

# HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 13.1.1**  
**Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council**  
**Special Meeting**  
**May 6, 2021**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Denise Schofield, Executive Director, Parks & Recreation

Original Signed by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** April 4, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Creation of a Disc Golf Course in Dartmouth

---

## ORIGIN

January 10, 2019, Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council meeting motion:

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Mancini

That Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council refer the presentation and proposal from the Maritime Disc Golf Association for a staff report and return to Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council with a recommendation. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if  
(a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council recommend to Regional Council that it direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):

1. To take no further action on the proposal for a disc golf course at the North Woodside Community Centre; and
2. Continue to undertake the disc golf pilot project and related initiatives and assessments as part of the municipality's ongoing and future recreation programming.

## **BACKGROUND**

On January 10, 2019, Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council (HEMDCC) received a presentation from disc golf course designer and contractor, Benjamin Smith. Similar to traditional golf, disc golf commonly involves the throwing of flying discs within a course, from a series of successive tees to targets which are usually comprised of metal baskets. The sport can be played individually or in teams, typically on a nine or 18-hole (basket) course. Courses can be temporary or permanent and they can be integrated with other park activities or be standalone facilities.

The presentation outlined the community value of disc golf and included a proposal for the municipality to develop a course within a wooded area beside the North Woodside Community Centre in Dartmouth (Attachment A). The nine-hole course would provide an introduction to disc golf and would include permanent tee boxes and baskets. The proposed course would be available to anyone interested in playing, either with their own discs or ones which would be made available to borrow, through North Woodside Community Centre.

Developing a disc golf course at North Woodside Community Centre would include the removal of trees to create fairways. However, unlike traditional ball golf, large clear-cut areas are not needed for a disc golf course. The nine tee boxes would involve levelling and tamping down ground, then installing gravel and precast stone for a permanent tee box platform. There would be corresponding baskets installed for each hole, which would also be installed permanently. Initial cost estimates based on the submission is \$50,000 to design and install the course. The proposal envisions funding through the municipal capital budgeting process.

On the basis of the presentation, HEMDCC requested a staff report and following this request, a refined proposal was submitted by the proponent for consideration (Attachment B).

## **DISCUSSION**

The remainder of this report considers disc golf participation, the availability of courses, current HRM disc golf recreation programming, and the merits of proceeding with the proposed development of the North Woodside site.

### **Disc Golf Participation**

Disc Golf is organized throughout the Maritime provinces by the Maritime Disc Golf Association (MDGA), which represents the disc golf community and supports tournament play across the Maritimes. There is also a provincial sport organization; Nova Scotia Disc Sports. Through discussions with the MDGA, it was learned that although the number of disc golf participants is lower than many traditional sports, the participants are passionate about supporting the growth of the sport throughout the region. The MDGA has approximately 100 members; this is a doubling of participants in the last five years. Hammonds Plains Disc Golf Club, highlighted below, has 78 members, which is almost four times the membership since opening five years ago. Tournament participation has grown in the last five years, from 170 participants in 2015 to 884 participants in 2019. Participants range in age (8 to 80) and ability (beginner to expert). The growth indicates there is rising interest in the sport.

In addition to the general growth of the sport that has occurred over the past several years, through consultation with the Hammonds Plains Disc Golf Club and HRM recreation programming staff, there appears to be an increased interest in the sport since the onset of Covid-19. However, this is not unique to disc golf, as anecdotally there appears to be uptake in a wide array of outdoor recreational activities.

### **Availability of Courses**

The Hammonds Plains Disc Golf Course Club is the only designated disc golf course in HRM. It consists of 18 holes through a wooded area, with walking paths connecting each hole. Although it is located on

private property, it is free, accessible, and available to anyone interested in participating. The Club has been in operation since 2015, when the land owner permitted a group of disc golf enthusiasts to develop the course. Unlike a traditional golf course, there are no reserved tee times or course fees and anyone is welcome to use the course throughout the year. The site is well used but is not exceeding its capacity.

