

**Burr Ridge Park District  
Regular Meeting  
November 8, 2021**

**REGULAR MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Burr Ridge Park District was called to order at the Burr Ridge Community Center at 7:00 pm by President Quigley.

Present:	Caplis, Malloy, Paulius, Quigley
Via Zoom	Lawrence
Also present:	Jim Pacanowski, Director
	Jamie Janusz, Superintendent of Finance
	Lavonne Campbell, Superintendent of Recreation
	Members of the Public

**Approve November 8, 2021 Agenda**

Item VIA, Unfinished Business, Discuss Harvester Park Tennis Court Resurfacing Project, is being moved to after Item IV, Correspondence, in order to accommodate members of the public in attendance.

**Approve, October 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Caplis moved, seconded by Malloy and approved by roll call vote to Approve the October 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Ayes: Caplis, Lawrence, Malloy, Paulius      Nays: None      Abstain: Quigley

**OPEN FORUM**

No Open Forum

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing further added to the written report.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Discuss Harvester Park Tennis Court Resurfacing Project**

Pacanowski recapped that the general consensus among the board was to avoid taking down fencing for the resurfacing project. Based on those directives, Pacanowski produced sketches showing that on the tennis court portion, there would be 1 tennis court or 2 pickle ball courts. On the 4-court sketch, there may be dialogue regarding the

buffer distances. There is 110 feet of existing width currently available to work with. Between the pickle ball courts is 12 feet. Pacanowski's recommendation for safety between pickle ball and tennis courts is 16 feet. Those 2 distances together are 28 feet along with the court distance is 120 feet. There is 110 feet available. With those distances there is no room available without taking the fence down. On the north/south boundaries there is a 7 foot distance between the end line pickle ball and the fence. It is a manageable risk management issue there due to the amount of time players go beyond the end line. Although it would not be ideal, 7 feet could be implemented there.

Caplis asked for verification that if the fence is taken down, then there is a need for new surfacing.

Pacanowski responded that is correct. The tennis and basketball courts have been in place for 30 years. It is an incredibly hard compacted base which would be good building material. With a 5 foot extensions installed on the side, it is extremely unlikely to put compaction on the extension to match the existing court, which would be a candidate for crack at that seam of which it would be of concern. Removing fence would require jacking out posts and trimming concrete clinging to posts while trying to avoid spoilage.

Caplis asked if core testing done was done in that area as that part of the park was somewhat swampy when installing the current tennis courts and basketball court.

Caplis asked if the water table is 3 feet.

Pacanowski responded that there is turf grass around it currently. The enigma is that the basketball court does not have cracks, however, the tennis court does have cracks. Caplis stated that the contractor had land movers for a week on the area in order to compact that area. If the fence is removed and foundation extended, it may not be possible to have the foundation stand up.

Pacanowski stated it may see cracking along the seam and it may be okay.

Quigley opened up the floor to discussion and questions from the public.

Lisa Erickson, 137 Kraml, Burr Ridge stated that the buffer distances are more than generous between courts. If there were less space between courts to accommodate the 4 courts instead of 2, it would be preferred. The pickle ball players represented in the audience are not rambunctious and 12 feet is too much space required for a buffer

Linda Jones, 7 Hunter Ct. Burr Ridge, sent pictures in of other pickle ball courts currently in the area with less buffer distances. Ms. Jones stated that 12 feet is overkill and not needed. Ms. Jones asked to reduce the buffer to 6 feet which is still generous. If six feet on tennis side was taken away there would be room needed to accommodate 4 courts which would also be similar in spacing to other pickle ball courts.

Joe Petrich, 8700 Wedgewood Dr., Burr Ridge, stated that in Western Springs, at Northeast Park, there was 1 tennis court converted to 4 pickle ball courts. Nobody steps or runs into each other. They don't have issues with safety. Players are usually running into the net as opposed to sideways and backwards. In addition, Mr. Petrich questioned compaction concerns.

Pacanowski responded that the compaction would be difficult to achieve on an extension to the existing base and would not be able to achieve the same compaction as what is existing and there would likely be cracking where the two meet.

Mr. Petrich stated he is a licensed structural engineer and there are ways to achieve proper compaction.

Pacanowski responded that there is an issue with the freeze thaw cycle which has been seen at this facility. It is not impossible to achieve proper compaction, but it is an issue.

Mr. Petrich stated that there are only negative comments regarding pickle ball courts. If the concrete is re-poured, and there is rebar and the area is compacted, there won't be differential settling. There will only be people walking on the surface, not vehicles.

