial resources. But it's interesting, isn't it? They didn't talk about one thing that's always part of, of a golf course. And it's, for many of us, it's the bogeyman. It's the sand traps. But interesting, you guys never made a mention about conditions of traps, if it's an issue, if it is part of the issue, the drainage during rain storms so the silt makes an impact, negative impact on the condition of the sand, and whatever have you. But I notice you folks had no comment on, on, regarding the traps. So is there something you guys have to say to the Committee this morning regarding improvements or traps. Is it right now low priority? We're working on the grass first. Pat's has a higher priority. You folks have something to inform us?

MR. PIERCE: Thank you, Councilmember Hokama. There are 50 traps on the golf course. Ideally, they would be raked daily and we would replenish the sand as needed. But right now, with focusing on the, the fertilizing, herbiciding of the fairways and trying to get the tees and the greens. Number one focus always on a golf course is your tees and your greens because that's where everyone is gonna go, hopefully. And, and then you go to your fairways and then your hazards, which hopefully people won't go into. But we ideally, right now, we'd like to do it every day, which we should. What we're getting it to is about twice a week. So that leads to a diminished quality of your, of your sand trap. We recognize that, but we're trying to focus on the weeds, which has been the battle cry against, against, against us.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: And I appreciate you being very candid, you know. I understand you, you only have so much resources and so much hours per day to implement the improvement programs. But I find it interesting about the comment of the, the Paspalum on the greens. Because our sister course, Wailua on Kauai, converted a lot of to Seashore Paspalum also. And I had a chance, I think Mr. Pontanilla had a chance to visit the course. It's come to a point where colleges are asking to go to that course to play tournaments from the mainland. So it's kinda interesting hearing the comments you folks shared with us today, and yet another sister course on Kauai, is having success because now there's interest to host tournaments with the same type of grass and pretty much same conditions as Waiehu. Wailua and Waiehu is pretty similar. I like to think we get the better views, but, you know, it's very similar conditions, next to the ocean, county course, same type of issues. Of course they converted earlier, with their superintendent under Mayor Baptiste. But I don't know if you folks had a chance and, to visit your sister operations and see if there's things you can share to help them or they can share to help us here, but I would go and look at Wailua. I, I mean I, I still think that's one of the better public courses in the country, Chairman. And although they're like us, they're not making as much money as I think they should be. We've seen sister courses I think in Nevada, in California. We've been told about this great muni course in Baltimore that charges \$30 a round and they are packed. You know, they've got more than, they turn down play because of the demand. But part of it, Chairman, I think is the experience people get from the facility and how they equate that to what they're being asked to pay. Obviously, those at other course, muni courses feel they getting the quality and experience they want, so they willing to pay a slightly higher fee but less than a

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resort. I would hope that eventually we come to a point where we can raise rates, but then the quality of play and the experience, the golfer will say it is worth it, whether it's a resident or a visitor. The golfer will say it was worth my green fees because I had a great time, it's a great course, and I would come back. So I, I just share that with the Department because we've seen successful municipal operations in the past. So I just share that with you, the Department, you know. I don't know if you folks had a chance. Have you gone and seen some of our other sister county courses and how they may operate?

MR. MATSUI: I haven't. The last time I was at Wailua was 20 years ago. But, you know, the Director, we've talked about going to these other municipalities and seeing how they operate. And, and maybe we could pick up some tips on how we can get better.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Because I think Mr. Pontanilla visited an area of Nevada, Utah that this municipality ran, I think, three courses with something like 30 employees, three courses, okay, 18-hole courses. And Mr. Pontanilla got to see, the condition of course was, I would say was pretty outstanding for a government entity course. So I'm sure there's things we can learn from an exercise into and creating our facility to be something of great experience. And I appreciate you folks looking at the audit and making whatever implementations that doesn't impact the opportunity of using the facility. So I thank you for that. So let me say that, you know, we have the USGA, which is, you know, the national oversight entity for golf courses. You still feel there's a reasonable chance with resources and whatnot to keep a type of hybrid Bermuda on Wailua [*sic*], gentlemen?

