



STATEMENT FROM THE CITY OF CEDAR HILLS
October 8, 2015

Where inaccurate or incorrect information is publicly advanced, the City feels it is in the interest of the community to provide an accurate and correct summary. Recently, statements made on a public website present inaccurate or incomplete information regarding city records. The City wishes to address those statements.

The claim has been made that the city has destroyed golf-related records, that cost estimates given to retrieve records are arbitrary in an effort to discourage records requests, and that city officials refuse to provide golf course financials to residents of Cedar Hills. These claims are false.

There are instances where the city provides free golf. Residents are given free golf on their birthday, on resident appreciation day, and each household receives a gift certificate for one free round of golf each year. Military veterans may receive free golf on Veterans' Day. Employees and elected officials are eligible for free golf, but can only use this benefit when there is no paying customer scheduled for a tee time. This is considered a fringe benefit and the employee or elected official is taxed on the value of the benefit, as outlined by IRS regulations.

The original GRAMA request from Mr. Cromar asked for records of all free golf provided during 2014. The system that the city utilized in 2014 to track rounds of golf, called Par 9, did not provide the city with the capability of tracking rounds of free golf with the associated "for no charge" reason code. The system only allowed for staff to indicate that no money was received. However, this did not always mean that the rounds were free. For example, golfers are able to purchase a punch pass for 10 rounds of golf. When the punch pass is used, staff will mark off the round played on the pass but in the system it is marked as "no charge" for that date. The city also marks "no charge" for golf rounds that are offered in exchange for other services for which the city would normally pay, such as advertising, course improvements, and business development.

Because the system did not allow staff to track free golf from prepaid golf, staff estimated it would take 20 hours to review all records from 2014 to determine which rounds were truly free. This was communicated to Mr. Cromar, who later reduced his request to cover one week in August 2014. Staff reached out to Par 9 to obtain those records as the city had transitioned to a new software in December of 2014. It was at this time that the city learned Par 9 had been sold to another company and all records were irretrievable. The city notified Mr. Cromar of this in writing. Mr. Cromar was later provided records for all free golf rounds for city employees and officials that were given in 2015 as this information is now tracked on paper.

City staff and officials believe in transparency and obey all laws regarding records requests. At no time has staff tried to prevent or dissuade an individual from making a GRAMA request. Estimates are given on good faith and refunds are given if the cost to provide records was less than originally anticipated. There has never been an attempt to withhold information on free rounds of golf, but the limitations of the software used in 2014 to track golf rounds does present challenges to extracting the data. The city is now tracking on paper any free rounds of golf given to employees or City Council members, but the names and payment details of all other golfers is considered proprietary and is not be released.

Lastly, all residents may view the city financials, including those related to the golf course, at any time. These are posted on the city's website and are audited by an outside agency on an annual basis. Additionally, the Golf Course Finance Committee, which was created in 2013 and consists of employees, officials, and residents from throughout the city, has provided a presentation of the golf course financials and is currently working on an additional analysis that discusses legal, financial, and social aspects of the golf course. This will be posted to the city's website when it is complete.

Those wishing to view the audited financial statements may find them online at cedarhills.org/finance-documents/financial-statements. Additional questions may be directed to the city manager.

For additional information or for media inquiries please contact Jenney Rees at 801-358-8730 or via email at jrees@cedarhills.org.

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