

This paper is in response to comments made on NextDoor over the past months regarding the controversy over Hiawatha Golf Course in Minneapolis. I believe that many people try, in a good faith, to inform people of the facts, but the commentary is not always based on facts. So, here is my response to statements made. My response is based on information that I have learned over the past year as part of the effort by SaveHiawatha18 to save the golf course. If anyone has different information, please feel free to respond to me.

I have pulled the comments from NextDoor for context and shown them indented in italics.

*Cory Schaffhausen*

*You are welcome to direct people to SaveHiawatha18. I have reviewed these pages. Some questions are the same as I have asked the project team. I would suggest that this organization exercise more editorial oversight of the content. Several pages, for example, discussion of the Nokomis weir, simply aren't true. There are plenty of areas for disagreement without including inaccurate information.*

Please let us know where there is incorrect information on the SaveHiawatha18.com web-site. I think it is detrimental to any good conversation for people to just say that someone is putting out inaccurate information without delineating exactly what that misinformation is, and providing sources for information that is the correct information.

We have done extensive research and spent an enormous amount of time trying to understand this issue. We have read and re-read the Park Board documents. We have met with representatives from the Park Board, the DNR, the City of Minneapolis, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Hennepin County, the State Legislature, the USGS, and the MAC. We have also talked to experts in the field of engineering and hydrology to try and make sure our information is as accurate as possible.

Regarding the Nokomis weir, or any other issue, please talk to us about information that you feel is incorrect. We have had people contact us with extremely good information that definitely broadened our perspective. But, when you make statements that just trash us, without providing any concrete information to rebut our information, you are not furthering a productive conversation.

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*Jeremy Phillips*

*The golf course closed in 2014 after severe rainstorms caused \$3.5 million in flood damage. In 2015, Park Board reopened nine holes for play. Last year, the board worked with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to restore the full 18-hole course and allow flood control along the creek bordering the course.*

The posts on NextDoor have some mis-information regarding dates. Hiawatha Golf Course was closed on June 19, 2014 due to the flood. Hiawatha's driving range reopened 13 days later on July 2nd, 2014. Hiawatha's front 9 reopened 36 days after the flood on July 25th, 2014, and the back 9 reopened on June 5, 2016. Hiawatha's back 9 could likely have opened much earlier, but senior Park Board management were not proactive in quickly initiating the necessary repairs on this nine, which resulted in a lengthy delay in repairing this part of the golf course.

A cost of \$3.5 million in damage is mentioned which insinuates that this was the cost for Hiawatha Golf Course to be repaired. I don't know where this figure comes from. It may be total damage to the

region? But, the cost to reopen Hiawatha Golf Course was minimal. The driving range and front 9 were opened within a little over a month. I'm not sure how you would spend several million dollars in that time frame. If you talk to golf course personnel, they will tell you that the golf course was reopened by pumping the water out of the golf course and reseeding with grass seed, which is exactly what was done in the previous 2 floods in 1965 and 1987. Additionally, the Park Board requested and received a \$1.1 million FEMA award to help fix damage to Hiawatha Golf Course. As far as we can determine, none of this money has ever been spent to restore the golf course, so Hiawatha Golf Course recovered with minimal expense and without using this FEMA money. The FEMA money expires in July of 2018 and we understand that the Park Board can take a 10% discount on the FEMA award and use it on other Park Board items. If they do this, they cannot ask for any FEMA money again for future flood damage to the golf course. So, if this money is diverted, the Park Board has used Hiawatha Golf Course to get over \$900,000 for other Park Board expenditures, while not spending any of the money for its intended purpose (repair of Hiawatha Golf Course).

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*Matt Steele*

*Municipal golf courses were a loss to the MPRB Enterprise Fund for years prior to the major flood.*

*Cory Schaffhausen*

*Hiawatha master planning misinformation and facts*

*After all this time, I'm not sure one more attempt to correct misinformation will help at all, but considering the important work on the CAC and decisions being made this summer, misinformation should be corrected.*

*If anyone disputes my account, please comment with sources of new information related to these points.*

*Misinformation: Golf makes money, parks do not.*

*Facts: Part 1: The park golf system has lost money every year since 2012. This is a fact and can be verified on public park financial statements. Losses during 2014 and 2017 exceeded \$1M. Hiawatha as an individual course is not reported on the same financial statements, but recent FAQs have described an average loss over recent years specifically at Hiawatha.*

MPRB Year-End Financial Statements indicate that the expenses for Hiawatha Golf Course are generally about \$1.1 million per year. The revenue can fluctuate from about \$750,000 to \$1.5 million per year. In the 20 years ending in 2016 Hiawatha Golf Course averaged \$120,000 per year in profit, or \$2.4 million in profits in this 20 year period. This timeframe included when the golf course was temporarily closed. (Source: Park Board document, Hiawatha Golf Course Area Water Management Alternatives Assessment, Impact Assessment, 7/14/2017, p. 30.)