MR. MATSUI: Yeah, again, you know, it's the, there's no magic pill. If we change to Seashore Paspalum, I'm not sure that everything will be fine. I think, you know, like any hybrid grass, it depends on the conditions of the course, the conditions, you know, the wind, the watering, the salt, and the compaction, all of those. But, you know, it's something we're moving ahead with. So far, on the tees, it's worked. And, and then once we're done with the tees, we'll go into the fairways. But you know, you know with Seashore there's a different set of maintenance issues. You know, one is having to verdicut and, and that type of thing. So, you know, we're moving ahead and we're seeing and trying to adjust with the conditions we have. And I think we're looking at different hybrids because, you know, a different hybrid of Seashore keeps coming out. So we're looking at that, too.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: All right, and that's much appreciated. We haven't talked about it, but is there a need for, for us to consider supporting, maybe for the whole Parks Department, a facility for total sod development? Whether it be for a baseball park, a passive park, the golf course, the baseball field, is there a need for us to develop a sod farm of, at a level that can do more than just for the golf course, per se? It can also assist the baseball fields, Kalama Park, whatever it be... You know, if and when we may take over the State's regional park development, which is gonna have a lot of, it's proposed with a lot of soccer fields, softball, baseball fields, so it's gonna be grass again. So is this something we should be thinking about, as part of an overall turf management program?

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MR. MATSUI: For the, our regular park system, we, we've started a sod farm, I guess up at War Memorial Complex.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: And that is between the football and baseball stadiums?

MR. MATSUI: Yes, in the back of that.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: That's kinda small, eh, guys?

MR. MATSUI: Yes. Okay. But it, it's not something that we're looking at like, you know, replacing the entire sod. You know, it's, you know, a lot of times we'll just use that to start putting in stolons, that kind of thing. For the golf course, you know, like the Seashore Paspalum, it's kind of a specialized kind of thing. I know they already have some areas that they're kinda growing that, you know, they can kind of use to, to patch areas that are bad. And also with the Bermuda area, you know, they'll take areas that are growing real well and just kind of take sod out of that to use it to re-sod. So, you know, it's kind of, they don't have a nursery, an area specifically set aside for that. But you know, they still do that sodding, taking from parts of the course and putting it in.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: And again, I'm just asking if that is something we need to consider down the road for more than just a golf course, you know, all, all our grass requirements for, for the Department? And I don't know, I mean, I don't know if you guys checked with Mr. Rego, but you know, I don't know why the driving range might not be part of a sod development program. You know, you guys just hitting to yardage signs. And it's a protected area from the normal play of, of our golfers, so. The other thing I wanted to ask, you know, when you mentioned, and it looked great by the parking lot, the side of the slopes you folks cleaned. You know, that's how it should always look. Doesn't the course or the Department use work, the Workline labor that we provide funds to do that type of work, or is that our golf course employees?

MR. MATSUI: We've been using the Workline intermittently for special projects. And I think they did the pond and that sloping area.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Is there any issues with the pond that the Committee needs to be aware of to, you know, potentially assist the Department in mitigating some kind of issue down the road? Is, is there any issues with the quality of the water, complaints about smell?

MR. MATSUI: We haven't had any complaints on, of the pond, other than the weeds that were growing on the sides of it. But you know the water condition, you know, it's pretty good.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Okay. Chairman, I was gonna ask you, as part of your plan, is it also taken into account, discussion of the concessions that are at the golf course? Or you just wanna talk about golf course operations?

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CHAIR WHITE: No, I think the concessions make up a very important part of the revenue stream. So I think those are certainly up for discussion. Not for decision-making, because that would take place in Mr. Pontanilla's Committee. But for informational purposes, it's certainly part of the discussion.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Thank you, Chairman, for allowing this then. And I just bring it up because if the golf course, you know, gets successful, then our concessionaires get successful, too. And then, unless I'm mistaken, Chairman, the base run plus percent, we will also make additional off, off that, unless they changed the contract terms of the agreement. But how well do we work with our concessions, the restaurant and, and the pro shop? Because I know it was brought up to us during the, before we entered into the first audit about coordination, communication. You know, if the course is gonna shut, plan to shut down for aeration purposes or, or spraying purposes, you know, the concessions, if they're told in advance, can make appropriate plans. But the day they go and let's say the restaurant has already prepared to serve, but then find the course is closed. And I'm sure that concessionaire is not a happy camper because they were ready to serve x amount of meals and there's no players at the golf course. And just as much for the pro shop, you gonna bring in your people to do their carts, to do this and then find out the course is closed. So you're already expanding and not receiving anything incoming. So I'm just curious of how, how we dealing with those type of components of the overall golf course operation, Mr. Matsui.

