



# PG&R Commission Meeting

Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis

[chapelhilltennis.org](http://chapelhilltennis.org)

10/24/2021

Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis

1

Thank you to the Commission and P&R staff members for inviting the tennis community to present tonight. We consider ourselves to simply be known as “Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis”.

Value(s)



Bolin Creek Greenway



As a start, I took a stroll on the Bolin Creek Greenway this past weekend. It was a beautiful, peaceful, and quiet experience. Since this commission also covers Greenways, I want to thank all of for your continual support of our CH Greenways.

I know this is not a picture of a tennis court, but I will come back to it again later in the presentation.

# Our Expectations

*Fairness and Transparency*



I originally titled this slide “Our Ask”. But actually it is more than that it is our expectation on how we want to be treated.

Historically, there are plenty of examples where the tennis community has been treated unfairly or at a minimum ignored. Also, there have been several decisions affecting the tennis community that were made without asking for feedback, impacts, knowledge, or recommendations or even communicating with the tennis community.

# Our Mission

## *Preserve and Improve CH Public Tennis Courts*



Our mission today is simple.

First it is based upon our belief that Chapel Hill should provide viable and safe public tennis courts for its citizens (including families, youth and students).

Preserve – keep what facilities we have. The town has been way to eager to convert or eliminate existing courts. There are fewer playable CH public tennis courts today then when I started playing in 1982.

Improve – there has been a lack of basic maintenance over the years to where the court conditions are barely playable, uninviting, and potentially unsafe.

This is a minimal mission statement asking you to support us in our “survival” as there are some making proposals to repurpose our existing courts.

Some day, as many members believe today, we should expand this mission statement to include the word “Grow”.

## Our Past Experience

*Neglect*



Ephesus (2012)



Cedar Falls



Ephesus



Oakwood



chapelhilltennis.org

Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis

10/24/2021 5

This has been the practice over the years for maintaining the tennis courts:

- Do nothing except basic maintenance
- When courts get too bad, condemn them and remove nets
- After users complain enough, investigate and ask town for funding
- Chose contractor, repair a few of the courts (process takes minimum of two years)
- Users are stuck playing on deteriorated courts for majority of time

The practice can be summarized with the word “Neglect”.

The top picture is Ephesus in 2012 when 3 courts were condemned as unsafe to play. The nets were removed from these courts.

The bottom three pictures shows conditions today from the courts at Cedar Falls, Ephesus and Oakwood. Players have witnessed court conditions deteriorate over the years. There is no court in Chapel Hill that is as good as or meets the standards which can be found in neighboring communities of Carrboro, Durham or Hillsborough.

# Our Progress Today

## *Engagement*



Investigating  
Acoustic Screen  
(Noise Reduction)



It has been noted that number of players who play on the CH public courts appears to be decreasing. Imagine if you were a landlord of an apartment complex and you let the condition of the apartments deteriorate to the point they are dirty and unsafe. Tenants would start to leave. It is not that there are fewer tenants, it is that the tenants are going elsewhere.

This is the same with tennis players. They are joining private clubs and most clubs have now frozen membership due to increased numbers. Eno USTA group has indicated they have 700 players registered who live in Chapel Hill but play elsewhere. A developer is building the largest racquet sports complex called SwingNC in Brier Creek at estimated cost of \$55 million because of number of tennis players in Triangle area.

Today, we are working with P&R staff on short term goals to make our courts more welcoming ... benches, fill in cracks, new practice backboards, noise reducing screens, pruning trees around lights, replacing burned out bulbs, and putting up number court signs. We are having monthly status meetings and we are working together to improve conditions. There still are many long term issues that need to be planned to get the courts to standards we generally expect in Chapel Hill.

# Our Tennis Community



Family



Adults



School Teams



Youth and Students



Lesson and Camps

Almost Exclusively  
Local And \$Taxpayers



[chapelhilltennis.org](http://chapelhilltennis.org)

Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis

10/24/2021 7

Our tennis community consists of:

- Youth and Students
- Families
- School teams (practices and matches)
- Lessons and Camp participants
- Adults

With few exceptions, the community is local to neighborhoods around the courts and importantly CH taxpaying citizens.

When decisions are made such as removing a net or eliminating a court, these are the groups that are impacted. Voices from this group are rarely heard because they are not the ones who go to speak at a board meetings, write a mail or send in pictures, or speak with a loud voice. They just want to drop-in at a public court to play tennis.

# Our Tennis Voices



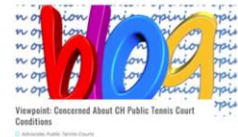
Win Win – Not All Decisions Need Be Zero  
Sum  
September 26, 2021



Town Proposal Eliminates Another Tennis  
Court. Really?  
October 17, 2021



Viewpoint: Advocating For Safe and Viable  
Tennis Courts And CH Town's Failure to  
Respond  
August 27, 2021



## Ephesus Tennis Courts

## Court Maintenance Lists

Description	Status
E-01: Repair crack on Courts 1-2 (temporary fix)	Complete
E-02: Put net back up on Court 2	Complete
E-03: Repair crack running length of Court 4 (temporary fix)	Not Started

... More

- Launch of [www.chapelhilltennis.org](http://www.chapelhilltennis.org)



chapelhilltennis.org

Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis

10/24/2021 8

Organizing the tennis community.

A new web site [www.chapelhilltennis.org](http://www.chapelhilltennis.org) has been launched. The purpose is to:

- Organize the tennis community
- Create a central repository for communication
- List of ongoing court improvements and proposed enhancements
- Encourage tennis community to become active for improving our public courts
- Provide a social media outlet for information and action
- Display information useful to current and future tennis players
- Ensure our voices are heard through contributor blogs/viewpoints, opinions that are clearly viewable to the town and community

The pictures are current screen shots from the website. All are encouraged to visit the site and return frequently to check on tennis updates and news.



# Our Public Tennis Parks



## *Values That Guide Us*

- Open for drop-in play except for reserved times for school, lessons, camps, maintenance or rental reservations
- As public taxpayer facility, rules are not dictated by any social, private groups, appointed individuals or investors
- Diversity by local community users is encouraged and generally a value of CH
- Attract users by providing a safe, welcoming, and clean environment especially for our youth, families and student athletes
- And to preserve and improve facilities for all current and future players

*It's only because of these guiding values that we have*



What is a public park? What separates it from a private club?

The tennis community believes it is guided by our values listed on the slide. Some of them are:

- Open for free drop-in play
- Rules are not directed by any specific group
- Diversity of local users of all ages and abilities
- Support of our student athletes when feasible
- Safe and welcoming facilities managed by the town using tax payer funds.

## Values(s)



*Friends of CH Public Tennis Community  
Thank You For Your Support*



chapelhilltennis.org

Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis

10/24/2021 10

### Values Should be Guiding Our Public Park Decisions

The preservation of public facilities should not be decided on numbers of users, who can organize the largest group, or those speaking with the loudest voices. It should be based upon the values that guide us, so all town citizens can experience our public parks such as:

- Bolin Creek
- Playgrounds
- And public tennis courts

(it should be noted that no one was using any of these public parks when the picture was taken)

Thank you for your support of CH Public Tennis