

**BROOKTRAILS TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Tuesday, February 24, 2009**

The Board of Directors of Brooktrails Township Community Services District met in regular session on February 24, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Brooktrails Community Center.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following directors present: Williams, Ziady, Horrick and Skezas. Director Orth was absent with notice. Also present were General Manager Chapman and District Counsel Neary.

REPORT ON CLOSED SESSION

None.

C. ADDITIONS/ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

None.

D. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. February 10, 2009. Upon motion and a second, the minutes were unanimously approved.

E. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

None.

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

G. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

H. CONSENT CALENDAR

2. Review of Accounts Payable report and authorization to issue checks. Upon motion and a second, payment of the outstanding bills was unanimously approved.

I. ACTION AGENDA

3. Public Discussion – Golf Course tree cutting proposal. President Skezas asked that speakers address fact, not fiction, and alternate pro and con speakers. More than 100 plus folks showed up for this public forum.

Larry Minson described himself as a golfer and then detailed the frequent non-golfing use of the course by families. Folks also come for the enjoyment and the beauty of the creek. He said the quality of the playing surface was not ideal, but the setting was unique and referred to it as "Brooktrails' best." Removing tree cover will only cause more hardening of the soil. The greens already do not drain properly. We could replace the greens or install artificial turf as done at Santa Fe, NM. He said cutting the trees will not provide any benefit or agree with the Specific Plan's stated goal: "to promote environmental stewardship." He referred the Board to his written comments for the science behind his comments.

David Hughes, golf coach for Willits High School, said that Ron Runberg's requests were for things he knows the golf course needs and he supported Mr. Runberg as knowing what was best. He introduced several members of his golf team, which currently numbers around 15. They have won championships and brought local pride to town.

Marylynn Boosinger of Brooktrails read a letter (dated 02/24/09 — a copy provided to the General Manager) and discussed residents' forced subsidization of Golf Course costs during a water moratorium. She decried the defining of the topic by Mr. Runberg as "either the redwoods go or the golf course goes," saying alternative solutions have not been allowed into the debate. She asked that the redwoods not be destroyed for short-term gain.

Jack Wade of Brooktrails asked for details of the District's costs to support the Golf Course. Mr. Chapman said under GASB34 we had to report two figures (both correct). The first figure included depreciation and the total expense was approximately \$20,000.00, but then depreciation is backed out (non-cash item) and the cash outlay was more like \$8,000. Mr. Wade said he supported the proposal in order to keep the Golf Course going.

Jack Houseman, former Brooktrails resident, spoke of his logging and timber career experience and said he believed you could harvest the trees and also preserve the overall look of the course and make the course better and attract more players. He felt our course was in a great location; it is cooler in the summer; he felt this asset needed to be saved and it can be done and is a resource for young people.

Pat Griffin of Brooktrails asked the audience to read between the facts in the midst of this emotional issue. He said he was an environmentalist and not a golfer. He said he loved redwood trees, but golf was recreation in nature. He supported the tree removal.

Jerry Verdot, president of Willits Youth Football and involved with other youth programs in Willits, spoke about a fundraiser held at the course that allowed indigent kids to participate in his programs. As to the water, he said he worked with the Sheriff's Department and maybe we should do a survey and find out what homes were using what. He supported the tree cutting.

Leo Cid of Santa Rosa spoke about the drought and said we have to face reality. He felt we should leave the redwoods alone. He felt we should sit on any extra water saved from the golf course and save it. He said if the District wants to give potable water to the Golf Course in the event of rationing it should be put to public vote.

Tony Cavallari of Brooktrails said his life outside of work was his family, his cats, and the Golf Course. He said he felt the majority of attendants considered it a highlight of their lives.

An unidentified Brooktrails woman who lived above hole number 4 said she could hear the water running when the golf course was irrigated, and it didn't run very much. She felt the Board should consider what would happen if they turned it into a park.

