Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Town of East Haddam
Black Birch Golf Course Feasibility Study Committee
Special Meeting

Date: March 31, 2026
Location: Municipal Office Complex, Meeting Room #3

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, & Attendance

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Alan Ponanski at 7:00 PM in Meeting Room #3. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Study Committee Members Present:
Steven Longobardi, Donald Lorusso, Jeff Miller, Mike Morris, Alan Ponanski, John "Jef" Wolter, Daniel Zimmerman

Study Committee Members Absent:
None

Additional Attendees:
Jim Ventres, East Haddam Town Planner

Michael Callahan (resident and member of Banner HOA)

2. Approval of Agenda

The Meeting Agenda prepared by Chairman Ponanski was reviewed by the Committee and a motion to approve was made by Longobardi, seconded by Morris and approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes for Tuesday, March 24, 2026 Special Meeting

Minutes were distributed by Secretary Miller and reviewed by the Committee. No corrections or additions were proposed by the Members. Lorusso moved to approve the minutes, second by Morris and approved unanimously.

4. Old Business

a. Discussion of Steps for Completion of Feasibility Study by June 16, 2026

Chairman Ponanski reviewed the steps proposed for completion of the Committee's report by June.

- Determine the fair market value of the Property and a reasonable price.
- Estimate the cost of restoration for use as a public golf course.
- Investigate issues regarding water/irrigation system availability and cost.
- Prepare revenue projections and operating costs.
- Determine the overall feasibility of acquisition, restoration, and operations.
- Draft the Committee's recommendation to the Selectmen by June 14, 2026.

Secretary Miller suggested that "Determine Funding Sources" be added as a a separate step prior to "Prepare Revenue Projections…" in order to locate potential private and public (local, state, federal) sources for capital improvements and operations. Miller offered to take the lead on that step and Chairman Ponanski agreed.

It was agreed by the Committee that Bob Casner, chair of the Town's Economic Development Commission will be invited as a guest speaker at the next Committee meeting on April 7th.

5. Public Comment

No members of the public were present to share any comments.

6. New Business

a. Calendar of Events Assignment of Action Leaders for Each Step

Due to the scheduling of guest speakers before the Committee from 7:00 to 8:00 pm and from 8:00 to 9:00 pm, the Committee agreed to postpone the assignment of action leaders for each step to the April 7th meeting.

7. Executive Session

The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:05 pm on a motion by Miller, second by Lorusso, and a unanimous vote. The purpose was to discuss confidential financial information, feasibility studies and issues, appraisal and engineering findings, and other

information needed by the Committee for feasibility, negotiation, or strategy determinations regarding Black Birch Golf Course.

a. Guest Speaker: Jim Ventres, Town Planner, to discuss various issues and his thoughts on residential development and restoration at Black Birch

b. Guest Speakers: ____ and John Guilmette, owners of Guilmette Golf LLC, a Portland, CT firm that manages several golf courses, including Minnechaug in Glastonbury, and Keney Park and Goodwin Park in Hartford. Guilmette Golf visited Black Birch multiple times and prepared several estimates of restoration and operating costs, with the most recent completed in October 2025.

Chairman Ponanski asked for a motion to exit Executive Session at 9:00 pm and it was so moved by Lorusso and seconded by Wolters with unanimous Committee approval.

8. <u>Adjournment</u>

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm on a motion by Lorusso, second by Woltersw and unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Miller
Secretary, Black Birch Golf Course Feasibility Study Committee