

# 2017 Annual President's Report

2017 was a fun but rainy season at The Fox. Rounds of golf were down from 2015 and 2016 where we had longer, drier seasons. Since there were more rain out days, many on Wednesdays and Thursdays, our bar and dining revenue was down this year as well. That is why it is as important as ever to support the club during the winter on Thursdays and Fridays. Try to schedule at least one night a month to come out and support the club during the slow season. Invite some friends out for a cocktail and fish on a Friday night.

Our non-student memberships are at 242 which are the same as 2016. It is nice to see our membership stabilizing after some large increases from 197 non-student memberships in 2014.

As I mentioned in my president's message a few weeks ago, we have recently solicited member feedback and will be presenting the results during the annual meeting. Here is a recap of the issue we are getting feedback on:

One of our main goals for a number of years has been to aggressively reduce our debt. Our total debt including our mortgage, line of credit and member notes on October 31, 2008 was over \$1.2 million. As of October 30, 2017 we were at \$516,841. That is a reduction of almost \$700,000 in 9 years. At our current debt reduction rate we will be debt free in 6 years, which will free up money for lots of improvements to the course and facilities.

While we are focused and driven to pay down our debt, we also don't want to sacrifice improvements to the course and clubhouse. There are two main projects Members have identified as being important to them: A) Leveling and optimizing the sizes of the existing tee boxes and adding forward tees and B) Redoing our green side sand traps.

Estimates are that each project will cost in the range of \$150,000 to \$200,000. Based on Member feedback from past surveys, it is fairly evenly split between tee box and sand trap projects, with the thin majority leaning toward doing the tee boxes first. After much discussion, the Board Members agree with the Membership that the tee box project should take priority, for a couple of reasons.

First, the tee boxes are one of only two areas—with greens being the other—that 100% of players use on 100% of the holes. Second, we've gotten outstanding response and use of the forward yellow tees since we began experimenting with them, so putting good quality, permanent forward tees in place makes good sense for our Members and Guests.

When the course was built on its current site 50+ years ago, the tees were created by pushing clay into mounds and forming them into tees—a less-than-perfect science at the time. Tack on 50 years of wear and tear, soil compaction, freezing/heaving and erosion and it's pretty easy to understand how the tees can become misshapen. The belief is the tee boxes project gives us an opportunity to upgrade the quality, beauty and playability of our course for many years to come. Included in this project would be a plan to add hardscape and plantings to our first tee to create both a focal point for Members and Guests and create a “wow” experience stepping up to the first tee.

If we go forward with the tee box project, there are a couple of different ways it could be done:

One option is to do a one-time assessment to Members. We discussed this at the last Board meeting and it was unanimously rejected. We are proud to say that Fox Valley Golf Club has never had an assessment and we don't want to change that great track record.

It could be done with a \$150,000 bank loan combined with regular club cash flow along with funds raised through the Fox Future Fund. We would then have beautiful new tee boxes and new forward tee boxes on all 18 holes that Members can enjoy for many years to come. Going this route would move our total debt elimination plans back two years. If we continue to pay our debt down at a rate of \$80,000 per year, two years from now our debt would still be \$10,000 lower than it is today and we would have new tee boxes.

The members were then asked in the survey if they wanted to move forward with the tee box project or wait two more years to reduce the debt further, and then readdress the tee box issue. After reviewing member survey results at the annual meeting the board will discuss if and when the tee box project moves forward. It is nice that the club is now in a position to have these choices.

Lastly I would like to thank all of the management and staff at The Fox as well as all the board members for their hard work and dedication during the past year. Without you, the great experience members enjoy would not be possible.

Make everyday a great day!!

Mike Zimmer