While disc golf can be played without a formalized course, some disc golf participants elect to play in parks or other wooded areas, this is done by identifying places or objects as their target and determining a certain number of throws to reach that target. This is comparable to other sports where informal play occurs such as pick up soccer, touch or flag football, touch rugby in a field or street or ball hockey played in vacant courts or parking lots.

### **HRM Disc Golf Programming**

Based on the potential interest in disc golf, the municipality recently acquired equipment to support participation in the sport. As of Spring 2020, Sackville Sports Stadium, Gordon R. Snow Community Centre, and Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre have disc golf baskets and discs that are available for recreation programming or for use by the general public, to set up a course of their own in a location of their choosing. Each of the respective community centres has nine baskets and 75 discs available. However, to date none of the equipment has been loaned out due Covid-19 protocols.

Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre initiated an eight-week introductory disc golf program in fall 2020, with two programs: an introduction to disc golf and a putting league. The introductory program had 8 participants ranging in ages and the putting league had 14 participants which were predominantly men aged 35 to 50. Both programs were offered in the gymnasium of Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre. Considering this was the initial attempt to formalize disc golf programming that took place during the reopening of municipal recreation facilities following Covid-19 closures, these program participation numbers are considered a success. Future recreation programs without the same Covid-19 restrictions that are currently in place will provide an improved indication of ongoing interest in the sport.

### **North Woodside Community Centre Proposal**

The proposal for a course at North Woodside Community Centre is for a wooded area, south of the North Woodside Community Centre parkland, west of Pleasant Street and east of the Trans Canada Trail. The proposal consists of nine holes, designed specifically for beginners. The wooded area is approximately three acres in size, the majority of which is comprised of deciduous trees, with a creek running through a portion of it. This area has positive attributes as a location for a beginner disc golf course, such as its proximity to the community centre. However, based on the undeveloped state of the area and the alterations to the trees and lands that would be required it would be premature to develop a course at this location. Staff of the NWCC noted that its Board might be supportive of the disc golf proposal but matters such as the availability and use of parking would need to be considered. Further such discussions were not held on the basis of other findings and proposed directions in this report.

The North Woodside proposal includes consideration of future HRM capital investment. Although the creation of a course in the woods would not involve intensive changes to the landscape, there would still be disruption to the natural area that would require capital costs. The capital costs cited in the proposal have not been fully investigated and the project has not been included within the municipality capital budget plan. To support a future capital investment in the creation of a dedicated disc golf course at this location or elsewhere, it would be beneficial to evaluate how the sport is developing through the recreation programming offered by the municipality and the usage of the newly acquired disc golf equipment at municipal community centres. Supplemented with updates from the MDGA and other clubs, additional supporting information for a future capital submission may be considered.

### **Pilot Programming**

While this staff report recommends that no further action be taken on the proposal for a disc golf course at the North Woodside Community Centre, there are opportunities to gather data and strengthen community

interest in the sport. In fact, initial discussions between municipal staff and the MDGA led to some of the current recreation programming and the purchase of equipment for community use. Considering equipment availability and access within HRM Recreation Programming, there are opportunities for the development and promotion of disc golf in partnership with the local disc golf community and HRM Parks and Recreation.

As a proposed type of pilot programming, temporary installations of loaned equipment within parks, which does not require landscape alterations, can more readily be implemented than the establishment of the permanent course in North Woodside. This type of programming would help to assess future, and more permanent infrastructure. The pilot programming approach has been discussed with Mr. Smith and local disc golf participants and has been met with support.

Pilot programming provides HRM the opportunity to collect data and gauge growth potential for disc golf. Further indications of the interest in municipal programming and the use of equipment will provide more evidence of community interest, need, and opportunities. This is the type of data that can better support a review of future proposals.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial impacts based on the staff recommendation. Should Community Council choose to recommend that Regional Council direct the CAO to advance the development of a disc golf course at North Woodside Community Centre, there would be financial implications that would be determined through the 2022/23 capital budget planning process.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendation in this report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The local disc golf community was engaged to understand the current provision of courses in HRM as well as the programming objectives for developing the sport within the municipality. Staff of the North Woodside Community Centre were engaged about the potential location of the disc golf course and its possible relationship to the community centre.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The environmental implications to developing a disc golf course within the identified wooded area would include the selective removal of trees and modifications to the landscape as described in this report.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council could recommend that Regional Council direct the CAO to advance the development of a disc golf course at North Woodside Community Centre through the 2022/23 capital budget planning process.