Pacanowski responded that the issue is more of a freeze/thaw issue.

Caplis added that in addition the condition of the soil is an issue.

Pacanowski summarized the rationale for the distances needed. There is nothing in the industry in writing regarding mandatory distances for safety. Generally speaking for industry standards, the recommend range on the side is 6-8 feet, and in the rear 8-10 feet. This was also the distance the audience stated was preferred at previous meetings. When setting up facilities, it is not advisable to take the buffer zone from one amenity and share it with another amenity buffer. Each pickle ball court should get a 6 foot buffer. There has not been a pickle ball issue made into litigation yet, however, that does not mean that it will be mutually accepted standards. There are new courts being built with larger buffers. Photos of a new court in Palatine recently built with a 10 foot buffer and another in a different town with more than a 10 foot buffer were circulated. There is also a quality of play issue for more competitive pickle ball players. Not everyone plays the sport in a passive type of play. There are a number of aggressive players and the facility must be designed that is safe for all levels of players. There would also be a quality of play issue in addition to a safety issue for tennis players if there is just a shared 10 feet for a tennis court.

Al Jones, 7 Hunter Ct., Burr Ridge, stated that pickle ball is a different sport than tennis and is dependent on rotation. If 2 courts are eliminated, the park district can say you put in pickle ball courts, however nobody will show up. Serious pickle ball players will go to the facility where there are 4 to 8 courts. It will be a box check off for the park district, but sadly there will not be anybody playing. There may possibly be young children playing, however, it will be a waste of taxpayer's money.

Linda Jones, 7 Hunter Ct., Burr Ridge, stated that Countryside has 2 courts. When another court is so crowded players will go to that facility or another where there are 2 courts.

Caplis stated that the courts at the Burr Ridge Park District will be lighted courts.

Mrs. Jones responded that it won't matter.

Bill Voigt, 166 Foxborough, Burr Ridge, stated that this is a great park. It is phenomenal; there is a nature walk, great baseball fields and a kid's park that is the envy of other park districts - first class. Mr. Voigt stated this is his 4th attendance at meetings regarding pickle ball. The initial conversation with the Board directed him to

discuss pickle ball courts with Pacanowski. When Pacanowski stated that there may be a couple pickle ball courts put in, Voigt's response was not to waste the money at that point. Voigt asked that the board revisit the issue when ready to look closely and perform due diligence beyond looking at a brochure, by looking at the actual courts and when the park district has the funding to do it. Voigt asked not to install courts that would be used as a second choice destination. Save the money and just resurface the tennis courts and pickle ball players will wait until the park district can say here is how we can do it instead of how we can't do it.

Linda Jones asked if there can be an option to wait until another tennis court is resurfaced at another location.

Pacanowski responded that there is another court that will need to be resurfaced and there may be public debate at that time.

Linda Jones stated that it is an advantage that there are no houses around at Harvester Park as the noise from the banging with the paddles would really annoy the people of the neighborhood. In addition, pickle ball usually starts at 7:30 am on weekends.

Caplis stated that the pickle ball courts would be built at Harvester, however there is only so much space left to build on. Space on the west end was looked into and was deemed not a viable option. The tennis courts will not be resurfaced again in many years. It is therefore now or never for the pickle ball courts. Whether 2 is viable or useful or 4 it comes down to 4 with dollars and cents and engineering coming into question. A core sample may be required before moving forward if an extension is decided upon before finalizing. In addition, Caplis stated that the question is should there be 2 courts or jam 4 courts in the space provided while trying to still maintain safety.

Audience member asked if staff talked to players about safety concerns and liability. Caplis responded that there are many lawsuits filed from people who were not concerned about liability or getting hurt.

Audience member asked how much investigation has gone into the discussion with players.

Caplis responded that the park district has to protect their interest in regard to exposure. If there are no guidelines for safety distances, then common sense must be used.

Mr. Voigt asked if there was any contact with the USAPA for guidance and what due diligence was done to see if the safety concerns are real or imagined. Were any visits to other parks conducted in research?

Caplis responded that the safety concerns for the park district will be referred to Pacanowski who has 40 years in safety and risk management in the park district.

Mr. Petrich stated that this is a retrofit job. If the park district doesn't want to spend the money on the project that is understandable, but it sounds like the board is making excuses.

Caplis responded that there is difficulty putting 4 courts in. Expanding the area by removing 2 fences to accommodate 4 courts would not be fiscally responsible. The only

alternative would then be to put them in with less buffer zones which is being viewed as a possible safety issue.

Malloy asked if the fences were moved would only 5 feet only gained.

