

President's Remarks, 2019 BSGAC Annual Meeting

BSGAC MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Burnt Store Golf and Activity Club is to provide a golf course and restaurant of exceptional quality, along with a variety of recreational, social and special events in an atmosphere of fellowship where members and guests feel welcomed and appreciated.

Over the past year, your Board of Directors, our staff and many volunteers, have worked very hard to attain goals stated in that mission statement. This past year has certainly been one of many challenges. Simply establishing that mission statement was one of our first challenges.

How have we met those challenges? It really began with the development of a business plan early in 2018. This plan focuses on eight key areas. Finance and capital planning, administration, golf operations, food & beverage, golf course condition and sales and marketing. The business plan remains a work in progress and it has been and remains a challenge.

We certainly faced a financial challenge this past year. We dissected the budget and trimmed where ever we could while ensuring that the membership would still enjoy all of the activities you have come to expect. Even after all of the cuts, it was clear we would not have enough money to get through the slow summer months to the end of the member year.

We clearly presented the facts of this challenge to the membership in a number of ways and we asked for your help. You, the members, stepped up to meet that challenge. You contributed over \$138k to ensure the club would continue to operate through the lean summer months. You should all be proud that your contributions did in fact make the difference. We came together as a club and we did continue to operate through summer. In the end, we came out in the black. And, yes, financial challenges do remain along our path.

While we are talking about the donation process, lets' talk about what has come to be known as the naughty list. If this is the only mistake that I, myself, or this board has made in the past year, I will be very grateful. Clearly, we should have handled the call for donations differently. However, as the saying goes, you can't un-ring a bell. Let me just say, if you were offended in anyway by the boards actions in publishing the list, I apologize. I am truly sorry to have caused anyone any discomfort or embarrassment. It is my hope that you will understand that clearly there was no ill intent on the part of the board or any member of the board. It just seemed like a good idea at the time.

Many of you contributed in other ways as well. Club member volunteers stepped up by contributing their time and talents to complete many worthy projects at little or no cost to the club. Certainly, the wonderful patio pavers we all now enjoy is an excellent example of a contribution. Member volunteers contributed by painting golf course restrooms and areas of the club house, trimming of shrubs and bushes, publishing a newsletter, laying sod, cleaning up our sign on Vincent Avenue, cleaning the islands in the parking lot, fundraising for and building our bocce ball court, washing windows, backfilling irrigation ditches, painting tee box markers, caring for the tee box landscaping and implementing our business plan. And, I don't want to forget our Activity Committee, Handicap Committee and Golf Committee, as well as all of the other folks who organize the 28 golf leagues and groups that make BSGAC so unique. I am sure I missed someone or something, if I did, it was unintentional and I apologize, but thank you all, it is you the members that make BSGAC what it is.

Many of you, as well as the Board of Directors, participated in a series of focus groups. Thanks very much to members Craig Holcomb and Jim David for hosting and conducting those focus groups and thank you to all of the members who participated. I think we all developed a better understanding of why many joined BSGAC and what we expect from the club. It certainly provided valuable insight for the Board and we have tried to keep your thoughts and ideas in mind as we implemented change and moved forward.

One example of that is this election we are holding today. You said you did not want the Board to recommend a slate and we did not. I believe that as a result of that we have ten members who stepped up and said they would get involved. They placed their names in nomination to serve on the Board of Directors. Thank you to each of them for offering to serve and thanks to each of you for casting your votes. These candidates deserve your consideration. Best of luck to each.

We also heard of the concern many members expressed over confidentiality of the vote. In response we arranged for independent, non-members, to count the vote and ensure no names are associated with the ballot. Next year we will use the two-envelope system ensuring your vote will be confidential.

At the beginning of the year we promised to be as open and transparent as we could regarding the business of the club. Throughout the year we held open member meetings as well as sent out informational letters and emails to all members keeping you as informed as we could as to what is taking place around the club. We have all responded to dozens of phone calls and emails as well as talked with members having questions and concerns about just about every aspect of the club. We even received some compliments and a thank you or two.

As I was preparing for this meeting, I was reviewing my notes and meeting minutes for the year. Every month irrigation issues, clubhouse roof leaks and failing equipment dominated our meetings. Also evident was the development of a closer relationship with our new landlord, Section 22. I believe Section 22 has shown itself to be a good landlord and partner and has stepped up to ensure many badly needed improvements to the property were made this past year. It began with the replacement of two badly deteriorated bridges and repairs to a third. The collapsing bulkhead in front of Osprey 9 green was replaced and as a result we have ten or fifteen fewer yards to carry the water.

The club house roof has been replaced thus eliminating the need for numerous buckets and plastic tarps frequently seen throughout the clubhouse. Noise reduction panels were installed in the dining room (thanks much to Lee Plank for this as well), a new hot water tank as well as a new stove were installed in the kitchen. Our old cart barn also received a new roof as well as a long overdue exterior facelift.

