

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Julie Dahlen, Director, Library and Recreation Services
SUBJECT: Monitoring of Pickleball Facility at Centennial Park
DATE: August 5, 2014

Needs: For the City Council to consider options for monitoring the use of Pickleball (PB) Courts at Centennial Park.

Facts

1. Invented in 1965, PB combines elements of tennis, badminton and ping pong; it is considered to be the fastest growing sport in America.
2. On January 13, 2014, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) endorsed a proposal from PB contract class instruction, Jack Hodges on behalf of PRPBC to fund the conversion of the roller hockey rink at Centennial Park to a permanent, dedicated, five-court PB facility.
3. The PRAC endorsement stipulated that:
 - a. The PB courts shall still be considered a public facility and will not be for the exclusive use of PRPBC. Recreation staff will unlock the facility between 6 am and 8 am on weekdays and lock the facility at dusk. As is the case with existing tennis courts, informal use of the PB courts may occur at any time outside of the contract class schedule. Special arrangements for weekend tournaments may be made with Recreation staff.
 - b. PRPBC shall abide by the maintenance requirements as determined by Public Works staff.
4. Public Works staff set the following maintenance terms:
 - a. All daily maintenance including blowing, sweeping and litter pickup is the responsibility of the accountable PB group.
 - b. Any required maintenance and/or refreshing of the PB court lines and/or specialized surfacing is the responsibility of the accountable PB group.
 - c. Any required sport supplies are the responsibility of the accountable PB group;
 - d. Repairs to the concrete due to cracking judged significant by City staff or damaged fencing judged dangerous by City staff is the responsibility of the City.
 - e. Emptying of permanent facility trash cans is the responsibility of the City.
5. City staff advised PB players that City staff does not provide security or regular monitoring of the tennis and PB courts.

6. PRPBC assured City Council that members would establish a volunteer patrol to report any instances of vandalism or illegal activity on the facility to the Paso Robles Police Department in a timely fashion.
7. PRAC and City Council agreed that no City funds would be expended for this project; PRPBC members raised over \$20,000 through private donations and fundraising events.
8. PRPBC completed the project in May, and the five courts are now in use.
9. Councilman Hamon raised concerns about the monitoring of the PB courts at the July 1, 2014 City Council meeting, reporting apparent use of the courts by the public for activities other than PB such as skateboarding, dog walking and smoking cigarettes. Some net cables were stretched as a result of people sitting on the nets, and scuff marks have been found on the courts. City Council requested that these concerns be forwarded to the PRAC for their evaluation and recommendations.
10. Approximately thirty PB players attended the July 14, 2014, PRAC meeting, and several members provided public comment. A variety of options was presented for PRAC to evaluate. By unanimous vote, PRAC recommended that PRPBC implement a more regimented volunteer patrol to provide increased monitoring, as this solution fulfilled previous commitments to avoid cost to the City and to keep the courts open and available to the general public. City staff also offered to post relevant City ordinances prohibiting skateboarding and dogs on the courts.

Analysis &

Conclusion:

Concerns have been raised regarding the public's use of the new PB courts at Centennial Park for activities other than PB. PRAC invited PB members to its July 14, 2014 meeting to discuss concerns and to consider solutions. By unanimous vote, PRAC recommended that PRPBC implement a more regimented volunteer patrol to provide increased monitoring, as this solution fulfilled previous commitments to avoid cost to the City and to keep the courts open and available to the general public. City staff also offered to post relevant City ordinances prohibiting skateboarding and dogs on the courts.

Fiscal

Impact:

Cost of signs, estimated at \$150.00

Options:

- a. Accept the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, advising the Paso Robles Pickleball Club to form a regimented volunteer patrol to monitor use of the PB courts at Centennial Park and authorize City staff to post relevant City ordinances on the courts.
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option.

Attachments

- Resolution #14-052, authorizing Paso Robles Pickleball Club to convert the current roller hockey rink at Centennial Park to a permanent, dedicated five-court Pickleball facility.
- Pickleball court monitoring options reviewed at the July 14, 2014 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

RESOLUTION NO. 14-052

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
TO AUTHORIZE CONVERTING THE ROLLER HOCKEY RINK AT CENTENNIAL PARK
TO A PERMANENT, DEDICATED, FIVE-COURT PICKLEBALL FACILITY**

WHEREAS, Pickleball combines elements of tennis, badminton and ping pong, is considered to be the fastest growing sport in America and was invented in 1965; and

WHEREAS, for nearly 2 years, Jack Hodges has conducted a PB program in the roller hockey rink at Centennial Park as a contract class, was authorized to paint stripes on the existing roller hockey rink surface and is currently providing his own portable nets; and

WHEREAS, as a contract class instructor, Mr. Hodges completed a vetting process with the City, is required to carry liability insurance, provides a set schedule of play, charges a participation fee and supervises the PB program. The city receives 25% of his class proceeds, and Mr. Hodges provides routine maintenance of the courts; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hodges' class has enjoyed steadily increasing popularity, prompting the formation of the Paso Robles Pickleball Club (PRPBC); and