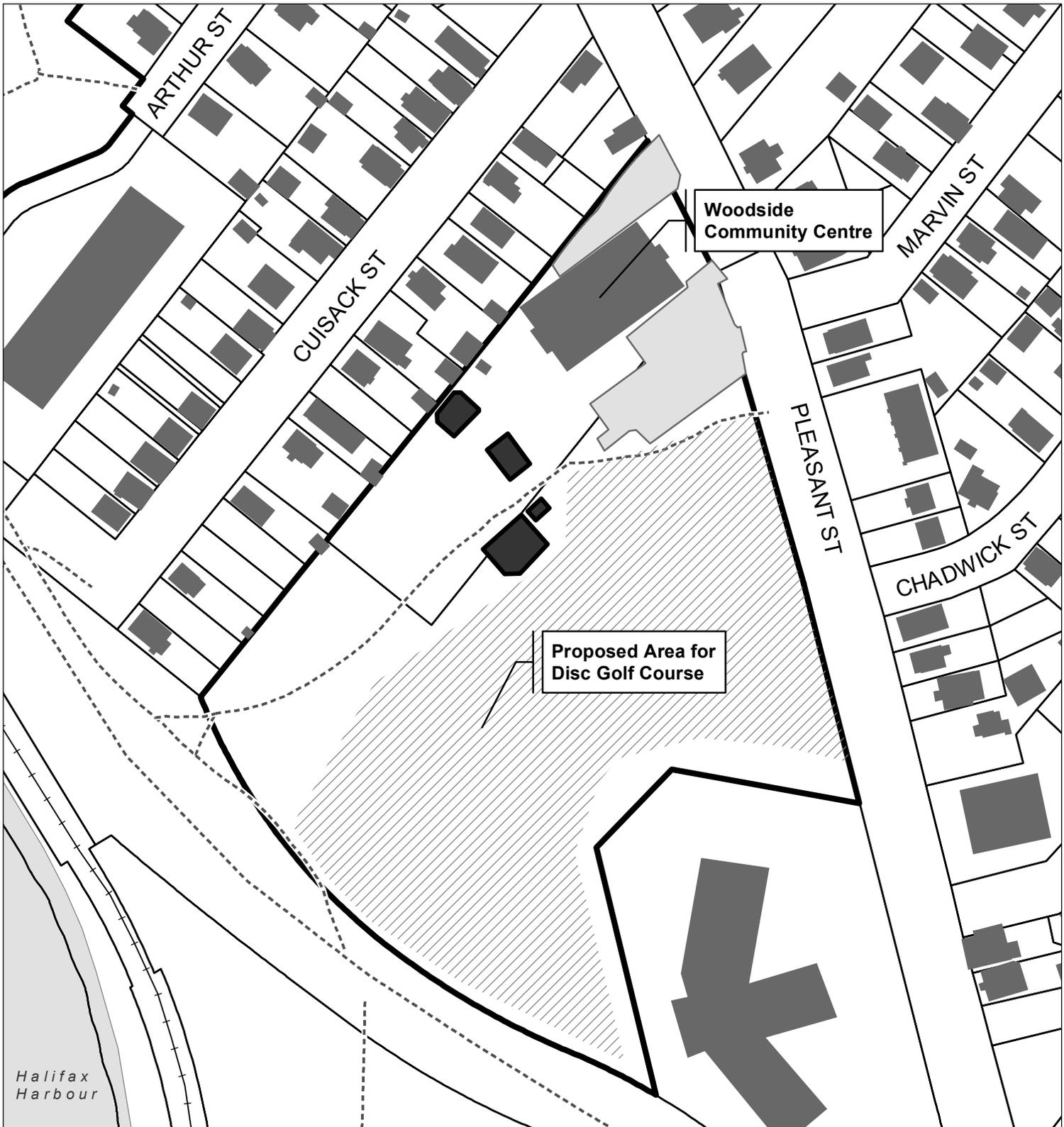
### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A Reference Map North Woodside Location  
Attachment B Disc Golf Proposal Submission

