

Jamestown Park Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do we need to renovate?

A golf course is a living, breathing entity that grows and changes just like a human. Growth and spread of trees and grasses, water erosion, and other natural processes alter the appearance of the golf course features to the point where the materials that compose these features begin to break down. As a result, the performance of the golf course features begins to falter, regardless of even the best maintenance practices. Jamestown Park Golf Course is no different in this regard. The golf course was originally built in 1974 and has never undergone an extensive renovation project.

Age and technological progress have necessitated renovations to improve golf course conditions to a standard that is more widely accepted in 2010, not 1974. Infrastructure such as internal drainage, cart paths, and construction materials such as sand and gravel have lasted beyond their accepted life expectancies. As a result, many of the golf course features have far outlasted their expected life cycles. An increase of rounds have rendered tee complexes undersized. In addition, the golf course features (tees, sand bunkers, greens complexes) lack character, strategic value, and visual interest.

2. What on a golf course breaks down to the point of needing replacement?

In 2005, the Allied Associations of Golf (including the United States Golf Association Greens Section, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the American Society of Golf Course Architects and the National Golf Foundation among others) examined the expected life cycle of golf course items. Their findings included the following (followed by year of complete renovation of respective item at Jamestown Park Golf Course):

- Putting Greens: 15 – 30 years (never)
- Bunker Drainage Pipes: 5 - 10 years (never)
- Bunker Sand: 5 – 7 years (partial 1995)
- Irrigation System: 10 – 30 years (never)
- Irrigation Control System: 10 – 15 years (broken since 1989)
- Irrigation Pump Station: 15 – 20 years (rebuilt in 2004; not replaced)
- Asphalt Cart Paths: 5 – 10 years (resurfacing in 1990)
- Tees: 15 – 20 years (never)
- Corrugated Metal Pipe: 15 – 30 years (never)

3. Don't people like the golf course?

From April 15th to May 31st 2009, a golfer survey was undertaken by the Town of Jamestown to gauge golfers' opinions of Jamestown Park Golf Course. Of the 174 respondents, the majority of golfers were men aged from 51 - 65. They were all regular golfers at Jamestown who play, on average, 40% of their rounds at Jamestown (10 respondents). 64% play at Jamestown on a weekly basis. Generally speaking, the

respondents all looked favorably on the golf course and considered it a good value but with specific concerns.

The majority of comments by respondents concerned excessive slopes on the putting greens. Descriptions ranged from “ridiculous” to “unfair” to “cruel”. Current putting slopes are too severe for the “medium-fast” to “fast” putting speeds golfers at Jamestown Park prefer. Many greens have dominant slopes from back to front or side to side which exceed 5%. In addition to the third green, greens such as four, seven, eight, and ten are just a few others which have extreme slopes that far exceed fair. Slopes in excess of 5% cannot be controlled and will require a softening closer to the 3% range, making new green speeds fairer and more enjoyable for golfers.

The reason why the putting slopes are now considered too fast is that they were originally designed for green speeds in the six to seven stimpmeter range. Today’s green speeds are in the nine to eleven stimpmeter range (Stimpmeter is a unit of measurement to determine how fast a ball travels along a putting slope). As a result of these preferred putting speeds, the slopes that were manageable in 1974 are now considered too severe when putting surfaces are mown lower in order to accommodate today’s speeds. This is a good example of efforts to upgrade Jamestown Park Golf Course to modern standards.

After putting green slopes, the next most pressing concerns are the excessive cross-slopes of many fairways and rough conditions between fairways and the woods. All in all, respondent’s comments supported the efforts undertaken by the Town in consideration of renovation efforts at Jamestown Park Golf Course.

4. The golf course looks great when I drive by, so what’s the problem?

Although it appears as though the golf course is very green above ground, the infrastructure which is supposed to contribute to that appearance is in fact detrimental to the health of the golf course. Practices that have contributed to the successful appearance of the grasses have been a band-aid approach by the golf course maintenance staff which is understaffed and underfunded as well.

