

TENNIS COURT STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARY

Date: January 30, 2023

Time: 1:00 PM-2:15 PM

Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Parks and Recreation Department:

Atuya Cornwell, Interim Parks and Recreation Director, Jonathan Ray, Senior Recreation Supervisor Athletics, Marcia Purvis, Principal Planner, Nikiya Cherry, Recreation Manager.

PG&R Commission:

Renuka Soll

Chapel Hill Town Ombuds Department:

Anita Badrock, Senior Ombuds

Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis:

Sue Balog, Ericka Briceno, Arlon Day, Jerry Edwards, Dale Finch, Elizabeth Heetderks, Kevin Kirk, Janet Ranheim, Kim Roberts, Coach Taylor, Diane Willis

Meeting Purpose

To collectively identify strategies to preserve and improve CH public tennis court facilities, to enhance communication, and provide an update on current projects. To acknowledge completed positive change in these areas.

Welcome and New Participant Introductions

1. Atuya and Jerry provided short New Year's welcome messages to everyone.
2. Kevin Kirk, Elizabeth Heetderks, and Anita Badrock (re)introduced themselves.

Updates of Maintenance Items and Renovation Projects

Full list of requested court maintenance items with completion status may be found at: [Court Maintenance List](#)

1. Maintenance updates:
 - a. Replacement of burned out light bulbs at Ephesus and other sites. Jonathan mentioned the town is trying to contract and schedule replacements but could

not give date. There are 8 or more lights out at Ephesus. Apparently Phillips also has problems with lights and town is collaborating with school system to get fixed.

- b. Janet asked that light shields should also be turned down to reduce glare from the lights. Jonathan said he would ask the repair crew to look at doing that.
 - c. Jerry mentioned that tensioning of the nets at Ephesus needs to be done. On court 3, a ball has been placed on the post to tighten the net. Hopefully this can be done quickly.
2. Hargraves renovation Project
 - a. Funding has been acquired to go out for bids and begin construction
 - b. March 27, estimate to begin construction
 - c. 150 days estimate to complete
3. Cedar Falls Renovation Project
 - a. There is a large shortfall of funding. Town under guidance of Marcia has been exploring other funding opportunities including ARPA, USTA, and others.
 - b. The design is in the 90% completion phase. Until funding is reached, they cannot go out for construction bids. Given lack of funding, no dates are available.
 - c. Elizabeth asked “what can we (tennis and school community) do to speed things along?” It appears Cedar Falls has not been renovated in over 20 years and already two nets are down due to unsafe conditions. Elizabeth had tennis students and families write town council but to no avail.
 - d. Renuka said she would ask that the commission petition town council again for elevating priority for CF renovation.
 - e. Note: without a schedule for this project in the foreseeable future, the four tennis courts at Ephesus remain even more important to the tennis community. The PG&R commission even recognized this in their September 2022 meeting resolving to keep all of the four courts dedicated to tennis.

Other Discussions

Loss of yet another dedicated tennis court at Ephesus as described in Atuya's mail of Jan 20, 2023 @ 5:45pm. Copy of e-mail may be viewed [<Here>](#)

1. Atuya indicated that P&R followed a process for making the decision. Jonathan said data was collected and claimed that data provided by PB was not used/influential. However, the tennis community is in the dark and has no idea what the process was used and not seen any data that was collected. Once again there was zero transparency with the tennis community with the decision process.
2. The plan is to have a two month trial/pilot where PB has priority on court 4 on Wednesdays and Fridays from 2-11 pm. The pilot will then be evaluated when it ends in March.
3. Tennis community reminded that having extra lines on court is distracting, portable nets stored on courts can be dangerous with potential injury to tennis players running for balls near the fence, up to 8 B players walking behind the courts every 15 minutes would be disruptive to tennis games, and the noise level will be elevated even more being adjacent.
4. The tennis community opposed the plan and gave several reasons such as tennis finally got resurfaced courts only to have one dedicated tennis court taken away. Sue passionately commented "We just want to have tennis courts to play on. Why aren't you hearing us?"
5. Jerry reminded the group of the continual attacks on tennis facilities over the past 18 months and efforts to reduce number of dedicated CH public tennis courts. It is worth summarizing here:
 - a. In Sept 2021, Phil told the PB group "no" when verbally asked to play PB on the tennis courts. Phil said that P&R recognized tennis was a drop in sport of the local community.
 - b. Then in March 2022, PB submitted written proposal, and tennis was given a week to respond. Tennis wrote and submitted a response outlining the history of courts and mentioned there are already too few public tennis courts in Chapel Hill and the ones we have are poorly maintained. P&R said they would put a temporary resurface on Ephesus courts which was done in October and gave tennis community optimism for more tennis players gladly returning to Ephesus.
 - c. In summer 2022, tennis was asked to defend its positions yet again. We asked the town to look for other options to create additional PB opportunities such as Southern Community Park. P&R is setting up additional PB courts there. But PB groups continued to eye the courts at Ephesus. It is unclear if data is being collected on use of PB courts at Southern Community? If not, why not? Can overflow at Ephesus be encouraged to play there?

- d. P&R decided to have a survey of PB and tennis players to gather information. In this survey, 52% of PB respondents were from CH/Orange County opposed to over 90% of tennis players. In reality, tennis had a total of more respondents from CH/Orange County. P&R appears to have ignored this survey statistics.
 - e. At the Sept 2022 meeting, tennis was asked again to defend their position to keep the tennis courts at Ephesus. PB attempted to change their proposal with words like pilot, trial, temporary. But as it explained by tennis, Cedar Falls and Hargraves will be out of commission and Ephesus is really the only remaining tennis courts. As result the commission unanimously resolved to keep the four courts dedicated to tennis as least until Cedar Falls was renovated.
 - f. Then in January 2023, P&R decided to go against the commission resolution. They mysteriously put together a plan outlined in his mail without any input from tennis or knowledge from tennis. See goals and vision at end of this report and ask “how was this handled?”
6. Jonathan stated there are still plans for classes, lessons, and clinics at Ephesus and some are listed in Atuya’s e-mail.

Closing

1. The pilot started Friday, January 27, 2023 with temporary yellow lines taped on the courts. Post note: There was already an altercation on the following Monday which Janet documented. PB nets were being left on court 4, and PB leaders are encouraging PB players to use court 4 (which PB has conveniently number 7&8). Both groups are asking players to be courteous and obey their respective priority times.
2. Next Meetings
 - a. Scheduled every other month in 2023. 4th Monday @ 1pm
 - b. Next meeting planned for: Monday, March 27, 2023 @ 1pm.

2023 Goals: *To continue moving forward with the actions and projects noted and to keep open communication between Tennis Community and Parks and Recreation. Be guided by the principle of “fairness, transparency and honesty”.*

Vision: *Preserve and improve CH public tennis courts and facilities*

Progress: *Measured by actions not words*