

## **FENWICK GOLF COURSE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

11/2013

This "Statement of Purpose" has been adopted by the Board of Burgesses to guide the stewardship and maintenance of the Fenwick Golf Course. Decisions on topics ranging from daily maintenance to potential architectural alterations should flow from this foundational point of view adopted by the Borough regarding the purpose and philosophy of the course and the game of golf in Fenwick.

The Fenwick Golf Course is a treasure. We wonder at its beauty, simplicity, and occasional eccentricity. We are grateful to the stewards of the past who preserved the golf course that has been in existence longer than most of the homes that surround it. We aspire to maintain the course's beauty and design integrity so that generations of the future will enjoy this timeless and unique treasure.

Fenwick is a historic, playable, short, links-style, nine-hole golf course. Each of those attributes carries certain implications for the overall care and use of the golf course.

### **History**

The Fenwick Golf Course dates to 1896, but as history tells us, the first tomato cans and flags were put in the ground two years before that.

The 1896 layout was rudimentary but over the years, the relocation and building of tees, greens and hazards, combined to create the basis of the modern Fenwick, a links-style design that resembles the seaside layouts of the British Isles in both character and playability, with un-irrigated fairways, natural greens and topography, and, usually, wind or breezes.

The first priority of the Fenwick Parks Commission should be to preserve any historic aspects of the course and to ensure that any changes that might ever be made to the course (and there should be few) be consistent with, return to, or improve upon the historic integrity of the design.

### **Playability**

The basic foundational purpose of Fenwick is that golfers of varying skill levels can enjoy the strategic design. It is not meant to be a penal golf course or a "championship" layout. Hole locations, green speeds, and the elements can combine to make the course challenging, as appropriate.

To maintain playability, the rough will be mowed at a length that allows misplayed balls to be found without undue difficulty, while at the same time exacting a fair penalty for an errant shot. Since greens are very small and difficult to hit, the consequence for missing them should not be too severe. Bunkers should impose a penalty, but be maintained in a way that average golfers can extract themselves.

On true links golf courses, greens are laid onto the land almost as an extension of the fairway and raised only when they are placed on a natural feature, such as a mound. Bunkers are dug into the ground to also fit with the topography and not clash with it. When and if architectural modifications are made to Fenwick, the work should fit into the links style of design where the features of a golf course harmonize with the land, ensuring that the playability and character is retained.

### **Length**

Even from the back tees, Fenwick is a short course. Realistically, there is very little room to stretch the layout and adding length is not a priority. The distance from today's white tees, 2,607 yards, is a mere 57 yards longer than the Fenwick of 1900. We value the course in its present form, and we appreciate its permanence and feeling of timelessness.

### **Links-Style Agronomy**

Fenwick is considered a links-style course due to its location, topography, soil, turf and architecture.

A links course is located near the sea and built on a sandy soil. The turf is maintained firm so golf shots can be played on the ground. The views from throughout the course are expansive, including water vistas.

At the core of links style golf is the requirement that the turf on fairways, approaches and greens be maintained as firm. Golfers should be able to use the ground game, or bump-and-run, throughout the course. It is this method of play that allows golfers to manage the wind and firm turf that are an integral part of seaside golf.

In order to achieve this, the superintendent must have the equipment and direction to maintain the turf as required.

Trees are generally not integral to pure links-style golf. However, trees -- especially "specimen trees" -- can play an important role in the beauty and character of a course, while providing protection from errant golf balls. In some cases, though, trees compete with turf for nutrients, water and sunlight. The result is weak turf that is susceptible to disease, which can only be combated with increased maintenance practices and expenses including pesticides and fertilizers.

Where trees serve no purpose or are not considered a "specimen tree" they can be removed if it will mean improved turf quality and playability of the golf course. If tree planting is required, care must be taken to species and locations so that neither roots nor shade harm the turf of the golf course.

## **Goal**

The Borough of Fenwick intends to maintain the Fenwick Golf Course according to these principals. The Borough shall hire a standing consulting architect who will develop, in cooperation with the Parks Commission, a Strategic Master Plan for each hole. That Plan will outline for each hole the purpose of the architectural design, highlighting where the current design promotes or occasionally conflicts with the links nature of the course and the other attributes described above. The Strategic Master Plan will also establish maintenance guidelines to ensure the health of the turf and playability of the golf course. The Parks Commission and consulting architect must in the future approve any changes to that Plan.