Pacanowski responded yes because there are electric light posts there.

Malloy stated that if there was 10 feet between tennis and pickle ball and the 12 feet between the 2 pickle ball courts were reduced, the 4 courts would fit in.

Pacanowski stated that this scenario would eliminate 1 length of fence, but not the other.

Caplis stated that pickle ball players are not really intruding on each other's area.

Pacanowski asked what the thoughts about the tennis buffer would be.

Caplis stated that a reduced buffer is worrisome for the tennis players, not pickle ball players.

Mr. Petrich asked if the park district is worried about the soil conditions, swap the area and use the basketball court area and restripe.

Pacanowski responded that expanding to the north would require demolition of sidewalks and basketball courts and everything butting up to it.

Voigt recommended 8 feet between pickle ball courts. Reduce the 3 to 4 feet on the right-hand side the tennis and pickle ball court buffer. Reduce the North/South measurements from 7 and 8 feet to 7-1/2 feet all the way across. Eight feet between courts, and 4 on the side. It would then require that only 1 fence be knocked down. Mr. Voigt would like to sit down and talk numbers.

Quigley thanked the audience for their comments and closed the public comment section of the meeting.

Malloy and Paulius asked that Pacanowski call USAPA for exact spacing requirements.

Quigley stated that the problem is that there are no exact requirements.

Malloy stated that a recommendation could be sought.

Quigley stated that his opinion is that if something can't be done right, don't do it. This is a retrofit of 2 tennis courts which are not designed for pickle ball. The Burr Ridge Park District is interested in pickle ball; however, Quigley is not sure the right thing to do is to retrofit this area into a 4 pickle ball court. The park district is putting their toe in the water for pickle ball. If the District is spending lot of money and the result will only be okay, that is not what we do. Quigley stated that his opinion is that repurposing 2 tennis courts into 4 pickle ball courts is asking for trouble and is not in favor of spending more money than anticipated in the budget and was not in the plan to take even one row of fencing down. If in the future it is found that the distances can be reduced for buffer safety zones it can be re-thought. For now, Quigley would take the advice of the individual responsible for all of the safety in the park and whose recommendation is written here. Quigley is open to checking for more information from the USAPA to get information, however, is currently not convinced to put 4 pickle ball courts on 1 tennis court.

Caplis asked Pacanowski when a decision is needed in order to pull the trigger for contract bids.

Pacanowski responded that regardless of the decision being pickle ball or tennis the project is north of \$25,000 and would require a public bid process. It would be desirable to be put out to bid no later than March.

Caplis asked if the USAPA has diagrams on how to build a pickle ball court.

Voigt responded that it is up to the park district to do due diligence to find that out.

Pacanowski stated that research was done on several websites including the USAPA. Some of the recommendation of distances are based on risk management principles that apply to park districts. The Burr Ridge Park District is an accredited agency and it is the responsibility of Pacanowski to design distances and fall zones. These are safety guidelines. Even a buffer zone for a slide is not a law, however, if there is litigation, the court will look at standards and use it to decide if you rationally designed it. The Burr Ridge Park District builds things that exist nowhere else. One thing that is disturbing is that there is not supposed to be shared safety buffer zones in a facility. Recommended in a pickle ball court is 6 feet. That is related to a single pickle ball court. If there is another pickle ball court next to it, the 6 ft for the 1st court does not go away. There is no book that says here is the legal limit for the distance for 4 pickle ball courts next to a tennis court. In addition, there is homage owed to both activities. Pacanowski stated that there haven't been one on one meetings with Mr. Voigt since there is no direction from the Board yet with a layout in order to begin design.

Paulius asked what the buffer between 2 tennis court is.

Pacanowski responded that it is 10 feet from the sideline of tennis to the support post of the other court. That post is about 3 feet from the sideline of the court which is about 13-14 feet.

Paulius asked if 16 feet is more than what is there now for tennis.

Pacanowski responded yes because now you would have pickle ball players to contend with. That gap is more important than between the 2 pickle ball courts. There would be a different reaction at this meeting if there was a roomful of tennis players in attendance.

Paulius asked what the distance is for 2 tennis courts. Is it 13 feet, but 16 between tennis and pickle ball?

Pacanowski responded that it is 13-14 feet for 2 tennis courts.

Paulius asked if pickle ball is more dangerous than tennis.

Pacanowski responded that if there are doubles tennis and double pickle ball occurring with rotations, 16 feet is needed for safety and quality of play.

Paulius asked if no other space is available for pickle ball courts.

