

Guide to Holding your Public Meeting



Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association

CONTENTS

1. Advance Preparation

- Meeting preparation
- Legislative requirements
- Choose your date/meeting location/newspaper posting and notifications.
- Technology considerations
- Room set up
- Deciding who will present
- Sharing information

2. Documentation

- Handouts
- Presenting the Annual Report
- Answering questions
- Preparing promotional material

3. Hints and Tips

4. Checklist & Templates

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1. Advance Preparation

Prepare a good Annual Report

The preparation of your annual report is the prelude to holding a successful meeting. Please remember that this report will need to be presented verbally by either yourself or someone at your club. Try to eliminate phrases such as “didn’t get that extra app in due to weather” or “wanted to do three applications instead of two” in the reasons for change in use section of the Annual Report. Also, the act specifically refers to “minimizing” pesticide use, NOT “reducing” it. Take a look at the reports already filed with the IPM council on their website to assist in preparing your report, wording and presentation that is positive will be the most effective.

Legislative requirements

The legislation states:

Public Meetings

As set out in sections 20 and 21 of O. Reg. 63/09, starting January 1, 2012, the owner or operator of the registered or accredited golf course must notify the public when the annual report is available for inspection by:

- *Publishing a notice in the newspaper, and*
- *Notifying all occupants of abutting properties and properties within 100 metres of the golf course.*
- *The owner or operator of a golf course or his or her representative must attend and present the report at a public meeting held before December 1st in each calendar year.*

Choosing your meeting date/ location/newspaper posting, and notifications

It is important that you make your meeting location choice based on your own Club’s requirements. This can be determined ahead of time by requesting an RSVP when providing notification of your public meeting.

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MULTIPLE CLUBS AT ONE VENUE

You may want to contact other small clubs in the area and get together to hold your meeting for the sake of cost savings. Keep in mind that attendees of the meeting may compare annual reports from one club to the next.

You may wish to designate one club in your group, the one that can accommodate the size of group you expect, and has the appropriate venue to hold the meeting. Or alternatively you could choose to rent a facility in a location central to all clubs.

You can consider sharing the cost of any rentals such as the facility, AV equipment etc, that may be required and pool the resources you each have.

If you are a club with substantial residential areas adjacent to your club, or your club feels that you will have a large contingent attend your meeting, you will most likely have to hold your own presentation and the option to partner with another club won't exist.

In this case, you will have to decide whether to hold the meeting on site at your club, or at a rental facility.

ON-SITE or OFF SITE?

There are advantages to both scenarios.

- 1) If you decide to hold your meeting on-site, you can use the opportunity to enhance community relations, host your "neighbours" as guests, provide them with light snacks and drinks, and promote your facility to them.
- 2) It is recommended by the Ministry that you do however choose a location close to your club, to allow those who live in close proximity to the club, to attend.

This is a choice that you will have to make somewhat based on assumptions, taking into consideration your presenters' ability to speak comfortably in front of a larger group, run an orderly meeting and manage any contentious issues that may arise. In any event, you have the right to close the meeting once your obligations have been fulfilled.

DATE

So now you have selected your location, you need to set a date for your meeting. Again, you may wish to consult with neighbouring courses, find out when they intend to hold their meetings.

You are obligated to hold your meeting prior to December 1st in each calendar year.

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NOTIFICATIONS & DELIVERY METHODS

Once your date is selected, you must post a notice of meeting in your local newspaper no more than 15 days prior to the meeting and that same notice of meeting must be delivered to the abutting and neighbouring properties within the same time period.

The Ministry states that the notice in the newspaper should be at least 10CM (4 inches) in width or the nearest equivalent in column layout.

It is important to note that there is flexibility within this 15 day time period. You could in fact provide 5, 3 or even 1 day(s) notice and still be in compliance with the legislation, but you will have to consider the time it will take to deliver the notices and schedule your meeting accordingly.

DELIVERY METHODS

There are various methods by which you can deliver the notice of meeting

- 1) Personally: You must hand the notice to the resident of the property; you cannot leave it in the mail box.
- 2) By Mail: The notice must be addressed to the person to whom it is required to be given at the address for the person.
- 3) Courier: The envelope must show the sender's name, address and telephone number.
- 4) Email: The notice of meeting can be an attachment in a portable format such as pdf or html.