Also, according to the MPRB's graph, Figure 9, in the same document, it shows that total net revenue (profit) for all Minneapolis golf courses was approximately as listed under "Graph". I have also listed Cory Schaffhausen's numbers for 2010 to 2016. And, I culled the numbers for all golf courses from the MPRB's Year End Financial Statements for 2007-2016.

# Minneapolis Golf Courses Profit/Loss By Year

Graph

Corey S.

MPRB Year End Financial Statement

1997: \$1,300,000		
1998: \$1,500,000		
1999: \$1,450,000		
2000: \$1,750,000		
2001: \$1,700,000		
2002: \$1,100,000		
2003: \$1,000,000		
2004: \$1,450,000		
2005: \$1,050,000		
2006: \$ 950,000		
2007: \$ 800,000		\$467,337
2008: \$ 900,000		\$138,990
2009: \$ 750,000		\$76,558
2010: \$ 490,000	\$220,935	(\$168,657)
2011: \$ (200,000)	(\$402,826)	(\$877,251)
2012: \$ 700,000	\$326,627	\$68,699
2013: \$ (300,000)	(\$1,388,466)	(\$916,626)
2014: \$ (800,000)	(\$294,758)	(\$1,753,403)
2015: \$ (100,000)	(\$554,825)	(\$1,506,362)
2016: \$ (200,000)	(\$1,182,092)	(\$1,981,359)
2017:		(\$1,182,092) (Break-down by course was not provided)*

So, looking at the array of numbers, we have 3 totally different sets of numbers. Which numbers are correct????? I certainly don't know which numbers are correct. And, what does this say regarding the reality of their numbers? It makes me wonder what the real net revenues were.

Regardless of the massive differences in the numbers, the revenues started dropping in 2009. Should this be a surprise? What else happened in this time frame? Gas prices were the highest ever, the economy collapsed and we went into a very bad recession. I don't think that golf courses were the only victims of this calamity. It is understandable that golf course revenues would drop during this time frame as many people had no jobs or they had much less discretionary income. In 2014, another hit occurred with the flooding of Meadowbrook and Hiawatha Golf courses. With that, it appears that the Park Board started to talk about ridding the city of its golf courses, and they were reticent about investing any money in them. When you don't invest in your assets, your assets lose their value and end up losing revenue. For example, Hiawatha Golf Course was without a kitchen for an extensive period of time (they couldn't even make a hot dog). So, are the revenue problems a victim of public disinterest in golf, or are they are a victim of the trifecta of a recession, a one in 20 year flooding calamity and a disinterested Park Board?

A closer look at some of the details for some years reveals some unusual items that need to be taken into account:

2015-2016

An interesting item for 2015 and 2016 is an expense against the golf courses called ""Comp ABS, Post Emp Ben & Pen Liab Adj". This, apparently, reflects Workman's Compensation claims and other post employment benefits that were paid out in these years. In 2015 and 2016 these costs were exceedingly high which would heavily affect the profit/loss of the golf courses in these years. A spot check of the resolutions that authorized the payouts do not give any details about these payouts. It appears that some of this money is paid out of the ParkBoard Self-Insurance Fund, which is a fund for the whole Park Board. So, should this cost be added to the expenses of the golf courses? Here is the list of Comp ABS expenses placed against the golf courses for the past 10 years:

2007: \$	42,917
2008: \$	51,115
2009: \$	24,463
2010: \$	53,102
2011: \$	76,987
2012: \$	74,935
2013: \$	(59,579)
2014: \$	4,756
2015: \$	574,253
2016: \$	1,038,470

A 2016 MPRB Memo also delineates another impact to the budget in the Enterprise Fund which is the increase in the minimum wage. The anticipated impacts were: 2014-\$7,000, 2015-\$32,000, 2016-\$31,000, 2017-not given, 2018-\$83,000. This was before the \$15 minimum wage increase in Minneapolis. Source: 2016 MPRB Budget Issues document. I am guessing that these wage increases are less likely to affect the Park Board revenue from the refectories because wages (and any increases) are the responsibility of the private companies that run the refectories. But, it will affect any Enterprise budget that directly hires its staff, like golf courses. (See below for a further discussion of the revenue of the refectories.)