The maintenance building on Islamorada Blvd. was almost completely rebuilt. This included a new roof along with some new structural steel, new siding and insulation, a complete rewiring, new septic system and rain water control. Finally, many dead and dying pine trees were removed from the golf course and grounds. Thank you Section 22, as well as you, the members of BSGAC, for all of those improvements.

In response to community voices and in an effort to encourage new as well as returning members, we eliminated the initiation fee. One consideration in this lengthy discussion was that every year, any number of our members, for reasons beyond their control, did not renew their membership. Only to find, when their circumstances improved, these former loyal members may have had to pay a new initiation fee to re-join the club. The board collectively believed that unfair. We believe that we should welcome back members having endured some hardship rather than penalize them.

Again, in response to member as well as community voices and in an effort to ensure every resident in our area can enjoy the Club, we developed a variety of flex memberships for single members as well as couples. We offer one, two- and three-month activity memberships, summer activity and golf memberships as well as high season flex memberships.

Our member year begins in November and of course that means annual dues. We recognize that this is the time of year when everyone wants our money. Coming up with those dues' payments can be a challenge for many members. In an effort to help you meet that challenge, we just rolled out a trial program which will enable members to pay their annual activity and golf dues on a monthly basis throughout the year rather than one big lump payment in October. Rather than write a check for \$750.00 you can pay your activity fee in monthly installments throughout the year. Not only will that help our members, it will provide the club a more even cash flow throughout the year.

Speaking of challenges, there is our aging golf course. I'm not quite sure how it happened but we somehow managed to attract a young man with more energy than anyone I know. Daniel Farley, our golf course Superintendent. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Daniel he came to us via Naples National and The Oaks Club in Osprey Fl. Two rather prestigious clubs. You will be hearing from Daniel a little later in the presentation.

Daniel has met the many challenges of our golf course head on and has been reported to be out on a spraying machine hunting mole crickets under a full moon at 9:00 o'clock at night. While Daniel has the energy and technical know how to make our golf course look great, and I suggest he has made many wonderful improvements, he is in the end, only human.

The Board recently published a document discussing the many golf course turf issues faced by the club and Daniel. As stated in that document, the irrigation system is 30 to 40 years old, is completely outdated and in total disrepair. The long and short of it is we absolutely need a new irrigation system. That is not something you go buy off the shelf at Home Depot. Daniel has proven himself to be thoroughly knowledgeable in this area and has expertly guided us through the process of a needs assessment, the design phase and ultimately the bid process required to install a new irrigation system.

Again, our landlord, Section 22, is partnering with us on this project and we thank them for that. We have worked closely with them and they have been involved throughout the entire process. Part of our due diligence has been to select a product manufacturer from whom we would buy the irrigation components. We looked closely at the two main vendors, Rain Bird and Toro. After several site visits, presentations and proposals, we agreed that Rain Bird was the best choice for BSGAC. We signed an agreement to use Rain Bird products **if and when**, we install a new system. That locked in some very good pricing for materials with no cost to the club at the present time.

We recently received bids from four contractors to install the system. A complete review and evaluation of the terms and conditions of those proposals is still underway. We expect that process to be complete in the next several weeks.

I think it is safe to say that this board as well as the Section 22 Board, is of the opinion that the present irrigation system, closely followed by our history of poor funding practices is the cause of most of our problems with course condition. Further, our opinion is that we should not, cannot, wait any longer, hoping for membership to rise, while watching the course continue to degrade, and it will. We must act now and replace the irrigation system as soon as is reasonably feasible.

I know the question on everyone's mind right now, how much? The answer is \$760k +. Again, we are partnering with Section 22 and we are reviewing and evaluating a number of funding mechanisms to get this done. Once that process is complete, we will hold an open meeting to let everyone know what has been decided.

Please be patient as we move through the process. Construction is scheduled to start in October of this year, to take advantage of the seasonal slowdown in construction demands, and is expected to take two to three months to complete. There should be minimal interruption on the course as the work will be done on one hole at a time. I ask for your cooperation and understanding. In the end it will be well worth whatever inconvenience it may cause.

In closing, I want to thank my fellow Board members for their time and hard work this past year. We certainly faced some challenges. I want to thank all of the member volunteers who gave of themselves and worked so hard throughout the year on the activity committee, golf committee, handicap committee, all of those having worked on the various action plan teams involved in the business plan, again, I am sure I have missed someone, I apologize. I want to thank our wonderful staff. They certainly faced big challenges in meeting the demands of the Board and all of the various committees and action teams making all of those changes. Our staff met those challenges very well. When you meet one of them in and around the club, please let them know how much you appreciate their efforts.

Finally, I want to thank all of you, the members, for your continued faith, trust, support and most importantly, your continued membership in BSGAC. **You are BSGAC.**