The following information should all be included in the body of the email.

- a. the name of the recipient,
- b. the sender's name, address, telephone number, fax number if any, and email address.
- c. the date and time that the email is sent and the name and telephone number of the sender
- d. telephone contact information in case of technical difficulties

The receiver must also provide an email to the sender indicating receipt of the email.

- 5) Fax: The fax transmission must include a cover sheet indicating
 - a. The name of the recipient
 - b. The sender's name address, telephone number and fax number
 - c. The date and time of the transmission

"Conditions of Notice Delivery" which is Ontario Regulation 228/07.

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It is also important to note the following:

“if more than 50 persons must be notified in order to meet the requirement in subparagraph 3 ii of subsection (1) and the Director is satisfied that it would be unduly onerous to give notice in accordance with clause 38 (1) (a) or (b) of the Act or Ontario Regulation 228/07 (Service of Documents) made under the Act, the notice is sufficiently given if it is given in a manner approved by the Director. O. Reg. 63/09, s. 20 (2).”

If your course fits into this category, it would be advisable to write to the Director and make application for an exemption; you will need to be prepared to prove that it will be unduly onerous to comply with the notice requirements, given the large number of residents you will have to contact.

If you have more than 50 properties surrounding your course that have to be notified, you will need to send a letter (Template of letter will be posted on the OGSA Website) requesting special dispensation.

You will however still have to give notice to all those properties, but you will be able to address the notice “dear occupant” and will be able to leave it in the mailbox as opposed to actually handing it to the occupant.

In the case of apartment buildings, you must seek permission from the building superintendent to post your notice in a common area, prior to applying to the Director; you must acquire this permission in writing. This document must then be included with your letter to the Director when you apply for the special dispensation. Your notice must then be posted in the common area of the apartment building.

You must keep a copy of the notice on file for a period of at least 2 years after publication

Sample notice of meeting included under templates at the end of this document.

Technology Considerations

To run the video that has been prepared as part of this IPM Toolkit, you will require a computer with an LCD projector and a screen appropriately sized to the room.

If you have internet access you can run the movie from the link provided. You have the option to use the flash movie with, or without audio. Should you decide to use audio, you will also need speakers connected to your computer.

Alternatively, you can run the movie from a prepared DVD, and your needs will be a DVD player and a television screen. This is a much simpler option for smaller venues.

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If you have a large venue, you will need to adjust your AV set up accordingly, if you expect a large group and have rented AV equipment, you may want to have a microphone also.

There are a number of companies you can rent equipment from; some will even provide an operator at a cost, if you don't have anyone in your organization that is "tech savvy".

If you are a club in a more remote area and you can keep things very simple, a small room, a few chairs, a pot of coffee and your required IPM paperwork, you may not need anything else.

Room Set Up

Once your AV is set up, test it and make sure everything works, have the requisite spare batteries for any cordless equipment, extension cords, and the ability to darken the room if necessary. Have a dry run of the flash movie. A rehearsal for your designated presenter would be advisable.

Set out rows of chairs, and have a table for sign in at the entrance to the room.

Have a staff member sit at this table when people start to arrive.

Deciding who will present

The legislation allows for flexibility as to who can present the report to the public, it can be the Owner, General Manager, Superintendent or any other course employee who is adept at presentation delivery. Alternatively you could employ a professional consultant or spokesperson, if your budget allows.

Base your choice on who is the most comfortable standing in front of a group and speaking. If it is your General Manager/Owner, he will most likely have to direct any IPM related questions to you, but you are the accredited professional, the expert in your field and your answers will come from your knowledge of IPM and the course itself.

The owners/management of the club are obliged to ensure that knowledgeable people are present at the meeting.

Network with your colleagues

Talk to your fellow superintendents; find out what they are planning to do, share information and resources if possible.

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2. Documentation

Handouts

If your presenter is comfortable, you may not need to provide attendees with any handouts. The choice is yours. Legislation requires that if anyone asks for a copy of your report, you must provide them with one. Assume that anyone who is attending the meeting will want a copy.

Presentation of the IPM Annual Report.

