

FORMAL REPORT

To:	Mayor Strathdee and Members of Council
Prepared by:	Stephanie Ische, Director of Community Services
Date of Meeting:	12 June 2018
Subject:	DCS 12-2018 Follow-Up: Pickleball Courts on the Tennis Courts

PURPOSE

This report serves as a follow-up to DCS 09-2018 which was considered at the May 22, 2018 regular Council meeting. Further information is presented below in respect to the common agreements that have been established for creating two pickleball courts at the tennis facility, and possibilities for long term collaboration and promotion of racquet sports in St. Marys.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT DCS 12-2018 Follow-Up: Pickleball Courts on Tennis Courts be received, and

THAT Council approve Recreation and Leisure Master Plan recommendation #48; and

THAT Staff be directed to create two multi-purpose courts out of the Town's existing tennis courts to allow for pickleball play based on the common agreement described in staff report DCS 12-2018.

BACKGROUND

At the May 22, 2018 regular Council meeting, staff presented Council with recommendation #48 from the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan which recommends that the Town create additional space to play outdoor pickleball by creating two multi-purpose courts out of the Town's existing tennis courts. Council made the following motion.

2018-05-22-25

THAT the Town staff facilitate a meeting between representatives of the Tennis Club and Pickleball Club to arrive at a mutually agreeable design for use of 2 pickleball courts at the tennis courts and report back to Council at the next regular meeting.

Below is further information reporting back on the common agreements resulting from the meeting.

REPORT

On June 4, 2018 representatives from the Tennis Social Club, the Pickleball Social Club, and the Town met to review and discuss Council's direction above. Representing tennis were Andrea Macko and John Sipos. Representing pickleball were Marg Angus and Doug Diplock. Representing the Town were Stephanie Ische, Jenny Mikita, Hillary Bennett, and Brent Kittmer.

The meeting was a helpful learning exercise for each of the three parties to understand the others' perspectives. Council may find the following information informative as it relates to the interests of each group:

Town Interests

- Providing opportunities for healthy active lifestyles for all residents.

- Removing barriers to recreation, including the barrier of available time. This means providing more opportunities for spontaneous recreation activities.
- Providing sustainable, scale-appropriate, and cost effective recreation services.
- Following through on the recommendations of the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan. Administrative direction for short term and / or tricky recommendations to come forward in a timely manner to the Council that oversaw the completion of the plan.

Tennis Interests

- Long-term growth in spontaneous AND organized play (as individual players may seek new partners and organized play allows for potential partners to meet, etc.).
- More dedicated and active Town involvement in the promotion of the sport.
- Establishing a common understanding that tennis has the facilities, pickleball has the people and the promotion support, so working together can only be beneficial.
- Ability to have unimpeded play as they have historically had on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Accommodation of pickleball courts to have as little of an impact as possible on the ability to play competitive tennis. For competitive players, any change in the courts will impact the game, and new lines especially is viewed as fundamentally changing how the courts can be used for play.
- Establishing a common understanding that the Tennis Club has a vested interest in the courts due to their past efforts in driving the upgrades at the facility. Moving forward, all court users MUST contribute to any necessary maintenance and long-term capital costs.

Pickleball Interests

- Long term growth and participation in the sport.
- Having the ability for outdoor play within St. Marys in place of driving out of town and paying out of town fees.
- Having the ability for spontaneous play of pickleball.

Through the course of discussion the three parties were able to find common interests and mutually agreeable options on a number of items. This includes the immediate task of creating pickleball courts on two of the existing tennis courts, and ideas for collaboration and promoting racquet sports into the future.

The areas of agreement include:

Delineating the Pickleball Playing Surface (see attached rendering)

- The “non-volley zone” will be marked with 2 inch lines around its perimeter, preferably in a shade of red. The main-body of the zone will remain the existing blue colour of the tennis court.
- The serving/playing zone will be shaded, preferably a smoke or stone grey.
- To assist with boundary recognition, the existing white tennis centerline will be extended to the baseline of the pickleball playing area.
- To assist with boundary recognition, “L” shaped corner markers will be painted at each of the four corners of the pickleball courts. Size to be approximately 2 inches wide, six inches by six inches, with the preferred colour being a shade of red.

- All colour selections to be reviewed by the painting company for their professional opinion on the impact to play.
- The preferred courts to be painted are the North courts. The Town will be replacing a post that has become unfounded, and the nets will be tensioned to tennis playing height. Pickleball will use a mid-net tension strap to pull the midpoint of the net down to pickleball height rather than the Town leaving the handles on the tensioner.
- The two South courts are understood to remain tennis courts (without alterations or additions) in perpetuity.

Playing Times

- The Tennis Club will maintain its traditional Tuesday and Thursday night play.
- Pickleball will organize play for Wednesday nights.
- The Town will update the signage at the courts.

Long Term Collaboration

- The Town has a take away to review how to grow interest in tennis and pickleball, to be delivered through Senior Services / Youth Services.
- Both groups are willing to participate in free “open house” nights for the purpose of teaching and introducing newcomers to both sports.
- The Town will review the Community Guide, and spring/summer and fall/winter publications to ensure that drop-in play for tennis and pickleball are properly captured and promoted. Drop-in play needs to be properly captured and promoted as being promoted and sanctioned by the Town.
- The Town will organize more regular meetings between tennis, pickleball, and any other interested racquet sport group.