2017

The 2017 unaudited budget declaration, p. 13, states "Expenditures were increased by \$1,000,000 at Theodore Wirth Regional Park related to site improvements for the Adventure and Welcome Center and golf course. See Board Approved Resolutions 2016-249 (Donation Agreement), 2016-250 (Operation Agreement), 2016-251 (Lease Agreement) and 2016-252 (Golf Course Changes and Improvements). The new Adventure and Welcome Center is for the Loppet winter skiing and bike trails, and also replaces the Par 3 golf course building with the new Wirth Adventure and Welcome Center building which is a facility for the Loppet activities. According to Resolution 2016-252, \$89,000-\$97,900 of the \$1 million expenditure was approved for renovating the golf course bunkers. The rest of the money was spent because "modification of the golf course is necessary to allow for the implementation of the Wirth Adventure and Welcome Center, which will occupy the location of existing holes #17 and #18, as per the approved Theodore Wirth Regional Park Master Plan". So, the majority of the cost (\$900,000) is not to enhance the golf course, but to accommodate Loppet activities: cross-country skiing, bike paths and trails. To make this accommodation, several holes on the 18-hole and 9-hole golf courses were moved and reconstructed. Where was the \$900,000 expensed? Should these costs be expensed against the golf course budget or against the winter sports budget, since these changes were not required by the golf courses? Along with the construction costs, the Theodore Wirth Golf Courses (18-

Hole and Par 3 courses) were under construction during 2017, so the revenues will naturally be down for these golf courses (due to construction required to support NON-GOLF activities).

While talking about winter sports activities, part of the Enterprise Budget, here are the profit/(loss) figures for Winter Activities from the Annual Reports:

	Revenue	Expenses	Profit/(Loss)
2007	\$98,131	\$376,359	(\$278,228)
2008	\$101,528	\$260,050	(\$158,522)
2009	\$164,258	\$262,661	(\$98,403)
2010	\$78,351	\$112,191	(\$33,840)
2011	\$43,591	\$95,075	(\$51,484)
2012	\$188,422	\$437,715	(\$249,293)
2013	\$250,346	\$592,134	(\$341,788)
2014	\$182,008	\$656,759	(\$474,751)
2015	\$118,449	\$851,895	(\$733,446)
2016	\$100,467	\$773,905	(\$673,438)
2017	not yet reported		

As you can see, Winter Sports Activities have had a loss every year for the past 10 years, and the losses have become larger. So, the losses for these Enterprise Fund activities have been supported by other revenue in the Enterprise Fund. And, yet, the MPRB spent almost \$1 million in new money in 2017 to further support these activities.

And, two other additional expenses were added to the golf budget for 2017:

- 1) \$90,546 for repair of the Columbia Golf Course Bridge.
- 2) \$567,122 for FEMA reimbursable repairs to Meadowbrook Golf Course. Meadowbrook was reopened last year (2017) after being closed for 3 years. It had FEMA reimbursable repairs that totaled \$567,122. The Park Board indicates that in 2017, they added the expenditure of \$567,122 "for FEMA reimbursable restoration expenses at Meadowbrook Golf Course" to the golf budget. It is unclear from the 2017 unaudited report whether FEMA reimbursed the Park Board for these expenditures in 2017, or if the Park Board will be reimbursed in 2018. If it is the latter, then the expenses for 2017 show a higher loss than was actually true, because this money will be reimbursed in 2018.

So, the forthcoming numbers for 2017 will have many caveats that need to be taken into consideration when evaluating the profit/loss numbers.

Another question I would have for the Park Board, "What is the correlation between the rise in greens fees and the decline in number of rounds played over the last 20 years?" Greens fees have consistently risen over the last 30 years. I know that in the mid-1980's 9-hole league fees for a round of golf at Majestic Oaks was \$6.50 including tax. At Gross Golf course my league members are now paying \$20.00 plus tax in 2018. So, is the real decrease in rounds of golf because of a lack of interest in golf or because of a large rise in the cost of golf? I have friends who would like to golf but don't because it has become much more expensive. And, most people admit that the middle class is shrinking. If the number of rounds are going down, why isn't the Park Board lowering prices during the unfilled time slots to make sure those slots are filled so that they bring in more revenue?

One other item regarding finances for Hiawatha Golf Course. During 2017 the golf course was fully open, and many golfers say it was in great condition. Yet, the Park Board Superintendent set the highest greens fees at a rate several dollars lower than the other Minneapolis Golf Courses. We don't know her reasoning, but it did artificially depress the revenue collected on Hiawatha Golf Course in 2017. So, if you see the revenue for Hiawatha Golf Course for 2017, take the number of 18 hole rounds played and multiply that by \$3 to \$4. Then, add that to the net revenue and see what the net revenue might have been if she hadn't done that.

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*Cory Schaffhausen*

*Hiawatha master planning misinformation and facts*

*Facts: Part 2: Creating a new park will cost about the same over 20 years. If the course is redeveloped, the long term costs (\$27M) are estimated to be similar over a 20 year period compared to keeping the course (\$26M) because the course will also require capital investments and will have much higher operating expenses. Part 3: Golf revenues may increase in the future (or decrease), but Hiawatha specifically will not make a profit if it floods.*

## **Comparison of Golf Course Retention vs. Reduced Pumping Scenario**

Regarding the costs of redevelopment of the Hiawatha property, please read Park Board document, MPRB Hiawatha Golf Course - Benefits and Costs Comparative Screening, July 14, 2017. Page 5 gives a diagram of the MPRB's analysis of costs and revenue over 20 years.

	Golf Course Retained	Reduced Pumping Scenario
Construction Cost	\$15,000,000	\$27,800,000
Operations Costs	\$24,000,000	\$17,000,000
Expected Revenue	\$13,000,000	\$18,000,000
Environmental Benefits	\$24,000,000	\$74,000,000

### **Construction Costs**

Page 7 of the document says that the values for construction costs were developed in 2017 dollars "assuming that less than a 5% project definition is available at this time." This means that "the selected accuracy range for these point estimates is -25% to +50%." So, the construction costs are wildly speculative, and based on very little project definition. Construction cost for the reduced pumping scenario could be anywhere from \$20.85 million to \$41.7 million. Construction costs for the Golf Course would be anywhere from \$11.25 million to \$22.5 million. Note: The construction cost for the golf course is, mainly, reconstruction of the clubhouse, not the golf course itself. If the golf course and clubhouse are left as is, the construction costs would be \$0 if the golf course is retained as it now is.

### **Revenue**

The Park Board estimates that revenues for the golf course would be \$13 million over 20 years. This would be \$650,000 per year on average. In looking at the actual revenues for the golf course from the Park Board's Year End Financial Statements on their web-site, over the past 11 years you can see that there were only 2 years that the golf course had revenue at that level or lower. These were the years that the golf course was partially closed due to the flood. So, these revenue projections for the golf course seem exceedingly stingy. Whereas, the projections for the reduced flooding scenario of \$750,000 per year would seem to be a much more subjective revenue stream on property that is likely to be less usable due to being partially flooded. It seems that the MPRB has given overallly dismal

projections for the golf course while giving overall optimistic projections for the reduced pumping scenario. Note: Both plans include the expanded restaurant, so both plans produce the same revenue from the restaurant/clubhouse.

Here is a list of the revenue generated from Hiawatha Golf Course by year from MPRB Year End Financial reports:

	Golf Course	Learning Center	Total Revenue	Profit/Loss
2007	\$1,163,089	\$140,776	\$1,303,865	\$117,277
2008	\$1,183,274	\$131,875	\$1,315,149	\$ 58,847
2009	\$1,202,073	\$136,280	\$1,338,353	\$143,274
2010	\$1,089,786	\$127,183	\$1,216,969	\$ 20,369
2011	\$ 913,600	\$ 98,871	\$1,012,471	(\$112,995)
2012	\$ 987,397	\$107,633	\$1,095,030	(\$ 22,041)
2013	\$ 656,218	\$ 94,594	\$ 750,812	(\$401,064)
2014	\$ 416,943	\$ 84,398	\$ 501,341**	(\$696,557)
2015	\$ 339,515	\$102,942	\$ 442,457**	(\$448,648)
2016	\$ 649,943	\$114,563	\$ 764,506	(\$266,825)
2016*	\$ ???,???	\$???,???	\$ 765,845	(\$123,486)
2017*	\$ ???,???	\$???,???	\$ 908,354	(\$208,384)

\* Financial results received by SaveHiawatha18 from the Park Board with more detailed 2017 financials.

\*\* Golf Course partially closed.

### Operations Costs

Estimated operations costs of \$24 million for the golf course over the next 20 years align with costs for the past 10 years of \$1.1-\$1.2 million per year. Operations costs for the reduced pumping scenario are highly subjective since it is unclear what will really end up on the property, so it is hard to know if they are realistic, but they will probably be less than the golf course because there will be less usable property.

	Golf Course	Learning Center	Total
2007	\$1,112,217	\$74,371	\$1,186,588
2008	\$1,105,873	\$50,429	\$1,156,302
2009	\$1,131,329	\$63,750	\$1,195,079
2010	\$1,136,923	\$59,737	\$1,196,660
2011	\$1,074,934	\$50,532	\$1,125,466
2012	\$1,032,321	\$84,750	\$1,117,071
2013	\$1,095,796	\$56,080	\$1,151,876
2014	\$1,155,601	\$42,297	\$1,197,898
2015	\$ 852,921	\$38,184	\$ 891,105
2016	\$ 977,180	\$54,120	\$1,031,300
2016*	\$ ???,???	\$??,???	\$ 889,331
2017*	\$ ???,???	\$???,???	\$1,116,738

\* Financial results received by SaveHiawatha18 from the Park Board with more detailed 2017 financials.