The legislation states that this report has to be presented and we have been advised by the Ministry of the Environment that you have to present your report **verbally**. You could present the report on screen in a power point presentation, or you could have copies available to hand out and read your report and map. You must keep a copy of your Annual Report available at the club for 5 years.

Questions

You could indicate that there will be time for questions at the end of your presentation.

You could then conclude the meeting and state you will stay behind for a short period of time for questions.

You do not have to take questions, nor answer them. Additionally, if you are unsure of the answer, direct them to either the Ministry of the Environment website or the IPM Accreditation Program website for further information. REMEMBER: The purpose of the meeting is to present the Annual Report as it is a legislative requirement, not anything else.

Promotional Material

You may wish to hand out some promotional material for your Club. Perhaps seize this opportunity to market your facility to those in attendance. Prepare some additional paperwork about any community activities your club has been involved in, charity tournaments, special programs, your ability to accommodate people with disabilities etc. Accentuate all the positives about your course and the industry in general.

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Golf Industry Statistics

Recently, the National Allied Golf Associations completed a study on the Economic Impact of Golf in Canada, and the following are just a few of the most important findings contained in that study.

- The game of golf accounts for 11.3 billion of Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) \$4,384.3 million in Ontario
- 342,000 jobs in Canada; 123,000 jobs in Ontario
- \$7.6 billion in household income; \$2,970.4 million in Ontario
- \$1.2 billion property/other indirect taxes Canada wide; \$496.4 million in Ontario
- \$1.9 billion in income taxes in Canada; \$693.5 million in Ontario

Key benefits include:

Environmental: Green space, of which almost 25% is unmanaged wildlife habitat

Employment: 43% of employees on golf courses or at clubs are students

Real Estate: Values are significantly higher on properties located adjacent to golf courses

Charitable: 25,000 charitable events are hosted on Canadian courses each year, raising more than \$439 million dollars for charities Canada wide.

Golf courses contribute significantly to Construction activity via facility related maintenance, expansions and improvements

The travel and tourism Industry benefits directly from the well managed and maintained golf courses in Ontario.

(courtesy of NAGA's Economic impact study of golf for Canada, 2009)

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3. Hints and tips for a more successful meeting

- 1) Be organized, be ready
- 2) Coordinate with your area clubs
- 3) Pool resources and share information
- 4) Have every one sign in at the door and provide their contact information
- 5) Have everyone who wishes to speak, stand and state their name and address
- 6) If you don't have a presenter who is comfortable speaking to groups, hire a consultant, seek assistance from a fellow superintendent who has already conducted a meeting
- 7) Hand out the agenda, and follow it, try to stick to a time frame for your meeting, include timing on the agenda
- 8) The purpose of the meeting should be kept in mind. It is a presentation to inform, not an open forum for others to dominate and take control.

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PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

ANYTIME

Date & time of meeting established

Location is booked

Book/ make sure AV equipment will be available

Decide on the presenter or team to present

List of residential properties (addresses) you have to inform about the meeting – establish method.

Decide how much notice you want to give (no more than 15 days)

NO SOONER THAN 15 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR MEETING DATE

Make arrangements to have notices delivered (or mailed) to all properties surrounding your course, in line with the legislative requirements.

Prepare Notice of Meeting

Put Notice of Meeting in local newspaper (in accordance with the amount of notice you have decided to give).

Prepare Agenda

Establish staff involvement if any i.e. Sign in person.

DAY OF MEETING

Room set up

AV set up

Run through electronic presentation

Run through verbal presentation

Chairs, sign in table

Sign in Sheets on Table

Coffee/ Tea/ Snacks

NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that:

XYZ Golf & Country Club, *(Full name and address of club)*
2147 ABC Drive,
Toronto, On
L8e 4L4

will be holding their Public Meeting on:

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

Telephone _____

(Telephone # of the owner or a representative of the owner of the golf course)

Please call us if you plan on attending, to ensure we have enough space and seating arrangements can be planned. Thank You. (OPTIONAL)

AGENDA

XYZ Golf Club Public Meeting

Introductions & Welcome Designated person/team 5:00 – 5:15PM

 Club Information

 Golf Industry Statistics

Presentations Designated person/team 5:15 – 5:45PM

 Media Presentation

 Annual Report Presentation

Questions and Answers Designated person/team 5:45 – 6:00PM

Light Refreshments