A question that was raised at the May 22, 2018 Council meeting was the ability for pickleball players to contribute to the costs of delineating the pickle ball courts, and their ability to contribute to the long term maintenance reserve required by the Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant. The pickleball representatives provided the following information in response:

- The Pickleball Social Club is a relatively new creation that is should be considered to be outside of the programming at the Friendship Centre.
- The Club has not yet established a financial model, and does not have a bank balance.
- If required to do so, the Club has a willingness to contribute to costs as necessary.

If Council were to require the Pickleball Social Club to contribute to the cost of creating the new courts options for Council to consider are:

- Require the Pickleball Social Club to raise funds in advance of the courts being painted; or
- Town to front end the costs and enter a deferred contribution agreement similar to the donation agreements for the Cadzow Park revitalization project.

SUMMARY

Recommendation #48 of the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan (RLMP) states that the Town create a total of two pickleball courts on two existing tennis courts. This recommendation is made in response to an identified growth in pickleball in St. Marys. What must be acknowledged alongside this recommendation is that RLMP recommendation #48 would not be possible unless the Town was in the fortunate position to have an excellent tennis facility. Although a Town facility, the project to rehabilitate

the tennis courts was driven by a group of dedicated volunteers from the tennis community. Without their efforts, the likely recommendation of the RLMP would have been to invest in upgrading the courts.

At Council's direction, a productive meeting between representatives of tennis, pickleball, and the Town was held on June 4, 2018. Through the meeting each party was better able to understand the interests of the others. Also, the three parties were able to come to common agreements on how to best paint a pickleball playing surface on the tennis courts, and how to collaborate and promote both sports into the future.

It is staff's recommendation that Council approve the creation of two pickleball courts at the tennis facility based on the common agreements described in this report. Staff have contacted the painting contractor and confirmed they could complete the painting within two weeks of Council's approval. The Courts would need to be shut down for one day to complete the work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Since the May 22, 2018 Council meeting staff have received an updated cost estimate from the resurfacing contractor. It is estimated to cost \$3,750 to have two pickleball courts painted.

STRATEGIC PLAN

- ☒ This initiative is supported by the following priorities, outcomes, and tactics in the Plan.
 - Pillar #4: Culture and Recreation – Recreation Services Master Plan:
 - Outcome: Assessing the real needs of residents in terms of providing the right fit for recreation services provided by the Town will require contracting out for a consultant who specializes in this area given the exhaustive analysis to be performed in providing key recommendations.
 - Tactic: Secure a consultant to complete a recreation master plan, implement the key recommendations as required, develop an inclusion policy, and review the long term effectiveness of the recreation master plan at key points in time to ensure currency and fit with the Town's priorities.

OTHERS CONSULTED

Pickleball Social Club: Marg Angus and Doug Diplock

Tennis Social Club: Andrea Macko and John Sipos. The Tennis Social Club has provided the following additional comments for Council to consider:

"The tennis court restoration project began quite modestly: a handful of tennis players knew that the courts needed improvement to remain safe and playable. We learned the ropes of fundraising and of municipal infrastructure to make the dream a reality. The entire project was paid for in advance of work beginning, and we are immensely proud of our efforts and of our community's support. There was no burden to the tax base beyond what the town was initially prepared to contribute for the existing facility.

We were surprised to learn that no payment plan was established when the pickleball line project was created, especially considering that there are existing options to play the sport in town, and that these courts would be additional to these options. There is also the consideration that the lines could potentially take funds away from existing programming as players opt for drop-in play rather than organized play through the Friendship Centre. The pickleball organization does have line options while waiting for the project to be funded: the tennis courts can be chalked or taped with pickleball lines, or linoleum-style line material can be used. Our tennis club used the previous courts until the day they were demolished -- their poor conditions only served to motivate our fundraising efforts.

The fundraising for the tennis courts took place over two years, and while dues were solicited from our members (plus raised funds through tournaments), the vast majority of the \$150,000 project cost came via grants and donations from the community. Considering the proportionately

small cost of painting the courts and the apparent popularity of pickleball, raising the estimated \$3,500 should be relatively straightforward, especially considering charitable receipts can be provided by the Town. Any funds raised beyond this amount can be placed in reserve for future maintenance. It is also a good sign of faith in their support of the courts and development of their sport beyond the support and organization provided by the Friendship Centre.

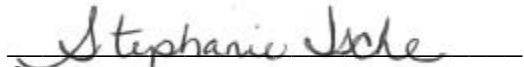
At our meeting, it was suggested that a payment agreement could be established (such as Lions Club and the Cadzow pavilion). But having an agreement in place with a long-established service club for a facility that the entire community can enjoy is different than automatically paying for a new organization's specific and specialized wants. We also believe that the "play before paying" format sets a dangerous precedent for the Town when it comes to recreation, for any organization."

ATTACHMENTS

1. Pickleball and tennis court rendering based on common agreement.

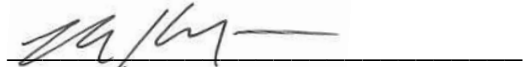
REVIEWED BY

Recommended by the Department



Stephanie Ische
Director of Community Services

Recommended by the CAO



Brent Kittmer, CAO / Clerk