Much needed improvements to the growing environment of Jamestown Park Golf Course will help to reduce the amount of irrigation water, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor. These improvements will help to save the Town of Jamestown money as well as reduce the Town’s carbon footprint.

An updated irrigation system will improve coverage in addition to water distribution and usage, thereby reducing over-watering in certain places to compensate for under watering in adjacent areas. In addition to the obvious benefits, with a modernized irrigation system’s efficiency in distributing water, it will not be necessary to increase storage capacity of the irrigation ponds, eliminating a costly line-item that may otherwise be unavoidable.

In the area of turf grasses, the planting of new putting surface turfgrasses will provide more consistently rolling putting surfaces. These new strains are less disease prone, more heat resistant, and not as dependent upon great amounts of water. These new grasses will minimize efforts by the maintenance staff as well as create better playing conditions. Lastly,

proposed drainage improvements will help provide better playing conditions and allow the maintenance staff to better spend their time maintaining the golf course features instead of a combination of constant band-aid repair and maintenance.

5. Will the golf course be more affordable to maintain after the renovations?

A primary goal of the Town of Jamestown regarding renovation efforts to Jamestown Park Golf Course is to minimize daily maintenance tasks. By improving the infrastructure of the golf course, maintenance efforts will be cut thanks to the implementation of superior materials, drainage improvements, proper grasses, and improved construction techniques.

Everyday set up of the golf course will not require excessive maintenance efforts either. Golf course features will be designed with manageable slopes and minimal hand labor. The final result of these efforts will be better conditions and more efficient maintenance practices both environmentally and economically. Excessive amounts of hand labor in terms of irrigation, repairs, and other efforts also cost money. Currently the Town averages over 2,080 man hours a year doing repairs and maintenance of current infrastructure. Improved infrastructure translates into approximately \$41,600 of labor savings per year due to repairs.

The implementation of newer putting surfaces will require less man-hours in a variety of ways. Specifically, the number of aerifications to new greens can be reduced from four times per year to two times per year. Syringing (the practice of hand-watering hot spots of the putting surfaces) will be virtually eliminated with more drought-tolerant and heat-resistant grasses. The combined savings for the Town of Jamestown in terms of aerification and syringing can be translated into a savings of \$6,380.00 annually. A new irrigation system will reduce labor by approximately 100 hours per year as well as the utilization of less power as well (\$2,000.00).

Another aspect of proposed renovations is the elimination of almost six acres of traditional rough grasses which require mowing twice a week during the growing season and regular fertilization and irrigation. In its place will be low-maintenance grasses which need little chemical application and irrigation. These grasses only require mowing once a year. This will translate into a savings of approximately \$3,600.00 of savings annually as well.

The bottom line is that a conservative estimate of maintenance budget savings for the Town of Jamestown can be approximately \$53,500.00 per year. This translates to just under 10% of the annual maintenance budget for Jamestown Park Golf Course.

6. Will renovations improve the environment?

As previously mentioned, by improving infrastructure such as the irrigation system and implementing more appropriate turfgrasses, total utilization of irrigation water and chemicals will be greatly reduced. Replacement and upgrade of drainage pipe will help to better manage runoff throughout the property and minimize the possibility of pipe failure, thereby reducing the possibility of flood conditions.

Improved infrastructure will allow the maintenance staff to forego a regular routine of band-aid fixes for one of consistent golf course maintenance. As a result, overall manual labor will be reduced. All of these renovation efforts will help to reduce overall output and resource usage at Jamestown Park Golf Course. The result will be a reduced carbon footprint for the Town of Jamestown.

7. Why do we need to move golf holes?

In addition to infrastructure problems at Jamestown Park Golf Course, there are a few specific areas of the golf course which have been inherently dangerous for golfers due to congestion. There have been instances over the years where golfers have been hit by errant golf shots in these specific areas. On the front nine, adjacent holes six and seven can be dangerous for golfers playing both golf holes due to close proximity of the landing areas and blind playing conditions (golfers cannot see other golf shots hit in their general direction). Proposed solutions to move tees back and re-grade landing area slopes will improve this condition.

