

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

July 2, 2025



To: City Council
From: City Manager Department
Prepared by: Christopher Freeland, City Manager Department
Subject: **Review of Purpose and Function of the Indian Wells Golf Resort Advisory Committee**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **REVIEWS** and **DISCUSSES** the purpose and function of the Indian Wells Golf Resort Advisory Committee; and

FINDS the action exempt from CEQA review under CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).

BACKGROUND:

At the June 20, 2024, City Council meeting, the Council adopted a resolution to amend the purpose and functions of the Golf Resort Advisory Committee. This was completed after a Council Ad Hoc Committee (Mayor Whitman and former Councilmember Griffith) were asked to examine the structure, efficiency, and make recommendations to revamp duties and processes of all City Committees.

During discussions between the Ad hoc Committee and members of the Indian Wells Golf Resort Advisory Committee it was suggested to provide a clearer purpose and function of the Committee.

Purpose and Functions of the Golf Resort Advisory Committee. (Current Function)

The Indian Wells Golf Resort is an award-winning, premier golfing destination, and a major point of community pride. The Golf Resort Advisory Committee is focused on preserving the prestigious reputation of the Indian Wells Golf Resort, by serving as liaisons between the golfing community and the City of Indian Wells. The Golf Advisory Committee provides suggestions on the operations and maintenance of the Indian Wells Golf Resort to the City Council. The scope of such involvement includes the following:

1. Participate and give recommendations on long-range planning, improvements to both golf courses and the driving range, course utilization, and other ancillary activities, which support the Indian Wells Golf Resort operations to provide a high-quality experience for all golfers.
2. Serve as representatives of resident golfers on preserving access for resident play and ease in the resident booking experience.
3. Receive reports from management on golf, merchandising, marketing and Food and Beverage operations. The scope of the reporting will not include any financial reporting, as the financial performance of the Golf Resort is not within the advisory scope of the Committee.
4. Act as ambassadors of the Indian Wells Golf Resort by providing suggestions to the management company that enhances visitor and resident experiences in all operations of the golf resort.
5. Promote the sport of golf to all ages.

In addition, the Ad hoc Committee recommended changes in the membership of the Committee to allow the General Managers, or their designee, from each of the City's Resort Hotels to serve on the Committee. The addition of "or their designee" was included to assist in meeting quorum needs and allow representation from hotel partners when the General Manager is not available to attend.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Taylor has requested a discussion by the Council clarifying the resolution limiting the Committee's ability to opine on matters that may impact the financial performance of the resort without discussing the financials of the resort.

Specifically, the Golf Resort Advisory Committee resolution states, the Committee shall "Receive reports from management on golf, merchandising, marketing and Food and Beverage operations. The scope of the reporting will not include any financial reporting, as the financial performance of the Golf Resort is not within the advisory scope of the Committee."

Staff worked closely with the Ad hoc Committee on this particular provision. The intent was to allow Troon to manage and operate the Golf Resort without the Committee asserting itself into the operational costs and profitability of the golf resort, and to preserve Council's responsibility to oversee resident amenities (e.g., Golf Resort). This is especially true with the new management contract with Troon that incentivizes Troon for its performance and the new structure of the restaurant contract.

The intent of this provision has been interpreted by some to mean the Committee is not allowed to discuss any matter dealing with the finances of the Golf Resort (e.g., green fees, food costs at Kestrel, profitability of the facility, etc.); however, the Committee has been asked to make recommendations to Council that have financial implications (e.g., selection of architect for Players Couse redesign costs, quality of bunker sand, addition of clocks, benches, etc.). Golf Resort staff did provide monthly reporting on the rise of golf average daily rate, covers at Kestrel, etc., at previous Golf Resort Advisory Committee meetings. This has since stopped due to concerns over the interpretation of this provision.

Staff is seeking Council's discussion and direction on the matter, including any recommendations to provide clarifying language to the resolution, do nothing, or provide alternative direction.

Please note that staff does not recommend any changes to the Golf Resort Advisory Committee's functions that could interfere with Troon's ability to operate or manage the finances of the Golf Resort or require any renegotiation of Troon's management agreement.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (14 CCR 15061(b)(3).)

ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution