

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2020 MEETING**

Meeting (telephonic) called to order at 10:02 AM. A quorum per the BYLAWS of the Alliance was present in the form of the following members: Kevin Heaney (President), Jim Ferrin (Vice President), Len Dumas (Treasurer), Tom Schunn (Secretary), Emmy Moore Minister, Tom Addis, Joe Huston, Richard Harris, Bruce Williams, Lee Finkel. Also present were Azucena Maldonado (Latina Golfers Association), Marc Connerly (Legislative Committee), Jeff Jensen (Legislative Committee), Craig Kessler (Legislative Committee), and Kevin Fitzgerald (Legislative Committee).

President Heaney explained that several Agenda items will be taken out of order as two members will be joining the meeting later in the first hour.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

**Jim Ferrin moved, Emmy Moore Minister seconded, to approve the Minutes from the December 17, 2019 telephonic meeting.** The motion was unanimously approved upon voice vote.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

President Heaney stated that Lee Finkel will now be representing CGCOA in place of Steve Plummer. **Emmy Moore Minister moved, Joe Huston seconded, to approve Lee Finkel as a new member of the Board of Directors representing CGCOA.** The motion was unanimously approved upon voice vote.

SPECIAL ORDER

To provide a status of state and county orders due to the COVID-19 crisis. Craig Kessler shared that 21 General Managers in the Coachella Valley predominately from high end private clubs are formally petitioning the County of Riverside to reverse a blanket order to shut down golf courses. The staff writer for the Desert Sun is covering the story. Governor Newsom did not follow a top down model but deferred to decision making process of individual County Public Health officials. As the crisis progressed, the definition of “essential critical work” has been tightened by the state and in most counties. Jim Ferrin explained that Haggin Oaks in Sacramento went to the County for clarification and that there are a few courses that have reopened, at least for the time being. Craig Kessler stated that the strategy to tie golf to other outdoor recreational activities was successful until the parks, beaches, and hiking trails were forced to close. Once that happened then it became time to position golf as amenable to operating under social distancing and to be among the first activities to reopen once we are on the other side of the pandemic curve. We do not want to press the issue to the point that we might jeopardize our positioning once the economy begins to reopen. President Heaney explained that the prior evening there were two Orange County golf courses on the news with images of golfers directly violating the county’s Stay at Home Order. There are similar stories from other areas and the scenes are negative for the golf industry.

Craig Kessler provided a brief overview of the Federal Stimulus Bill (CARES Act), but he also added that We Are Golf, the advocacy arm of the World Golf Foundation, is going to be releasing a short form summary analysis for the golf industry this week. CAG Board members have been provided with the summary, but it is not yet public.

Emmy Moore Minister described how several golf clubs have come together in Yolo County to develop a set of guidelines by which courses could follow to get an exception from the County Board of Supervisors. The petition to reopen was denied, but the facilities hope to make changes to the document and request relief again.

The Federal Stimulus package does not categorically exclude golf which has been the case with previous disaster relief monies. Golf courses were considered ineligible for disaster funding after Hurricane Katrina.

Craig Kessler provided an update from a meeting held primarily for municipal golf managers in Long Beach last month. The USGA hosted the meeting to gather information and input from the municipal sector as the organization reimagines its Green Section.

CAG MEMBERSHIP

President Heaney posed the questions – how should we add names to the CAG Board of Directors? What, if any, parameters are in place to find new members, and does anyone have suggestions to about how to reach out to potential members? He also created a CAG Board membership subcommittee. The committee will evaluate Bylaw requirements, and then work to bring potential Board members to the current CAG Board for consideration. Emmy Moore Minister stated that she would participate on the committee, and Bruce Williams stated that he would also participate.

Emmy Moore Minister welcomed guest Azucena Maldonado of the Latina Golfer Association and suggested that she be a member of the CAG Board of Directors. Azucena Maldonado has been involved with CAG and has participated in several CAG Capitol Days. Jim Ferrin agreed that Azucena Maldonado should be a member of the CAG Board and explained that she has been an asset to CAG. She has good relationships with elected officials in Sacramento, and she has been an important part of our meetings in the Capitol. **Jim Ferrin moved, Emmy Moore Minister seconded, to add Azucena Maldonado to the CAG Board of Directors.** The motion was unanimously approved upon voice vote.

COMMUNICATIONS

Emmy Moore Minister explained that the first CAG newsletter of 2020 was to be distributed following Capitol Day in Sacramento. Now that the Capitol Day has been postponed, the newsletter will be released within several weeks. April’s newsletter will be a COVID-19 heavy issue, but it will also include updates about awards and various other updates. She shared that we now have the website controls from EKA and will begin to update it regularly. Craig Kessler asked if the website might be able to provide COVID-19 updates from what the CAG allied organizations currently have available on their sites. Emmy Moore Minister stated that if the CAG organizations would like to share any COVID-19 content from their sites, then the information will be provided on the CAG site as well.

Richard Harris suggested that CAG consider a grassroots advocacy mobilization campaign. The campaign should be created as soon as possible to ensure that the golf industry comes out of the COVID-19 crisis safely and is positioned positively. Both in the immediate, and as money from the federal stimulus is distributed, the industry needs a vehicle so that golfers are mobilized to advocate for the game. A successful grassroots campaign would include – golfers writing and sending letters to the editor, attending public meetings when appropriate, and even tabling to raise awareness of local and statewide advocacy issues. He suggested that CAG member organizations pool email contacts to create a campaign contact database but explained how even if pooling databases among CAG organizations isn’t possible, there are other ways that CAG organizations’ might distribute important information with their own contacts. CAG needs to agree on a simple structure where each CAG organization along with others as the campaign expands, are prepared to share advocacy material when issues arise at the state, county, city, or special district levels. CAG cannot be a successful advocacy organization without a grassroots campaign. Lee Finkel stated that he agrees with creating an advocacy campaign, but that rather than pool the databases, organizations just need to agree to help distribute information to their own members. Azucena Maldonado stated that this present crisis is an opportunity to build the campaign. CAG members just need to agree that the organizations will help share golf’s messaging. Emmy Moore Minister stated that golf is in an excellent position to benefit from the crisis. As the game reopens it offers social distancing and outdoor recreation that many other popular activities do not. Craig Kessler stated that golf is effective at executing the inside game, but it does not have an outside game. The organizations have a lane, golfers themselves have a lane, but the effort is far more effective when both the inside and outside game are both utilized, and golf does not yet have such a coordinated effort.

Richard Harris called for the creation of a committee where the group would develop campaign messaging. President Heaney stated that there is a large constituency of golfers who are not part of this effort. Most golfers in the state are not members of clubs and are therefore are not on a contact list of the current CAG organizations. Other large organizations such as golf management companies have contact lists of golfers who are often not members of a club and is an added benefit of growing CAG membership. Joe Huston stated that he supports the idea of sending important CAG messaging to the allied organization’s members, but the difficult task is figuring out what we are going to share. The content is difficult to create but NCGA is supportive of messaging to promote the health of the game – sending the content to NCGA members is simple. He also asked about the first messages – would it be to support ongoing maintenance, or would we wait? Craig Kessler stated that CAG might want to share a generic message that maintenance operations are critical for the golf industry. The message might consider CAG offering support for the Governor’s approach while articulating that golf is amenable to social distancing when the time comes that we begin to reopen activities and businesses throughout the state. Azucena Maldonado explained that a campaign needs messaging and that CAG needs a plan for how the content will build from informational messaging to certain action, but not every message has to rise to action. President Heaney shared that the content will probably begin with simple education and sharing information as courses remain closed, and then as we begin to play golf again that CAG build to action when necessary. A subcommittee was created to consider and development of advocacy campaign content. The subcommittee will bring messaging ideas to the Board, and the committee should include broad representation from Board member organizations. Richard Harris, Marc Connerly, Azucena Maldonado, NCGA (communications team), SCGA (team), Emmy Moore Minister, Tom Addis, Len Dumas plan to serve on the committee.

Tom Addis shared that the Southern California Section lost a key communications person earlier this year who was going to the point person to handle the CAG newsletter. The newsletter will be distributed regularly going forward.

LEGISLATIVE

Craig Kessler shared that California’s legislative session is becoming a lost year other than COVID-19 specific actions. We were hoping to build on last year’s measure of relief to secure a more perfect measure of relief for independent contracting PGA Teaching Professionals in 2020. We do not expect to hold a Capitol Day now until 2021 as yesterday’s meetings were cancelled due to the pandemic. Tony Rice shared that we are basically having to be reactive when we would typically pursue proactive strategy. The Capitol is closed to everyone except legislators and key members of staff. The Legislative calendar deadlines have not been moved, and the Legislature is on an extended spring break through April 13, although that date is subject to change. The legislature will have to pass a baseline operational budget to get the state through the next few months, and then members will either come back at the end of session to pass a more comprehensive budget, or even have to hold an emergency session. Tom Addis stated that he appreciates the participation of Craig Kessler, Tony Rice, and Kevin Fitzgerald for sharing information on the California PGA Chat forums held every Monday and Friday. President Heaney stated that he echoed the comment and thanked Tony Rice for all the work that he is doing for CAG, especially in this difficult period.