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Gareth Evans, Recreation Planning Specialist 902.292.1264

---

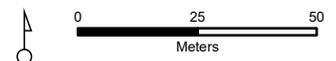


### Proposed North Woodside Disc Golf Course

- Trail
- +— Railroad
- //// Proposed area for disc golf course
- Playground Surface
- Building
- HRM Park
- Parking Lot

**HALIFAX**

**Parks & Recreation  
Strategic Planning & Design**



### **Maritime Disc Golf Association Course Proposal for Dartmouth**

The Maritime Disc Golf Association would like to formally submit a proposal to oversee the construction of a permanent 9-hole disc golf course located next door to the North Woodside Community Centre at 230 Pleasant Street, Dartmouth.

#### **Why disc golf?**

A disc golf course would provide an inexpensive form of recreation for people of all age and skill levels and be a welcome addition to the year-round recreational activities in the HRM. Disc skills, and in particular disc golf, have been incorporated into the outdoor pursuits and physical education classes in several of our local schools and is a universally accessible game for people of all ages and skill levels. Unfortunately for the HRM there is currently only 1 disc golf course available for play. The installation of a disc golf course would provide an important recreational resource for our entire community. Communities of similar sizes and population of the HRM in the United States average over 30 courses. A disc golf course would give everyone, from youth to seniors, a free, healthy, and challenging outlet for their energies. There are already a growing number of disc golfers in the area as shown in the MDGA's 2016 disc golf survey and evidence by the current usages of the course in Hammonds Plains. These players would be the building blocks of a healthy disc golf community in Dartmouth.

#### **Park Safety:**

A disc golf course placed in the park will increase foot traffic at random times during the day and steadily during evenings and weekends. The influx of purposeful visitors would discourage the presence of individuals who are only in the park to cause mischief and perhaps engage in lascivious behavior. Areas that are infrequently used and considered unsafe could be "opened-up" by the course. As many recreations departments have found the installation of a disc golf course has led to significant decreases in inappropriate activity, vandalism and litter as users have a stake in keeping the course and surrounding area clean and well kept, and safe. The course has been designed to optimize the ability for multi-use and to keep the potential flight of discs as safe as possible by directing them away from Pleasant Street, the playground, North Woodside Centre parking lot, and Harbour Trail.

#### **Conservation:**

Disc golf is an environmentally friendly sport. Unlike traditional golf, a disc golf course does not require manicured fairways or additional grass which must be mowed and watered daily. The proposed course is designed to fit into the existing flora of this city park. In addition, disc golfers overall tend to take great pride in where they play, helping reduce potential litter on the course. In the long-term, a disc golf course can also help in the preservation of the park by giving the local players a stake in its preservation and protection.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Maritime Disc Golf Association would be the main promoter for the disc golf activities in the park, especially in the first year. The MDGA would create a club and provide weekly disc golf events open to the public. The MDGA would also receive the money to build the course and hire Greensmith Contracting for the bulk of the work. Greensmith Contracting is owned and

## **Attachment B - Submitted Proposal for a Disc Golf Course in Dartmouth**

operated by Benjamin Smith the former MDGA president. This company has 10 years of landscape experience and has built 14 disc golf courses already. Greensmith would act as project manager for all the physical work that needs to be done in order to create a lasting disc golf course and a safe and healthy public park. The HRM would provide the funding for the project and oversee the maintenance of the park after the course's completion. The North Woodside Community Centre, The Homebridge Centre, the Dartmouth Campus of NSCC, and any other interested community groups should act as promoters who encourage any/all of their members to participate in the various disc golf activities that take place on site all year long.