MR. MATSUI: Right now, like you said, the, the carts and the pro shop is one concession. We're advertising right now. We'll be opening bids, and it's gonna be a five-year contract. We do have an upset price. And then the restaurant is another concession that's bid out separately, just for the restaurant. And I'm, I'm not sure what the term of the restaurant is. You know, they have until 2014. And so, you know, all, all of those will be, is under contract. I think for the, we have some provisions if there's, due to some catastrophe or whatever that the course has to be shut down entirely, there's relief for compensation, you know, if the course is shut down.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: And have we made those, also those, I guess adjustments? I think at one time a previous restaurant concessionaire's concern was about the electrical meters, and what was being run through their meter was also taking care of some of the course, actually course requirements. So we've made those appropriate adjustments so that the, what is Parks' requirements is Parks, and what is the concessionaire's requirements is theirs?

MR. MATSUI: Yeah. Each of the concessions have their own meters, so right now, you know.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Does the County have its own meter?

MR. MATSUI: Yes. So there's three meters.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Okay. And then there is, was an issue about labor on the course, and whether or not our employees were actually staying on the job. Has that been addressed as far as management talking to other employers, employees?

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MR. MATSUI: Could you repeat that question? I, I didn't quite get the question.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: You can assure the Committee that what we expanding at course for personnel costs is accountable?

MR. MATSUI: Yes. We are accounting for all of our employees.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Okay. Very good, very good. I'm done, Chairman. Thank you very much. I await to hear other Members' comments or questions. Thank you.

CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Hokama. Mr. Pontanilla?

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Thank you. Mr. Matsui, you know, we've had that storm that came across the islands, in fact, the tsunami. In regards to erosion, especially for those fairways and along the ocean side, did we have any major damages during the storms?

MR. MATSUI: We didn't have any significant damage. No.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: So hardly any erosions?

MR. MATSUI: No.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Okay. You know, the tee box for No. 6, you know, every year, not every year but when I golf at Waiehu, it seems like the tee box is coming smaller and smaller. Now that we own the property adjacent to that, what's the possibility of expanding the tee box, you know, even further towards Kahului?

MR. PIERCE: That's a... thank you very much for that suggestion. We will take that under advisement. I mean that, we'll look into that.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: That becomes a true par four. Chairman, I do have one more question, but this is in regards to goose grass. And it doesn't pertain to the golf course. The goose grass that I wanna talk about is, you know, I know you guys working with the University of Hawaii because we get e-mails from them that they do experiment at Waiehu Golf Course. I don't think any one of us had gone. I surely didn't. But what caught my eye during a graduation at the stadium was that now the goose grass is starting to go into the stadium. And at one time, the grass in the stadium, you know, there were no weeds. In fact, the stadium sod was the best in the State. But now I see, you know, goose grass all over the place. And I don't know if you folks are addressing that issue. And I think you guys are. And hopefully, you know, you can get rid of that grass in the stadium because we spent big bucks, yeah, and then we had somebody from the NFL to look at, you know, how to improve that sod. So can you comment?

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MR. MATSUI: You're correct in that there was an increase in goose grass at the football stadium. And we're concerned, too. So we've stepped up our maintenance of that area. Right now the stadium is closed. They're putting up the light poles, and we're doing the new scoreboard, PA system, and also the Wailuku side bleachers. We're changing the gutters along the track. And so the stadium's closed and now is the time that we're working on the field also. So we're looking at when we open up for football, which is mid-August, that it'll be a first-class facility, that it used to be.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: So you can assure us that the goose grass probably will not be there when football season starts. Because when it starts, then you know, the spreading of the seeds again.

MR. MATSUI: Yes. That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Okay.

MR. MATSUI: Once the football season starts, you know, there's just more wear and tear and you know, it's harder for the grass to recover. So we wanna do it now.

COUNCILMEMBER PONTANILLA: Okay. Just so long we have the assurance that you guys going take care the goose grass before the season starts. Because once they start trampling and spreading that seed, it's gonna be what we have at Waiehu Golf Course. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

CHAIR WHITE: Welcome.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: Chairman --

CHAIR WHITE: Mr. Hokama?

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: --if I may? Chairman, I think one of the things the audit brought up was, I think, like No. 3, you know the shrinking of the greens. So that's been, has that been addressed, gentlemen?

MR. MATSUI: Yeah, we are aware that the greens are shrinking. And we're addressing that, that, that we're slowly gonna start expanding it again.

COUNCILMEMBER HOKAMA: So what's your time, to end of the calendar year, Mr. Matsui? Six more months?

MR. MATSUI: It's more of an ongoing process, you know, as it was explained to me. You know, as you mow the fringes, the tendency is to, I guess, mow...anyway, the greens get smaller around the edges. You know, it starts creeping, you know, like one inch, two inches. And then pretty