Don Morris of Brooktrails read a new letter (02/24/09, copy given to General Manager). He said it is not a golf course planted with redwoods, but a redwood grove on an alluvial terrace engulfed by a golf course. He was against logging this grove. Allowing this would set a dangerous precedent, opening up the grove for future logging and potentially also parts of the Greenbelt. He referred to a battle 20 years ago over logging in the Redwood Park, where the District withdrew its plans due to strong opposition by a majority of residents. Maybe Brooktrails can be unique and set its own standards and be adapted to coexist with its environment. Mr. Morris mentioned he had yet to receive a definitive answer on the course's annual water use. As to logging, the size and average 130' height of the marked trees indicates not thinning or "tailoring" or maintenance, but actual logging of over 215,000 board feet. The course was thinned in 1995 with predominantly small trees cut. The total 800 signatures represented in the golf petition represented 5% of the greater Willits area. He then read an excerpt from the Brooktrails Redwood Guardian, Winter 1969, written at the second anniversary of Brooktrails, saying it was designed to be a site where land development and forest conservation met and became mutually beneficial, with the forest dedicated in perpetuity, where a recreation park would be carefully blended with a residential community, the first such in the United States: a preserved natural grove within a populated community.

Rebel Johnston of Brooktrails said every time she drives this road she sees big trees on logging trucks coming out of the reservation, but nobody's concerned about that. She said you all use the golf course and she believed the course and the trees were both good things and we could come up with a compromise.

Verne Ostrander of Sylvandale said he was a Golf Course member and loved golf. He said it was wrong and stupid to cut 50 trees.

Kathleen Pabalate tearfully said she and her husband's best relationship with their two sons was on the Golf Course. She said she didn't know what the big deal was, she was about relationships and not about trees. She repeated she didn't care about the trees or scientific evidence, but was concerned about the course and how it affected families.

Tom Van Lokeren of Willits, a golfer, said this was a tremendous dilemma. He agreed with someone who earlier had asked why it had to be "either/or." He had looked at the tagged trees and he said when they are gone, the golfers are going to be very sad; it will be an emasculated version of its former self. He said he warned the golfers they will feel a deep pain in their hearts when they play the course, because those trees may only be 5% of the grove but they are strategic for the aesthetics and they lift us up. It just won't feel as good as it used to when they are cut down, so there has to be a way, because either/or is unacceptable.

Gerald Viale of Brooktrails said this place years ago was all old-growth redwoods which were clearcut and burned at the turn of the century. We have a responsibility to manage the forest after that. He said the trees at the golf course will not be missed; the others will grow to a size that will take up that space. In the '90s they took it out and here we are again. We need to manage this forest; otherwise every tree will be gone from fire. He said we have to get more aggressive about clearing.

Levi Briggs of Willits from the Willits High School golf team said there is not a lot for them to do except sports. He said Willits used to have a bowling alley and a roller rink but now we have to go to Ukiah. He said the Golf Course and golf team truly bring pride to Willits.

Sandra Southard of Brooktrails said this environment cannot sustain this golf course any more and we need to accept this. The Runbergs are a wonderful family and she was very sorry but she felt we need to listen to what the environment is showing us. It would be a shame to destroy these trees that were meant to be here for thousands of years.

Mike Harrison, a golfer and Brooktrails resident, said our youth do need a place; he was proud of his son on the golf team and was glad he had a place to be around people who were mentors. He spoke about the value of relationships and hoped the Board would support Mr. Runberg's request.

Joanne Cavallari of Brooktrails said she wanted to address the issue of Brooktrails residents subsidizing facilities used by people outside of Brooktrails. She read from her letter (submitted 02/24/09,

copy given to General Manager) and said Brooktrails kids use the Willits schools, skate park, swimming pool and playgrounds, all paid for by Willits. She said Willits didn't complain about this and the reality is we are one community. She said the Willits Bypass will cause travelers to have fewer reasons to stop here and this will have an enormous effect on our local economy. Brooktrails doesn't get sales tax revenue, but the tax is the largest component of the Willits General Fund that pays for the recreational facilities. There will be fewer jobs for our kids. The Golf Course could give people a reason to stop and stay in Willits.

Roseann Blanchfield of Willits recalled the swimming pool and lake which are gone. She felt the Golf Course was wonderful for kids and families and she would hate to see it lost.

Palmer Runberg of Brooktrails, a junior golfer and son of Ron Runberg, said there was nothing else to do in Brooktrails but golf and sometimes he and friends played six days a week. Cole Jessup, nephew of Ron Runberg and also a golfer, said he wanted to be on the high school golf team.

Charlie Hol of Brooktrails said he used to golf at Northwood, very similar to here. He had brought several clients up to the Golf Course who have always thought it was great. He said he was here because he was interested.