### **Details and Timeline:**

The creation and installation of a disc golf course at the park would take between 3 and 6 months to complete from the beginning of the design stage to the opening day of the course. This process begins by reviewing and confirming the proposed course layout (attached). Included in this layout would be the placement of all tee pads and baskets. After the layout of the course has been agreed upon the cleaning work will begin. The aim for park is to cut trees that are less than 6 inches in diameter in the general fairway areas and to remove horizontal tree limbs up to a height of roughly 12 feet. The desired outcome is to get a park that is healthy, spacious, safe, and suitable for multi-use walking and disc golf activities.

In some cases the organic materials that are cut will be turned into mulch, in other cases suitable limbs will be incorporated as borders or 'natural walls' for the edges of the paths. Cutting will be done in stages so assessments can be made as the project develops. This process can take up to 6 weeks depending on man power and conditions. Upon the completion of tree cutting gravel bases for all 9 tee pads will be laid. Each pad will be roughly 9 feet long and 4 feet wide with a base of 6 inches of compacted gravel. After the gravel pad has been established a rubber tee pad will be set in place with tee signs mounted adjacent to each pad. Baskets will then be permanently set in place using metal 'sleeves' and a small amount of concrete. Each basket will be set in a sleeve and secured using a lock and collar. Baskets can be removed or relocated if necessary. The final step before officially opening the course is to place direction and caution signs in key locations around the park. These signs will indicate the flow of traffic for all park users and will draw attention to high use areas. Once the physical work on the course has been completed an opening day event will be held on site. This event should be a partnership between The Maritime Disc Golf Association, The North Woodside Community Centre, The Homebridge Centre, Greensmith Contracting, and the HRM. Promotion for this event should take place through any and all avenues available to each partner as well as the Dartmouth campus of the NSCC.

The opening day event, lead by the MDGA, will feature a disc golf demonstration and free discs to potential users of the course. This will be a public event with a media presence that recognizes all the partners who have made this course a reality.

After the course has been opened the NWCC can keep a number of discs in house to use as loaners to the community. Workshops and special events can be held throughout the year as demand dictates. The MDGA will host at least 2 workshops and one public event on the courses

## Attachment B - Submitted Proposal for a Disc Golf Course in Dartmouth

in the first year of being open and will train any and all staff members who wish to learn more about disc golf. The MDGA will also donate 25 discs to the NWCC. Local schools and community groups will be contacted to take part in the opening day event as well as any and all future events that will be held here. If the process were to begin today with an approved course layout it could be playable in 6 months.

### 9 Hole Disc Golf Course Costs:

9 Permanent Baskets \$4,950 (\$550 each)

Individual Tee Signs \$500

Gravel \$350

Course Map/Rules Signs \$185

Freight \$670\*

Course design fee \$2,500

Park Cleaning including new bridge and tee pads \$40,000

Total \$49,155\$

Taxes \$7,373.25

Final Bill \$56,528.25

\*Freight charges may vary a final quote can be given upon agreement of this contract.

\*\* The park cleaning fees can be reduced to fit the HRM's budget but this proposal assumes public walking paths will be incorporated into the final designs.

Link for basket size:

<https://dproberts.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/basket-size.gif>

Letter from the town of Sackville:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=f97557d76e&view=att&th=15434dc5b379ba8a&attid=0.1&disp=safe&zw>

And New Minas:

[https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=f97557d76e&view=att&th=158bacd4eabefbc2&attid=0.1&disp=safe&realattid=f\\_iw6got290&zw](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=f97557d76e&view=att&th=158bacd4eabefbc2&attid=0.1&disp=safe&realattid=f_iw6got290&zw)

Live at 5 clip for Bible Hill School course:

<http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=100570>

What is disc golf? This is disc golf:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kO3ZSkFt8Cw>

A sample of the 2015 National Event <https://vimeo.com/134161817>

Attachment B - Submitted Proposal for a Disc Golf Course in Dartmouth