WHEREAS, on January 13, 2014, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) approved a proposal from Mr. Hodges on behalf of PRPBC to fund the conversion of the roller hockey rink at Centennial Park to a permanent, dedicated, five-court PB facility; and

WHEREAS, the PRAC recommendation includes the following provisions:

- The conversion of the facility shall not displace any other formal recreation programs. Recreation staff confirmed that no formal play has occurred in the roller hockey rink for several years. An informal poll of drop-in players indicated very little use overall.
- The PB courts shall still be considered a public facility and will not be for the exclusive use of PRPBC. Recreation staff will unlock the facility between 6 am and 8 am on weekdays and lock the facility at dusk. As is the case with existing tennis courts, informal use of the PB courts may occur at any time outside of the contract class schedule. Special arrangements for weekend tournaments may be made with Recreation staff.
- PRPBC shall abide by the maintenance requirements as determined by Public Works staff.

WHEREAS, Public Works staff has favorably evaluated the feasibility of the project and has set the following maintenance terms:

- All daily maintenance including blowing, sweeping and litter pickup is the responsibility of the accountable PB group.
- Any required maintenance and/or refreshing of the PB court lines and/or specialized surfacing is the responsibility of the accountable PB group.
- Any required sport supplies are the responsibility of the accountable PB group.
- Repairs to the concrete due to cracking judged significant by City staff or damaged fencing judged dangerous by City staff is the responsibility of the City.
- Emptying of permanent facility trash cans is the responsibility of the City; and

WHEREAS, the City does not provide security or regular monitoring of the tennis and PB courts, PRPBC has indicated a willingness to establish a volunteer patrol among its members along the lines of a Neighborhood Watch group so that any instances of vandalism or illegal activity on the facility can be reported to the Paso Robles Police Department in a timely fashion; and

WHEREAS, no City funds will be expended for this project; PRPBC members are currently raising funds to cover the estimated cost, not to exceed \$18,000; and

WHEREAS, PRPBC is currently seeking three competitive bids for the improvements and has been informed that the project is subject to prevailing wage requirements.

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles, to authorize the Paso Robles Pickleball Club to convert the current roller hockey rink at Centennial Park to a permanent, dedicated five-court Pickleball facility.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles at a regular meeting of said Council held on the 15th day of April 2014 by the following vote:

AYES: Hamon, Steinbeck, Martin, Strong, Picanco
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:



Duane Picanco, Mayor

ATTEST:



Caryn Jackson, Deputy City Clerk

MONITORING OPTIONS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

1. Members of the Paso Robles Pickleball Club voluntarily monitor the courts as stipulated in the agreement.
2. Lock the courts at all times that the Pickleball Club is not conducting its activities.
3. Allow access only to members of the public wanting to use the court for its intended use via a combination lock on the courts. Players would need to check in at the public service desk at Centennial Park which is open from noon to 5, Monday through Friday.
4. Hire outside security to be paid for by PRPB Club.
5. Install security cameras on the courts, to be paid for by PRPB Club. Per Paso Robles Police Department, there are drawbacks and limitations associated with the use of security cameras:
 - *Regarding 'flash cams' (sometimes referred to as wildlife cameras or motion activated cameras) these can be effective low cost deterrents in some situations. However, there is no perfect tech solution to prevent ongoing criminal activity at a specific location. These cameras can scare some folks away, but once the crooks become aware of the device it becomes vulnerable to vandalism and/or theft. If the camera is hidden to prevent detection, the question arises as to whether it retains any deterrence value. Also, if the camera is hidden the process of collecting the photo evidence can be cumbersome unless there is a wireless download or live streaming capability. That wireless capability will increase the cost of the device, but luckily as tech improves those costs are coming down. Some of these devices can actually broadcast a warning message when the motion sensor is activated.*
 - *Regarding fake cameras, the same issues described above are in play. While the cost per device is much less, in order for these to be effective they have to be visible and prominently displayed, which leads to vulnerability unless you can get them secured in an inaccessible area. That may be possible with those high fences over at Centennial but without looking I am not sure.*
 - *We have used one of these devices at Sherwood Park in the past but found it to be labor cost prohibitive. Keep in mind that we were using a system that did not have the wireless/live streaming capability. I believe these devices can be effective when used in conjunction with good lighting, fencing and gates/locks. No matter what, if they are used they need to be maintained and updated/adjusted on a regular basis otherwise they will lose their deterrence impact.*
 - *One of the biggest challenges for the PD/City in regards to video camera systems is the cost and storage of data. To acquire a reliable and good system, they are normally very expensive (over \$100K). In addition, once we install such a system in a public place we have an obligation by law to retain the video footage for approx. one year. So the cost of the system coupled with the cost to buy storage capacity and manage the data is quite a bit more involved than one might imagine.*
 - *Ability of police officers to promptly respond is affected by other department concerns – citizens' safety taking priority over facilities maintenance/vandalism.*