MEETING MINUTES
VENETIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
Pool and Fitness Committee Meeting February 27, 2017

In Attendance:
Joy Wolf, Chair
Lisa Plotkin, Vice Chair
Harriet Ambrose, Member
Peggy Palmer, Member
Tisha Washington, Member
Dick Foster, Acting Secretary
Absent: Gwen Mengel, Secretary

Scott Kissell, River Club Manager
Charlie Sandomenico, Dir. of Tennis and Fitness
Harry Orenstein, VCDD Board Representative

A. Call to Order
Joy called the meeting to order at 2:02pm.

B. Establish Quorum
Six of the seven members were present so there was a quorum. Since the secretary, Gwen, was not present, Dick agreed to be acting secretary for the meeting.

C. Welcome New Member
Joy welcomed new member Tisha Washington to the committee.

D. Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2017
Following edits by Joy, Lisa, Scott and Dick, Peggy moved to approved the minutes as edited. Joy seconded. Motion passed.

E. Additions to Agenda
None.

F. Resident Input
Joy opened the floor for resident input and asked residents to keep their comments brief.

The first resident likes the FOD (Fitness on Demand) classes and requested that more FOD classes be offered and to include afternoon classes. Charlie said that requests such as this are welcomed. Also, DVD’s can be used with the FOD system and some are currently available. Joy also suggested offering FOD classes at different times. In the Tennis and Fitness newsletter, Charlie will notify residents that FOD requests are welcomed. Charlie is monitoring the FOD usage to determine the best classes and times for classes. Scott indicated that we are in Phase 1 of the rollout of FOD classes, and that now may be the right time to move to Phase 2 with expanded offerings and customized group classes. The exercise room will accommodate 15-16 people per class.

Another resident said that several years ago, she could not get into fitness classes because they filled up so quickly. So, she joined the YMCA. She would prefer to take class here. She thinks people taking 4-5 classes per week is too much. The resident also suggested having outdoor fitness classes to allow more participants per class.

Another resident had spoken with several other residents and reported that the new fees for fitness classes have divided the tennis and fitness communities. The fitness classes are also good for socialization in the community. There is confusion about why and who made the decision to charge a fee for fitness classes. She was also concerned that the question about fitness class fees in the current River Club Survey was misleading.
People think the entire community is subsidizing the fitness classes and tennis clinics, which are amenities and add to our property value. She asked if Charlie has a job description and Scott said he does and is available from Scott. Charlie is responsible for scheduling tennis and fitness activities. She asked who and why the decision was made to purchase the FOD system. Harry explained that the decision was made in conjunction with implementing fees for fitness classes so that there would be alternative fitness classes available at no charge. She asked if the Pool and Fitness Committee was involved in the decision to implement fees. Scott and Harry explained that the Pool and Fitness Committee attempted to meet to discuss this. Unfortunately, they could not find a date to meet and have the required quorum; so the committee could not provide input to the VCDD. There was a public hearing that residents could provide feedback about the fitness class fees. Since the fitness class fees were part of the annual budgeting process, the decision could not be delayed to give more time for the Pool and Fitness Committee to meet. Harry said the lessons learned from this situation have led the VCDD to improve communications with the community. The resident also requested that fees not be added to the water aerobics classes.

G. CDD Board Update – Harry Orenstein
At the March 6, 2017 VCDD public hearing about fitness class fees, a Pool and Fitness Committee representative will be allowed to speak first during the public hearing to present the committee’s recommendation about fitness class fees to the Board of Supervisors.

The VCDD will reserve time during the VCDD meeting on the fourth Monday of each month for any VCDD committee to speak directly to the VCDD Board.

The VCDD would like each committee to provide a mission statement. Harry praised the draft mission statement of the Pool and Fitness Committee and encouraged the committee to review and approve a mission statement.

Harry reported that the VCDD Board does not want results of the River Club Survey question about fitness class fees to be provided to the Pool and Fitness Committee until after the survey is closed on February 28, 2017. The VCDD Board was concerned that discussing preliminary results of this controversial topic could influence the final results.

