



Sponsors, the Assignment and History

Sponsors:

The City of Harrisonburg is the official sponsor of the ULI Technical Assistance Panel.

Many City departments have compiled data for these briefing materials and will be participating on July 14 & 15.

The Assignment:

Beginning in late 2019 and early 2020, the community began asking questions about the costs associated with the operations of Heritage Oaks Golf Course (HOGC). Since its opening in 2001, the course has run a deficit. This deficit has fluctuated, but until recently it has been in excess of \$400,000 annually. At the same time this conversation was beginning, Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation staff, led by former Director Luanne Santangelo, instituted a series of operational changes to increase revenues and decrease operational costs. These changes have led to that deficit nearly disappearing. It was also at this time the relationship between that operational deficit was being seen within the context of a community wrestling with large public policies including homelessness and affordable housing. Because of these issues and questions, City Council, through a recommendation by City Manager Eric Campbell, asked for studies to identify efficiencies with operations and thus potentially ways to eliminate the operational deficit as well as a study of the land on which Heritage Oaks is located to consider alternative uses that could also benefit the community.

Questions to be addressed by the panel:

How can the City best position the existing Heritage Oaks Golf Course property, either in its current use or through full or partial redevelopment, to achieve the following:

1. Provide maximum benefit and accessibility to all local citizens.
2. Generate a positive financial return to the City's financial position.
3. Address the adopted City Council Vision and Goals to the maximum extent possible.



History of the Study Area:

The Heritage Oaks Golf Course is a municipal golf course designed by golf course architect, Bill Love, and encompasses 18 holes over 191 acres (of which 35 acres are deed restricted for recreational purposes only). The golf course includes a driving range, practice putting green, and a three-hole par three course.

Construction of the course began in 2000 with final completion occurring in 2002. The total cost of the course construction was approximately \$5.4 million. The course was constructed on property that was part of the existing City-owned Hillendale Park. Additional smaller parcels of land were also purchased. Bluestone Elementary School is situated on property that was originally part of the golf course land.

More recently, in 2009, HOGC constructed the First Tee facility on the course property in collaboration with First Tee of the Shenandoah Valley. Construction of the facility cost approximately \$420,000, which was largely raised through private donations of cash, materials, and labor.

In 2010, City Council established a Golf Course Study Committee to develop ways that would make the course more profitable. There were numerous recommendations that came out of the study. A primary outcome of that study was the recommendation to expand the clubhouse to include a larger restaurant space to enhance opportunities for patrons. The cost of this expansion was \$320,000.