Superintendents asked for ‘grow-in’ information

BY MARK LESLIE

The president of a major golf course construction company called on the superintendents to help builders determine the cost of "grow-in" for a new course.

Jerry Pierman, president of International Golf Group, asked "the fellows who know" to itemize the costs of repairing minor areas after the contractor has left.

"You need to give us some specifics so we can help you receive a more realistic first-, second- and third-year grow-in budget," he said.

"To date, no one has accurate figures," said Pierman. Occasionally no costs for grow-in are included in a project budget. At the same time, developers often have funded no money for grow-in expenses.

Averages, numbers, costs, studies reflecting demand for play, labor costs, golf course costs, equipment costs, design costs — all these figures are at the disposal of developers, Pierman said. But when the course is built, a surprise awaits many of them when "all of a sudden the grow-in budget pops up."

"They react is, 'I thought that was part of the developer's vocabulary as 'golf course costs,' " he said. "'Clubhouse costs,' " maintenance costs" and "design fees.

"Who will benefit from this?" he asked. "You will. What's also important is that the contractor will, because he will know that there are going to have to be such things as fertilizer and water and the golf course contractor has left, that there is going to have to be some money to clean up those areas outside the rough areas that the golfers see from the course. He's got to understand that minor washout areas are going to occur after heavy rain. Once the contractor is gone, who cleans that up? Who fixes that?"

"Talking about minor areas, but somebody has to take care of them. Large areas, the contractor repairs, but minor areas are very important."

"What I'm asking you to do is to let us know, in an itemized way, that we can help you,

Pierman said educating the industry and developers about grow-in costs is becoming even more important as municipalities get into golf course development and ownership.

He said officials need to show voters the figures to satisfy their need to know all the costs and to establish credibility.

"Blow your own horn, and by doing so you would help the golf course developers and builders," Pierman said. "Work with the architects society and the Golf Course Builders Association of America. We will also explain the term 'grow-in costs' and what it means."

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— Jerry Pierman