FINANCE

Len Dumas stated that the CAG bank account is open with Wells Fargo - invoices have been paid, and now we are in the process of fully transferring statements from Northern California to Southern California. Tom Addis stated that we are setting up an accounting system through Quick Books so that information will be easily accessible to members of the CAG Board. Jeff Johnson in the Section office is handling the CAG account. We sent a $9000 check for the amount owed EKA, we have $1900 in the bank right now. Once every organization is up to date with their individual commitments, the balance should be on track. We are going to begin a new billing system for invoicing each month. Craig Kessler asked if we are up to date with EKA through March. Len Dumas stated that we are through February. We just received the March billing for $3000. Len Dumas suggested that we have a signatory in Southern California so that the checks are distributed most effectively.

MEMBERSHIP

President Heaney stated that a subset of membership is funding and that it is necessary so that CAG can pursue its initiatives. He also asked how we can represent a larger swath of golfers? We might consider extending membership to various groups - large management groups and others to bring the industry more closely aligned under the CAG umbrella. How do we want to begin to develop a strategy to bring in other groups and organizations to CAG for membership or support? We need to think about how the organization can better represent the golf community in the state. How do we set parameters for membership? Lee Finkel stated that the first step to get the support of and bring in multicourse operators is to create a sales pitch for CAG. President Heaney asked what in CAG’s value proposition is highly important to management companies - what would these companies want to see for their dollars? Lee Finkel stated that American Golf would like to support such efforts, but they operate in many different places, so they determined that NGCOA was the most appropriate organization to support as a corporate member and the company also supported CGCOA to some degree. We need to talk about the advocacy work which do have an impact on the bottom line for the golf operators. President Heaney asked about the problem that many companies operate in various states, and how might they pick which organizations they will be able to support. Lee Finkel stated that he would look first at the companies that operate most of their golf properties within the state. For those companies there is a direct need to focus on the problems unique to California such as the drought problems, etc. It is hard to justify for many of these companies, but when we look just at this year, we can see that 2020 stated as one of the best on record, and now it has been turned upside down. President Heaney asked Marc Connerly if CAG is being sensitive with this conversation to avoiding competing with CGCOA for membership as we would want to avoid direct competition among CAG and its member organizations? Marc Connerly stated that he believes that there is a place for both so long as the roles are clearly defined (CAG lead the statewide Advocacy Organization, and CGCOA has other roles related to the image of the game as well as other member benefits) and we just need to collaborate on the roles. Emmy Moore Minister stated that the low hanging fruit for CAG involvement is the golfers. Management companies are dealing with layoffs and uncertain futures, golfers have been benefitting from these statewide efforts and there are golfers with the means and desire to contribute if given a way to help. President Heaney stated that CAG needs to think about how we can best position ourselves for the end of this closure period. The industry is struggling, and we obviously need to be sensitive to that point, so it does not make sense to begin asking for contributions at this moment. Lee Finkel and Jim Ferrin volunteered to be members on the new messaging subcommittee. Len Dumas stated that it seems to be closely tied to the emergence committee so the groups should work closely together. President Heaney stated that he hopes to participate in many of these upcoming subcommittee conversations. CAG is in a better position now, but we need to think about our business strategy going forward.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Upcoming meetings. President Heaney asked whether the Board should have “google meet” or “zoom” meetings more frequently? The group agreed that it should meet again through the virtual format and offered the beginning of May as an option. Richard Harris stated that he would like to get the first meeting scheduled quickly while the game is in this closed period. He has a list of seven good contacts to begin the campaign committee conversation. Once the campaign subcommittee structure is in place, then the committee can begin to create messaging, then the subcommittee will bring the ideas back to the CAG Board. Joe Huston stated that the communications committee messaging should not be strictly advocacy campaign messaging. The messaging might be statewide, and it might be regional. CAG must determine what is it that we want to be saying to other prospective groups within the state. Jim Ferrin stated that we already agree that maintenance operations is something that we all agree to supporting. Craig stated that messaging needs to find its sweet spot so that groups will accept and run with it. Emmy Moore Minister stated that communications messaging should look to come up with short points that can find broad reach. Craig stated that shorter messages are useful, but that CAG should look to craft shorter messages out of full detailed analysis because to be successful CAG needs to have full command and context of the issues, and its audience.

The next formal in person meeting will be in the Fall. President Heaney offered to host the meeting at the SCGA offices. Emmy Moore Minister stated that if we do end up holding a Capitol Day over the summer then we would probably just want to hold the in-person meeting at that time, but it remains to be seen if that will be possible.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion to come before the Board, President Heaney adjourned the meeting at 12:10PM.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Kevin Fitzgerald