William Boosinger of Brooktrails recalled how Summer Lake was loved and used by thousands, but when it became apparent it was hurting the salmon, we gladly let it go for their sake. He appreciated how important golf was to the community and was a sportsman himself. He had filmed a recent course walk and this would be shown on Channel 3 in a few days. He showed a video frame of Green #3 where six trees are marked for removal. He said they could have selected any of 51 trees to shoot, but he chose this one because it is very large and stands alone, and he could not figure out how it was harming Green #3, which looks very healthy and vibrant. If you go to Green #6 or #7 and you look at the thirteen 130', 100-year old redwoods slated to be removed, for him it doesn't work. He said "thinking globally" was to understand and appreciate the fragility of life on Earth and respect the things that are growing; to "act locally" was to at some point say, regarding your own backyard, no more; let us respect the natural environment. These trees have the potential to live some 2,000 years; they are among the rarest and tallest trees on Earth and some of the oldest living things on Earth.

Belinda Ingle, Golf Course member with a lot in Brooktrails, said we don't get a lot of sun on the greens, we're not asking to clear-cut, we're asking to remove a few trees. She said other golf courses cut and trim trees and we are not asking to do anything extraordinary.

Jim Schroder of Brooktrails, a golfer, said the golf course provides recreation, is an employer, a tax base for the community, and an asset for our youth. If it turns into a park it will become full of beer cans, 4-wheels, and kids hanging out smoking. He hoped we could keep the golf course open.

Maryl Morris of Brooktrails read her letter (submitted 02/24/09; copy given to General Manager) regarding the high levels of lymphoma among golf course groundskeepers, along with other cancers. She had requested information on the chemicals and quantities used on the Golf Course from the District office. The largest amount is fertilizer, followed by Scott's FF11 fungicide, whose active ingredient is a suspected carcinogen, followed by the herbicide Quicksilver which is toxic to fish. She said these applications are required to be reported to the County Agriculture Office. She felt this operation needs more oversight. She suggested further research to find an alternative approach to greens management — one not promoted solely by professional golfing organizations — that would allow the course to co-exist with its natural environment.

Kurt Johnson of Johnson's Quality Tree Care said he was contracted to bid on the job. In his walk-through with Ron Runberg, he said Mr. Runberg was really concerned about which trees he had to take and only wanted to take a few trees.

Jim Brown said everyone is saying it's just a small amount of people who use the course, but it's a stepping stone for the youth. He supported the golf course, the retirees and family members.

Ellen Drell of Willits Environmental Center said she was sorry it had come to a discussion of being pro-golf or pro-tree. She felt most people in the room were both. She walked the course today and was reminded it is becoming an extraordinary redwood grove. It was getting old and tall enough to affect your psychology and the connection people feel to family and friends while there. She suggested putting the decision off until alternatives are considered. Was it possible to leave the course as it is now and continue to golf? Brooktrails had something unique and someone had described it as Muir Woods North.

Tami Jorgensen of Willits said that we cannot afford to lose another recreational facility in the community environment. The Willits swimming pool is used by anyone who wants to use it and it costs more than a dollar to get in. She said we should not argue about money but should be supporting the things that are really indispensable. Willits has lost funding, and she asked the Board to please think of our youth and of those who will not retire to this area without a golf course.

Mike Aplet of Brooktrails said he had a quandary over this issue, as he liked trees a lot, but also knew a lot of the golfers, who gave to the community and rarely asked for anything in return. On the other hand, trying to grow a perfectly manicured piece of grass in a conifer forest is silly, and he felt there has to be some alternative. He would like to see the grove be managed long-term for old growth; whether that meant no tree could ever be taken down in the interim, he'd be willing to compromise on that. But he said he would like everyone to take another look at whether we really need to take some or all of these trees, and decide which ones we would save to turn into those giants for our grandchildren.

Ken Gott of Willits said he worked as a timber cruiser in the Forest Service in the 1970s, but that forest is so overgrown with salmon berry, etc., that no one really sees it and everyone stays on the manicured trails. He occasionally likes to golf at the course and so does his family. He said Brooktrails was clear-cut, and clear-cut again in the 1950s, and then they built Brooktrails. In the 1960s they decided to build a golf course and they left only 16" trees, Jack Harwood had told him. The trees are huge now because they water them. Redwood is the fastest growing tree in the world. He said he was upset by this, and it was stupidity to say something that reproduces itself so magnificently, and to take family values away. He said he expected the Board to do the right thing and to say that people are more important than anything else.