Pacanowski responded that there is not. In addition, not every player feels a 6 feet buffer is adequate. Pacanowski talked to a number of different level of players, some who are more competitive players. A court needs to accommodate all levels of player. If building from scratch, this would be the recommendation.

Paulius asked what the recommendations are for tennis courts.

Pacanowski responded that there are no specifics. It is therefore wise to preserve the buffer that currently exists. Pacanowski would have to get back as to whether a guideline currently exists.

Caplis added that the tennis courts were built according to the recommendation at the time. There is a limited budget. If you take down 2 fences it is too costly. If there are only 2 courts and as the audience input is recommending that nobody will use 2 courts, it is considered a waste of money. The alternative is to cram 4 courts into the area. Caplis would like to hear from the USAPA for their recommendation for buffer distances and then the Board can determine if it is desirable to take down 1 fence. It may be necessary to have a soil sample in that area to see if it will be able to be compacted enough to accommodate an extension of the area.

Pacanowski stated that it is possible to have 2 pickle ball courts striped shared with tennis on the existing tennis court.

Caplis responded that the pickle ball and tennis players don't like it.

Pacanowski stated that at previous meetings pickle ball players stated that it would be better for a shared striped court in order to make 4 courts than to have just 2 courts.

Mr. Petrich stated that the lines start blurring.

Paulius stated that input from the public has been mixed and at times the input has been that the shared courts are better than nothing. At other times input has been that it isn't liked and not wanted.

Mr. Petrich stated that players will go first to an actual unshared pickle ball court and will therefore not be a destination pickle ball court.

Paulius stated that it is not the main priority for the Burr Ridge Park District to be a destination pickle ball court.

Gerald Sendra, 219 Cascade Drive, Indian Head Park, asked that the Board look to the USAPA for their recommendation.

Paulius stated that the Board is considering the risk management viewpoint as well.

Caplis stated that now is the time to build the pickle ball courts when resurfacing. Caplis asked that Pacanowski contact the USAPA.

Mr. Petrich stated that the more advanced players do play on tight courts and safety is not an issue.

Caplis responded that if the park district can't build the pickle ball courts right, it won't do it.

Mr. Petrich stated that 2 courts is not enough courts. There are 300 people in the group.

Pacanowski stated that this is the time to build the pickle ball courts. The tennis courts will not be resurfaced again for quite some time. There is not another viable site. If 4 courts don't go in now, there won't be a chance in the near future to put 4 courts in.

Caplis stated that it would have been preferable to have input from the public that it needed 4 courts or nothing. Caplis asked Pacanowski to contact the USAPA. If there is not enough room, it can then be decided if 1 fence can be taken down.

There was general consensus that taking down 2 fences would be too much money.

Pacanowski will contact the USAPA to see if there is any recommendation or guidelines whatsoever for distances for safety buffers.

Quigley stated that when a pickle ball rolls into a tennis court it will stop not only pickle ball play, but tennis play, so buffers are needed for safety and quality of play. Quigley also asked that Pacanowski USAPA be made aware that the pickle ball courts will be next to a tennis court.

Caplis asked that the item be again placed on the December Agenda.

## **REPORTS**

### **Director of Parks & Recreation**

Nothing further added to the written report.

### **Superintendent of Finance**

Nothing further added to the written report.

Caplis asked Janusz what the attendance was at the Village Taste of Burr Ridge event. Janusz is unaware of the total number of attendees, however, there was discussion of the need for a second serving station for drinks.

### **Recreation Division**

Nothing further added to the written report.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Determine 2021 Tax Levy Extension**

Janusz informed the Board that the Burr Ridge Park District will be asking for a 4.93% tax and will therefore not go through the Truth in Taxation process.

## **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

Caplis asked for verification of the Arlington Park bill for \$5,000.  
Campbell responded that 60 people attended the senior program event.

Caplis asked for verification of the master card bill for furniture storage.  
Pacanowski responded that this is for storage for lobby furniture in a climate-controlled storage due to vacating the Willowbrook facility storage.

Malloy moved, seconded by Caplis and approved by roll call vote to Approve November bills.

Ayes: Caplis, Malloy, Paulius, Quigley      Nays: None      Abstain: Lawrence

## **ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Caplis moved to Adjourn to Executive Session, Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(C)1 for the Discussion of personnel Matters Involving Specific Employees of the Park District, seconded by Malloy, and unanimously approved at 8:25 pm.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Caplis moved, seconded by Paulius, and unanimously approved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Stednitz  
Recording Secretary

h/jamie/board/minutes/brpd minutes November 8 2021