Another area of dangerous playing conditions is the twelfth fairway/thirteen tee/seventeen green area on the back nine. Both the thirteenth tee and seventeen green are along the line of play for golfers playing the twelfth hole. By moving elements of the twelfth hole as well as the thirteenth tee and seventeenth green, golfers will no longer be susceptible to stray golf balls from adjacent fairways. Renovation efforts to improve these conditions as well as others are a vital element of this project.

8. How often does a golf course typically undergo extensive renovations?

The above expected life cycles of golf course items infers that renovations to these items should be at the end of those cycles, but many golf courses undergo extensive renovations sooner rather than later. In fact locally, many golf courses have undergone multiple renovations (necessitating temporary shutdown of the golf course) since the day Jamestown Park Golf Course first opened its doors. Below is a list of Triad area golf courses which have undergone extensive renovations since Jamestown Park Golf Course opened:

- Sedgefield Country Club
- Starmount Forest Country Club
- Holly Ridge Golf Course
- Greensboro Country Club

In this same timeframe, Jamestown Park Golf Course has never shut down its golf course for significant renovations, making it the exception to the rule.

9. Why can't the Town phase the work in over time?

Because all of the golf course features need renovation for each hole, it makes most sense for the Town to shut the golf course down once, complete the work, and then re-open without having to re-visit the process multiple times. From a practical standpoint, the Town

will lose revenue each season the golf course is shut down because there will not be a full eighteen holes open for play. In addition, golfers will not want to interact with the construction processes because of noise, inconvenience, and possible danger.

If the Town phases the work over two seasons, golf play in the second season will be concentrated solely on the new nine holes (doubling rounds), which can severely damage the new grass. In addition, phasing work will result in an age difference between golf holes which can mean two different maintenance regimens for the maintenance staff, potentially adding maintenance costs and labor. The Town also runs the risk of not being able to secure consistent construction materials (sand, gravel, etc.) or the same construction company if construction is phased over multiple seasons.

10. Will greens fees increase as a result of the renovation work?

The Town Council reviews all town fees each year. It would seem that a golf course that undergoes improvements that enhance a golfer's playing experience would likely support a rate increase.

11. Will improvements to the golf course increase the value of my home?

The reputation of parks and recreation facilities enhance the value of the community served by the programs and surrounded by the property. Residents and those seeking to relocate to a community usually value green spaces, recreation programs, and facilities.

12. How were the soccer fields paid for?

The Town borrowed money to purchase the property in 1998 and developed the property with General Fund money.

13. Is the golf course losing money or is it the entire complex?

In most years, moneys from the General Fund have supplemented the Golf Course operation. In the last few years (as the course ages and requires additional band-aids), larger infusions of cash have been required. Although the course brought in \$902,030 in the June 2009 year, it cost \$1,082,870 to operate. \$180,840 of general Fund money was needed to supplement the operation and capital repairs. Other recreation facilities like ball fields, picnic shelters, and playgrounds, by comparison, earn very little in revenues and are supplemented to a much larger extent by the General Fund.

14. Will the golf course improvements increase revenues?

Improvements to Jamestown Park Golf Course can increase revenues as a result of lessened maintenance costs and renewed interest in the golf course. There is always an uptick in rounds played after a golf course undergoes significant renovations and it should be no different at Jamestown Park. The primary goals with renovation efforts are to improve infrastructure, which will improve maintenance efforts, and to improve strategic value and visual interest as well, which will create an increase in rounds played beyond the initial excitement.

In terms of infrastructure, the goal is to improve golf course conditions to a standard that is more widely accepted in 2010. Currently, golfers are paying to play a golf course with standards found in 1974. Surrounding golf courses are offering a product, which is more in tune with modern standards. Once improvements are made, golfers at Jamestown will be offered those same modern standards, which will result in a potential revenue increase. In addition, specific renovation tasks are proposed to improve pace of play and playability, which will result in faster rounds completed at Jamestown Park. In turn, this will allow for more rounds to be played at the facility and result in increased revenue as well.