Don Grossman said he did not golf or live in Brooktrails. He said some people say it's just a minority that wants to golf, others that it's just a minority that wants to save the trees. He said we needed to come together as a community. He said a lot of people would be mad at the Board no matter what they decided. To maintain the golf course and the trees, whether you cut them or not, they have proven they will grow, and logging the 5% of the trees creates a safety net. That cut volume will be replaced in 5 - 7 years. He said nobody seems to go through the trees that are there and point out the devastation from 16 years ago — nobody notices it, and it grew back. Regarding 50 houses worth of water, you're talking about 14 acres of land that will be flattened, leveled, so houses can be built, and trees imported from somewhere else. He said the plusses are to recreate and the trees will grow back. If the golfers quit coming, the golf course will go away, but the golfers keep returning, so why not let them enjoy it and the trees will continue to grow. He said he was for the golf course and for the trees; by not managing both responsibly, you lose the best of both.

Wally Stahle of Brooktrails said if we go ahead with the cut, we should change the name to Stumptrails Golf Course, and then in 30 years we can also cut again the smaller trees that will continue to grow. It comes down to replacing a pristine redwood grove, and the only place around here where they grow in such profusion and size. He said it seems crazy to cut down masses of such trees to grow short grass. We could take a couple of years to do this, and check out the drainage issues, before we irreversibly do this. It all does belong to the community, so we should look into some alternatives before we make such a decision.

Ron Runberg, manager of the Golf Course, said the issue actually did start around March 2008 and at the time it was around 110 trees being discussed, which now is down to 40 stumps/51 trees. One thing it's not about is money; if any money is realized, it goes to the Board and they decide how it's disbursed. It's not about water, as in his contract, it says in any kind of drought situation the golf course loses and he accepts that. *At this point recording tape ran out; balance of Mr. Runberg's comments are from his notes.* It's not about him, as the golf course was here before him and will be here after him. It is not about who has lived here longer. It is not about the trees. 50 trees on 46 acres will have no significant difference.

He said he had reviewed the two petitions. The golf course petition had over 850 people and 220 Brooktrails residents. The other side had 212 people with 79 residents.

He said he had made fun of both sides name calling and wanted to propose one more name that covers both of us: selective environmentalist. We choose to be selective environmentalists when it is convenient for each of us. We don't all walk or bike, we drive; we don't live off the land in teepees but in houses made mostly of wood, and we use paper from trees. The Board will need to vote on their values. *At this point the comments of Betty Laskow were lost due to the camera being out of tape.*

[Note: Added by Mike Chapman: It was also during this taping interruption where Mike Chapman, General Manager, made a point of correction that neither he nor his wife had signed the golf petition. He stated that his wife was against the cutting of the trees. He said he would gladly spell out his views at the next board meeting, but that was different than signing a petition.]

After a new tape was inserted Diane Smalley of Brooktrails said that she felt the issue needed a CEQA process performed. She also asked for more time before the decision being made.

President Skezas thanked everyone for coming and hoped they could attend every meeting, as the Board is in the midst of making decisions that will cost more them more money than these trees could ever cost them, relating to costs with the City of Willits. He announced a joint committee would meet at this location on Monday night to discuss these. This situation will have an incredible effect on Brooktrails sewer rates due to the costs of the sewer plant. He assured the audience the Board would exercise due diligence in making decisions about the golf course, and for viable alternatives to maintain the greens. He referred to the mentions of the pool, the tennis courts, etc., and said he wanted to emphasize that all of those activities were commercial, except that the pool in the Ohl Grove had to be filled in as a danger. The District doesn't have a recreation budget that could rebuild those for us. He said this is very similar to the Fitness Center being closed because it doesn't make money, versus the school system. To him, this situation was similar. Where the idea of making it a park came up, he did not recall, but that became the hew and cry; he hoped we could find some alternative way to keep the golf course and as many of the trees as possible.

J. ADDITIONS TO FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

K. SPECIAL REPORTS

From Directors: *Inaudible due to audience noise*

From District Counsel: *Inaudible due to audience noise.*

From General Manager: None.

L. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Wally Stahle said his suggestion for another name on the Golf Course *inaudible due to audience noise*. President Skezas asked for quiet, as the meeting was not over. Don Morris asked for the agenda of the Planning Meeting. Robert Terry said the General Manager had put in extra effort the past 10 days or more relative to the Rubber Spillway and taking care of final adjustments to the spillway project.

M. ADJOURNMENT

Directors (*inaudible*) *moved* to adjourn; President Skezas adjourned the meeting at 9.10 p.m.

George Skezas, President

ATTEST:

MICHAEL V. CHAPMAN