## Environmental Benefits

The projections for environmental benefits are very subjective, so it is hard to determine if these numbers have any validity. One concern that SaveHiawatha18 has expressed is how pollution can be reduced under the reduced pumping scenario when the golf course and the current lake become one. This would seem to reduce the sequestration of pollution that now occurs with the current pond system on the golf course, thus, lessening the perceived environmental benefits from the reduced pumping scenario. See further discussion of this topic later in this document.

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*Cory Schaffhausen*

*Hiawatha master planning misinformation and facts*

*Misinformation: Summer concessions cannot replace revenue from golf.*

*Facts: The summer concessions in total generated \$1.5M in profit in 2017. A portion of this money goes to the general fund to contribute to overall system needs (in addition to profit from parking and use and events permitting). A portion of profit from other enterprise units goes to cover the losses from the golf system. (Opinion: if residents are going to buy \$8 hotdogs I think they should at least know how much of this goes to subsidize golf).*

I hear many people say that the restaurants (refectories ) make lots of money. It is true that they are profitable. But, they will always be profitable as long as private firms are willing to run them. This is because, as I understand it, the Park Board franchises these enterprises to private companies. The Park Board collects a percentage of the revenue per this agreement, while the private companies bear total responsibility for taking on any losses from running of these businesses. And, the responsibility of capital investment in the buildings is also partially or totally the responsibility of the private vendor, not the Park Board. The high cost of capital investment in the building was one of the main reasons given for a private vendor pulling out of their running of one of these restaurants at the end of 2017. So, under this arrangement, the Park Board should never lose money; it is only a question of how much money they will make each year. The total burden of profit or loss is placed on the private firm that runs the business. Plus, these restaurants do not do anything to provide Recreational activities to the public (the second part of Parks and Recreation); they just provide another restaurant among many. Therefore, it seems unfair to compare the golf courses to the refectories, since golf courses are expected to generate enough revenue to cover operating expenses and necessary capital investments, whereas, the Park Board has little or no responsibility with respect to refectories for capital investments or incurred losses. Plus, the golf courses provide a unique recreational opportunity to the public, unlike the restaurants.

On a related topic, over the years the golf course revenues have paid for many other activities. The Park Board had a long-term Resolution that allowed the Park Board to use excess revenue from the Minneapolis Golf Courses to pay off bonds for park improvements for non-golf activities. And, one Park Board Commissioner has personally told me that they have been taking money from the golf courses for years to pay for other Park Board initiatives. And, I don't see anything wrong with this. When one area of the Park system makes a profit, it is good that that it can be used to pay for other initiatives. So, if the restaurants lose their private vendors and have to be run by the Park Board, and lose money in one year, and the golf courses make money in that same year, are people saying that the golf courses should not subsidize the restaurants? This doesn't sound very reasonable to me. In looking at the last 20 years of golf course revenue, it seems reasonable to me that, after providing extra money for other activities for so many years, maybe the golf courses should get some help when they hit a bump in the road?

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*Cory Schaffhausen*

*Hiawatha master planning misinformation and facts*

*Misinformation: The golf course is adding pollution to nearby water.*

*Facts: A majority of the pollution impairing Lake Hiawatha originates upstream from Minnehaha Creek. However, redeveloping the course would still allow significant reductions in pollution added to local waters. Currently, storm water from a large portion of south Minneapolis drains directly into Lake Hiawatha which adds pollution originating from our community (e.g. trash and phosphorus). Trash can be removed even if the course remains, but if a portion of the course is restored to wetlands to filter this storm water, the phosphorus can be significantly reduced. (Opinion: complaining about pollution from upstream is hypocritical unless our community takes steps to reduce our own pollution).*