H. Management Update – Scott Kissell and Charlie Sandomenico
Scott distributed the preliminary (not final) results of several fitness-related questions from the River Club Survey. However, the results of the question about fitness class fees was NOT included. Scott suggested reviewing the comments section as well as the graphs.

Harriet and Lisa asked why the River Club Survey was emailed only to the male spouse of each household? Others expressed the same concern. Scott said that the emails with the link to the survey were sent to the primary email address on record for each household. Since the survey was limited to one response per household, it was decided to send the survey link to only the primary household email address. Several members felt that the email should have been sent to all household email addresses. Scott said he would consider this feedback for future survey announcements. Scott also indicated that a second email was sent to all email addresses for each household reminding residents about the survey and requested their participation in the survey.
Charlie distributed data about class participation for the past 5 months versus the same months one year earlier. He reviewed the data and responded to questions. The number of unique fitness class participants in February 2017 dropped 23% versus February 2016. Overall, unique fitness class participation has dropped an average of 24% per month over the past 5 months since we started charging fees for indoor instructor-led classes. The overall number of fitness class participation has dropped by a greater margin because many people are taking fewer classes per week. Also, the number of instructor-led classes has dropped from 24 to 21 per week. Some fitness class scheduling concerns were discussed. Scott and Charlie encouraged this committee to provide recommendations about which classes to offer, how often, and at what time of day. Joy asked that this committee discuss the fitness class scheduling issues at the next committee meeting.

Scott distributed and reviewed an analysis of the costs for internal and external instructors to support the current schedule of indoor instructor-led fitness classes and the water aerobics classes. The total for indoor instructor-led fitness classes is $33,600 per year. The total for water aerobics classes is $11,840 per year for a total of $45,440 per year. External instructors are paid $40 per class. Internal (staff) instructors are paid $40 minus their hourly pay per class, so there is no “double dipping.”

Joy asked about if/how people are notified when water aerobics classes are cancelled due to weather conditions. Charlie said that an email is sent to a list of people who regularly attend water aerobics classes.

Charlie distributed and discussed the daily participation count for the fitness center, fitness classes, tennis, and pool.

Charlie discussed several new initiatives that have been launched to improve communications about the tennis and fitness activities. They include enhancements to the River Club website, a new “Tennis and Fitness Events and News” email blast, and additional postings on bulletin boards and elsewhere at the River Club.

Charlie reported that an equipment representative will be reviewing our fitness equipment on February 28, 2017, and will provide recommendations. Lisa asked Charlie to see if the representative could attend our next committee meeting to discuss his/her recommendations.

I. Feasibility of Summer Meetings
Historically, this committee does not meet during the summer months. Joy discussed the benefits of meeting year around. However, there has been an issue of getting a quorum during the summer since many members were part-time residents. A poll of the current committee membership found that 6 or the 7 members are full-time residents. After discussion, Joy moved, and Dick seconded, that the Pool and Fitness Committee meet monthly all year. The motion passed unanimously. Harry said that the VCDD needs to be notified of this change so the new meeting dates can be published.

J. Format of Pool and Fitness Committee Meeting Agenda
Joy recommended that the headings “Old Business” and “New Business” be removed from this committee’s meeting agenda. Topics not discussed during a meeting would be rolled over to the next meeting as necessary. After discussion, Peggy moved, and Tisha seconded, that the headings “Old Business” and “New Business” be removed from this committee’s agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

K. Review Results of Resident Survey In Regards To Fitness Classes
See topic H (Management Update) above. The committee will discuss the final results of the fitness related survey questions at the next committee meeting.
L. Recommendations to The VCDD Board on Fees for Fitness Classes

Joy recommended that we frame our recommendations to the VCDD Board about fitness class fees around four key components, based on suggestions from Harry.

- What should be the compromise about the cost of fitness classes?
- Should there be a fee for water aerobics classes?
- Should there be a reduction in the fees for tennis lessons, and if so, at what level?
- Should we limit individuals to 3 instructor-led fitness classes per week to make them available on a wider basis?

