

# INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## July 2, 2025



**To:** City Council  
**From:** City Manager Department  
**Prepared by:** Christopher Freeland, City Manager  
**Subject:** **History of the Tee Committee**

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **RECEIVES** and **FILES** this informational report on the history of the Tee Committee; and

**FINDS** the action is not a Project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5).

### BACKGROUND:

On April 8, 1985, the City of Indian Wells' Redevelopment Agency entered into an easement agreement (Attachment No. 1) with the Daon Corporation, Stouffer Investment Corporation, Desert Horizons, Inc., and GSH Limited for the City to construct, operate, and maintain two first-class 18-hole championship golf courses with club house and other customary golf ancillary facilities. The land where the current golf courses are located is built on City, Grand Hyatt (portions of the Celebrity Course along the perimeter of the hotel property), and Renaissance Esmerelda (former Hole 18 of the Players Course, clubhouse, driving range, and parking lot). Over the years, this underlying easement agreement has been modified to reflect changes in ownership of the hotels and underlying property, shifting of the golf course for hotel expansions, etc.

Today, Grand Hyatt is the successor to the land owned by Desert Horizons, Inc. and GSH Limited. Renaissance Esmerelda is the successor to the land owned by the Doan Corporation and Stouffer Investment Corporation.

One of the features of the Easement Agreement was the desire for all stakeholders to meet at least quarterly to discuss the maintenance, operation, management of the golf resort, and other provisions of the Easement Agreement.

Section 8 of the Easement Agreement states:

Agency - Grantor Meetings.

Agency and the Golf Resort Operator, if other than Agency, agree to meet not less often than quarterly with Grantors (or more frequently as the parties may agree) to discuss the maintenance, operation and management of the Golf Resort, to discuss possible revisions to the Maintenance and Operation Standards and/or the RFP Standards, and to discuss any policies and matters which materially affect the use of the Golf Resort, including, without limitation, golf time reservation policy, hours of operation, green fees and other charges relating to the use of the Golf Resort. All material changes to the Maintenance and Operation Standard and/or RFP Standards shall be discussed with all Grantors at a meeting of Agency, the Golf Resort Operator, if other than Agency, and Grantors, prior to implementation.

According to a review of City Council minutes, the City and signatory stakeholders would conduct meetings to discuss various topics as the "Tee Committee." Examples of these discussions include:

- Development of golf stay and play packages (1987)
- Taxicab regulations to and from hotel/golf resort properties (1990)
- Discussion on limiting time and frequency of fireworks displays at hotels (1991)
- Resort campus signage along Highway 111 (1991)
- Tee Committee serving as the City's Tourism Committee until its formation (1991)
- Addition of computers to golf carts (1992)
- Development of Complimentary Golf Policy (1993)
- Gulfstream Aerospace Invitational (1993)
- Increasing golf rates for non-hotel guests (1995)
- Discussion of reworking the driving range (1995)
- Painting of cart bridge and fences at the Golf Resort (1997)
- Discussion on purchasing electronic reservation system at golf resort (1999)
- Discussion on the marshal program (1999)
- Addition of GPS to golf carts (2002)
- Interview architects for the remodel of the Golf Resort Clubhouse (2002)

The minutes reflect that the Tee Committee was very active from 1987 through 2002. With an additional meeting in 2011 to discuss golf rates. The drop-in activity of the Tee Committee coincides with the formation of the Golf Resort Committee.

In 2002, the City Council formed a Golf Resort Committee consisting of two Councilmembers, the City Manager, a City staff liaison, the General Manager of the Golf Resort, the General Managers of the four resort hotels, and two Indian Wells residents. This new committee was not intended to replace the existing Tee Committee, even though the Tee Committee membership would be part of this new committee. Rather,

the Golf Resort Committee was formed to allow greater discussion of numerous and varied topics regarding the Golf Resort beyond what was allowed under the existing Easement Agreement and to broaden participation of residents and other hotel partners into the recommendations to the Council on the Golf Resort. Over the years, the Golf Committee has been renamed to the Golf Resort Advisory Committee.

#### Other Provisions of the Easement Agreement

In 1993, the Tee Committee developed a Complimentary Golf Agreement for the Indian Wells Golf Resort. It is the custom and practice of the golf industry for golf course operators to extend privileges to permit players, under certain circumstances, to pay greens fees or cart rental fees, or allow such play at rates lower than those normally charged to full-fee golfers, including complimentary play. Over the years, this agreement (Attachment No. 2) has been modified to reflect changes in the industry, city rules and regulations, and the need to memorialize various golf fee rates. For example, Golf Resort employees, visiting government officials, media and tourism partners, executives of the hotel partners, etc. may receive free play in rounds are available. Others, including PGA card holders, golf course superintendents, tennis players and coaches, and others received discounted play. Please note that City employees do not receive free play, as Council adopted, by separate resolution, the requirement they may play at the discounted Code C rate.

The Easement Agreement contains a formula for the allocation of golf tee times. The allocation of the tee sheet, from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm is divided into three ways: 33% resort play, 33% street/general public play, and 33% resident play. There are times that this may fluctuate (e.g. summer months and during season months when play may begin before 7:00 am. The tee segmentation is not in effect from June 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>. The tee allocation has been discussed and memorialized at various Council and Golf Resort Advisory Committee meetings over the years too.

The Easement Agreement also provides golf rounds to be utilized by Indian Wells resort hotels for the purpose of tourism. Indian Wells resort guests receive discounted play at the Golf Resort and access to the tee sheet months in advance and are protected up until 72 hours prior to tee time. At that point, the resort golf rounds are made available to the general public and residents.

Over the last several years, City staff and golf resort management have met frequently with the general managers of our local resort hotels, including the Grand Hyatt and Renaissance Esmerelda. As staffing at City Hall, Golf Resort, Grand Hyatt, and Renaissance Esmerelda have changed over the years, so too has the knowledge of a Tee Committee existence or its functions. Staff recently met with both general managers of the Grand Hyatt and Renaissance Esmerelda who are very pleased with the relationship with the City and agree to utilize the Tee Committee to address issues of mutual interest,

per the Easement Agreement, on an as needed basis. They are willing to meet more frequently if the City sees a need.

Staff are currently reviewing the easement agreement with the hotel partners to see if the agreement meets the current needs of the three stakeholders, are changes warranted, or to leave the agreement as it exists. Staff will report back after those discussions are completed.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This staff report is informational only. Any fiscal impact from the various goals, strategies, or initiatives are to be addressed separate from this report.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):**

This action has been reviewed per the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State and local CEQA Guidelines, and the City's environmental regulations. The City, acting as the Lead Agency, determined that the action is not a Project under State CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5), because organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment are not considered a Project.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 1985 Easement Agreement
2. 2020 Complimentary Golf Agreement