Hiawatha Golf Course, as it stands today, already performs a filtering function for 66 million gallons of storm sewer water that is pumped onto the golf course each year via a 2012 storm water diversion project at 43rd St. and 19th Avenue. This storm water is cleansed by flowing through 5 ponds on the golf course before it is pumped into Lake Hiawatha. It is questionable whether flooding of the golf course under the reduced pumping scenario will truly prevent pollution from entering Lake Hiawatha. If the golf course is flooded, it will be done by breaking the berm and allowing water to come onto the golf course from Lake Hiawatha. Once this connection is made, water will freely pass back and forth between the current lake and the golf course. So, the pollution will not stay in the golf course; it will flow back and forth as the water level in the lake rises and falls. So, you do not have a good sequestration of the pollution in this scenario. Plus, current best practice is to mitigate the phosphorus pollution at the source, not at the end destination. The reduced pumping scenario tries to mitigate the phosphorus pollution at the end destination. This includes the remeandering of Minnehaha Creek which, according to Park Board Documents will only reduce phosphorus coming into Lake Hiawatha from Minnehaha Creek by about 3%. Your comment indicates that Minneapolis has not taken steps to mitigate its own pollution. The current golf course is providing this service right now for 66 million gallons of storm sewer water that comes from the streets of Minneapolis. Also, this storm water diversion project is part of the reason why there has been such a large increase in the pumping of water from the golf course to the lake; this water was intentionally put onto the golf course in 2012 by the City of Minneapolis and the Park Board so that it could be cleansed and passed on to Minnehaha Creek and then to the Mississippi River. The level of pumping into Lake Hiawatha was not a surprise; it was partly a result of intentional actions by the City of Minneapolis to rid the city of increasing levels of storm sewer water due to 20 years of diversion projects that separated storm sewer water from the sanitary sewer system.

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*Cory Schaffhausen*

*Hiawatha master planning misinformation and facts*

*Misinformation: Reducing pumping will flood homes*

*Facts: Part 1: The proposed change is not to reduce pumping alone, it is to create a new dewatering system that only reduces groundwater levels near to homes, rather than the entire course area. Models have already shown how new dewatering systems can lower groundwater near homes, even to levels lower than they are today, with lower pumping volumes. The exact design and target levels will be finalized with input from the master plan process. Part 2: The Nokomis area has seen groundwater impacts, and the city is sharing reports about ongoing studies on a city website. These studies*

*currently suggest there are regional changes impacting groundwater far beyond Nokomis and the weir. These issues may contribute to changes near Hiawatha, but many issues are independent and are not relevant to Hiawatha. Nokomis does not have a dewatering system and Hiawatha will continue to have a dewatering system regardless of changes at the course.*

The modeling that was done is via software. As a computer software professional, I know that the results are only good as the inputs and software. Granted, these models may well be quite good, but in looking at the parameters used, I found that they have not modeled for the 2014 catastrophic flood. They have only modeled for normal conditions. As a person whose family owns one of the at risk homes, I have researched this extensively because, if it fails, my family will be the ones that suffer. The Park Board Assistant Superintendent acknowledged to me that once the current pumping stops, the groundwater levels will GO UP in the neighborhoods, and one Park Board document (Hiawatha Golf Course Area - Water Management Alternatives, pp. 14-15) states that the groundwater levels will go up as far away as Powderhorn Lake. If Powderhorn Lake is going to see increased groundwater levels, I am guessing that Sibley Park may also. To mitigate this increase in groundwater levels, they plan to install 2 pumps, one at 44th and Longfellow across from our house and another at 43rd St and 17th avenue S. They will also have to pump more water from Powderhorn Lake. And, where is this water going? The water from the near neighborhood is going back into the new Lake Hiawatha swamp. The Longfellow Avenue pump will pump water, perhaps, about 30-50 feet away, and the 19th Avenue pump will pump water into the 43rd St. storm sewer pipe which goes to Lake Hiawatha. Plus, if you look at their diagrams, almost half (47%) of the water that will be pumped is coming from the new Hiawatha swamp, not the neighborhoods. So, just like with the golf course pumping, they are pumping water in a circle. And, they are drawing water towards the homes rather than the current scenario which allows the water to flow away from the homes for 4-5 blocks. Assuming that these pumps can adequately rid the neighborhoods of water, what happens if one of these new pumps fails? If the golf course pump fails, the golf course is temporarily flooded. If the neighborhood pumps fail, I totally believe that the homes will be flooded. And, at the last Hiawatha Golf Course CAC meeting, someone asked the Assistant Superintendent if the Park Board was guaranteeing that the new pumping scenario would protect the homes. His answer was, " NO, nobody can guarantee that".

Regarding the modeling that was done by the Park Board, they have only done modeling of the groundwater and surface water levels for normal conditions. They have not modeled the property for the catastrophic flood scenario, which has happened in 1965, 1987 and 2014. Why? I understood them to say that they feel it is not necessary. I beg to differ. The biggest reason to do modeling at the catastrophic flood level of 816.2 feet is that, once the golf course is flooded under the reduced pumping scenario, you have lost flood storage capacity. So, when the next big flood occurs, there will be less capacity for the park property to hold the same level of water inundation. So, where will the water go? I have seen where water went from all 3 big floods (1968, 1987 and 2014), and it came almost up to Longfellow Avenue each time. In the reduced pumping scenario, according to the Park Board's map, water will already cover this same area. So, this area that handled the flood waters will no longer be available; it will already be used up. With less flood capacity, the water has to go past this area and across the street. And, it will also overwhelm or cover the pump on 44th and Longfellow, making the pump useless for protecting the homes. So, when it is most needed, the pump will be useless, just as the pump was useless on the golf course in 2014 when it was under water.