Lisa asked Scott for his recommendation. Scott said the proposal must be easy to administer without a substantial amount of manual effort that takes time and could lead to mistakes. For example, instead of “x” free fitness classes per week and then charge for additional classes, just reduce the fee per fitness class to achieve the same goal. Charlie pointed out that if we reduce fees, we will need to figure out how to add more classes to accommodate more participants. We should be flexible about limiting the number of classes per week and monitor participation closely, especially during in-season months.

Harriet had received input from several residents and presented their proposal to provide a unified community. They feel Charlie spends most of his time on the tennis program and that a fitness advocate is needed. They would like to review the job descriptions of Charlie and others involved in the tennis and fitness programs. They recommend hiring a part-time or full-time fitness director so Charlie can focus full-time on the tennis program. They recommend reviewing the day to day responsibilities of the tennis and fitness staff. Scott explained that Vision Golf and Association Management replaced WCI about 18 months ago as manager of the River Club and all activities, including tennis and fitness programs. Vision has reviewed and updated the job responsibilities of the tennis and fitness staff and has been making improvements in the tennis and fitness programs. Harriet moved to look at this as a long-term solution and to discuss further at future meetings. There was no second to the motion.

Committee members plus Scott and Charlie offered a variety of often conflicting suggestions about fees that were discussed in detail. They included:

- Reduce the fee for instructor-led fitness classes from $4 to $2 or $3 per class.
- Keep the fee for instructor-led fitness classes at $4 per class.
- Eliminate all fees for instructor-led fitness classes.
- Add a fee of $1 or $2 for water aerobics classes.
- With so many people participating in water aerobics classes, it may be difficult to charge/collect a fee so continue with no fee for water aerobics classes.
- Do not offer “x” free fitness classes per week.
- Offer certificates to new residents for a package of free fitness class(es) and tennis lesson(s) in their welcome kit to introduce them to the activities available. Also, include free “boot camp” or special classes for all residents. The cost (perhaps $10,000 per year) would be included in the VCDD budget.
- Promote the free Fitness on Demand (FOD) classes and get more resident input.
- Charge a flat fee of $25 or $30 per month for instructor-led fitness classes.
- Set a maximum of 3 to 5 instructor-led fitness classes per week per resident.
- No maximum of instructor-led fitness classes per week per resident.
- The Tennis Committee should make recommendations about changing tennis fees, not this committee.
The implementation of charging fees for instructor-led fitness classes has created division between many residents in the community. It is the committee’s understanding that a budget shortfall was not the reason the fitness class fees were implemented in October, 2016. Rather, it was decided that instructor-led fitness classes are a “service” and not an “amenity.” VCDD assessments pay for amenities and individuals should pay to utilize services. The 2016-2017 VCDD budget includes anticipated revenue from the instructor-led fitness fees, so eliminating these fitness class fees now will require a change to the current budget, which may be difficult.

Following much discussion, Peggy moved, and Lisa seconded, that the Pool and Fitness Committee make the following recommendation to the VCDD Board of Supervisors. The motion passed 4 to 1.

For the sake of unity of the community, the Pool and Fitness Committee feels that “services” versus “amenities” is no longer serviceable as a framework for the decision to charge a fee for instructor-led fitness classes. Therefore, we recommend to the VCDD Board of Supervisors that the fee for instructor-led fitness classes remain the same until September 30, 2017 and that the VCDD Board consider eliminating fees for instructor-led fitness classes starting October 1, 2017. The Pool and Fitness Committee would like to work with the VCDD Board to make recommendations for the 2017-2018 budget concerning fitness class offerings and possible limits on participation.

M. Define Role of the Fitness ‘Advisory’ Committee
Deferred to the next committee meeting.

N. Notification for Canceled Pool Classes
See item H (Management Update) above.

O. Topics for the Next Committee Meeting
   • Review Director of Tennis and Fitness Job Description
   • Review feedback from River Club Survey fitness-related questions
   • Discuss fitness class scheduling
   • Discuss recommendations of fitness equipment representative about our fitness equipment

P. Adjournment
Lisa moved, and Harriet seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 4:25 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Q. Next meeting
March 20, 2017