So, unless I get more information that proves the safety of the reduced pumping plan, I would rather rely on 70 years of history that has shown the current set-up has kept the homes safe and DRY.

Regarding what is being studied at Lake Nokomis, all water in the Minnehaha Creek watershed west of Lake Hiawatha and up to Lake Minnetonka ends up in Lake Hiawatha. This includes all of the water that comes into Lake Nokomis. Please look at a map of the Minnehaha Creek watershed and see how the size of the watershed compares to the size of Lake Hiawatha. It is amazing to see how tiny Lake Hiawatha is compared to the whole watershed, but it is still handling all water coming from the west. It is amazing and appalling!! Also, Rep. Jean Wagenius found out that the upper watershed is losing their deep water aquifer reserves whereas the deep water aquifer reserves in South Minneapolis are in good shape. This appears to be an indicator that too much water is being lost in the watershed upstream, which needs to be resolved. If measures were taken to resolve this problem, it could also take pressure off of Lake Hiawatha for handling all of this water. Also, the Park Board and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District have done a project similar to the Hiawatha project at Lake Nokomis where they installed ponds on formerly dry land. The MCWD staff admit that they have been unable to maintain these ponds as the area seems to be retaining more and more water. It is believed that this, and the high water levels of Lake Nokomis (which is managed by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District) may well be a contributory cause of all the water problems occurring with Lake Nokomis homes. It seems to me that the MPRB and MCWD should take this as a signal that they need to figure out what is happening there before they do a similar, but larger, project at Lake Hiawatha.

There is much talk about other uses on the golf course property, including a food forest. I'm not sure if any of these people have ever spent any time on the golf course property. If they had, they would understand that this property is a flood plain and with increased water on the property, it is unlikely to sustain orchards, since most trees don't grow in a swamp. My family has had fruit trees on our property since 1968 across the street from the golf course. These trees have not, generally, done very well. There were 6 fruit trees when we bought the property in 1968: an apple tree, a crab-apple tree, 2 pear trees, and 2 ornamental crab-apple trees. The crab-apple died within ten years, and we are on our 3rd apple tree, which is currently dying. One pear tree died many years ago, and the remaining pear tree survives, but looks like death warmed over. It produces pears, but unless they are sprayed, they become severely blighted and most are inedible. Plus, in August, the bees are everywhere in the yard. They love the apples and pears, which makes the fruit dangerous to pick, especially after the birds have pecked them. Will the City of Minneapolis take on the responsibility of people picking fruit at the risk of getting stung and having an anaphylactic reaction? A food forest is a nice thought, but the flooded golf course property is, most likely, a totally unsuitable property for this type of endeavor.

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*Cory Schaffhausen*

*I never said the purpose of the Park and Recreation Board is to make money, however, the Park system includes the Enterprise Fund to oversee all enterprises, including golf. The enterprise fund does not oversee bike paths and playgrounds. They are different and are funded through the general fund. One is treated as an enterprise and is expected to be self-sustaining. The others are not. In other words, parks are not meant to make money but golf courses are. My feelings have nothing to do with it, this is by design. If the general public is in favor of subsidizing golf or using tax dollars, then this system could be changed.*

I don't believe that any entity in the Park system is inherently expected to make a profit. The Park Board is a non-profit organization. The whole needs to pay for itself every year through revenue, grants and money provided by other government agencies. But, the expectation that any particular entity within the park system should always make a profit seems like an erroneous assumption. Generally,

the Enterprise fund has generated a profit which has helped pay for many activities covered in the General Fund, but that doesn't mean it has to consistently make a profit. And, Winter Sports activities, which are in the Enterprise Fund, have not made money in the past 10 years, so should those activities be ended?

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*Matt Steele*

*These discussions keep popping up with people defending the 18 hole golf course... But it seems so irrelevant, since I have yet to hear of a way to keep the 18 hole golf course alongside a significant reduction or elimination of pumping. Nature has already made the decision.*

Nature did not make this decision; the Park Board did. That is the issue. You are correct in that the 18-hole golf course cannot exist under the reduced pumping scenario. But, the Park Board engineering study even says that, "We also determined that the pumping of surface groundwater from the golf course to Lake Hiawatha was not impacting the deep groundwater aquifers in the region, but rather, just recirculating the surface groundwater inflows from the golf course ponds to Lake Hiawatha and back. Although energy intensive, the existing pumping is likely to have minimal ecological impact." (Source: February 2017, MPRB Stormwater, Surface Water, and Groundwater Analysis Summary, p. 47) All reasons that I have seen for the need to reduce pumping have been debunked. I am still waiting to hear a reason why we have to reduce pumping. Last summer, one (1) DNR employee said that the DNR prefers the reduced pumping scenario, but higher-level DNR officials stated publically at the State hearing last fall at the Capitol that the DNR has no stance on the level of pumping that can be allowed. Thus, higher-level DNR officials publically backed off of that statement, angering some at the Park Board including Superintendent Miller. The DNR says that they are waiting for a request for a pumping permit, and will work with the Park Board on whatever proposal the Park Board presents.

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*Matt Steele*

*Also, it's time for MPRB to divest from Meadowbrook, Gross, and Wirth golf courses... They aren't even within the City of Minneapolis, yet the City of Minneapolis taxpayers (and positive line items on the enterprise fund) subsidize golf outside city borders. We ought to accept offers for non-Minneapolis courses and offer first right of refusal for the hosting municipality to match a bid and buy the course. Hiawatha is a slightly different story, since it's a Minneapolis park asset inside the City of Minneapolis. But with waning interest in golf and the reality that pumping cannot continue as it has, it seems only reasonable to consider a wide range of uses alongside golf for this prime urban parkland.*

I have been around and on Hiawatha Golf Course for over 60 years. This property was built on a swamp, and is far from being prime parkland. If it is returned to its previous state by flooding it, you will not have a park; you will have a swamp that is likely not usable to anyone. This property is unbuildable. I had a conversation with a golf course employee a few weeks ago, and he told me that when the fences were put in for the driving range, they tested the land to determine how deep they needed to go to hit bedrock to stabilize the fence posts. They gave up after 40 feet because they couldn't hit bedrock. They then had to put in posts with huge concrete bases that are now tilting. This is how unstable this property is when it is fairly dry. If it is flooded, it will most likely, not support any activities; it will be one big swamp. So, for those who think it will be a nice park, you need to remember that the parkland that you see is only there because it is kept dry by pumping. And, it will

only stay that way if they continue to pump at the current levels. I have aerial photos of Rice Lake prior to the building of the golf course. Two of them show the property heavily flooded, like what occurred in 2014. Please look at the on-line photos of the flooded golf course in 2014. That is, probably, a good representation of what the property will look like much of the time under the reduced pumping scenario, except with no trees. In the old photos, there were very few trees on the property because they can't grow on a swamp.

One other personal note. I live just a few blocks outside of the City of Minneapolis, and golf at the Minneapolis Golf Courses on a weekly basis. Therefore, I pay fees that contribute to the upkeep of these properties just as do citizens of Minneapolis. When the golf courses generate a profit, some of that money comes from non-residents like me who pay to use the golf courses. And, that money goes to pay for other non-revenue activities in the Minneapolis Park system. And, as a kid who grew up across the street from Hiawatha Golf Course, I never begrudged the fact that I couldn't go on the golf course when people were golfing. As a kid, I made money selling kool-aid to the golfers, and many kids in the neighborhood made money selling golf balls. We went over there and slid on the hills in the winter, and cross-country skied. And, when I became a teenager, I learned to golf at Hiawatha. I really have a hard time trying to understand some of the very negative attitudes towards specific activities, just because they aren't the activities that a particular person wants to participate in. The successes of and accolades for the Minneapolis Park system are because it offers such a rich diversity of activities and experiences to people in the whole Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.

And, as a part of this process, I have done some research as to how the Minneapolis Park System became what it is today. It is in large part due to the vision and efforts of Theodore Wirth, long-time Superintendent. He is credited with putting the "Recreation" into Parks and Recreation. The best story that I read was what he did during his first year as superintendent. The parks all had "Keep Off The Grass" signs. He had them all removed, because he wanted kids to play in the parks. He, also, was the main force behind creating the golf courses for the City of Minneapolis. These golf courses are a huge part of his legacy. I also found out why the Hiawatha Golf Course clubhouse was built in the style of a Swiss Chalet. Theodore Wirth was born in Switzerland, and he built at least 4 buildings in this form: his Park Board residence (now on the National Historic Register), and 3 golf course clubhouses (Hiawatha, Wirth and Columbia).

So, Theodore Wirth had an expansive vision for what a park system should be, which was something for everyone, and especially, a wide variety of activities for the kids. We need to think long and hard before we begin to tear apart this legacy, and turn "Parks and Recreation" into "Parks and Restaurants."