

To: Honorable Mayor & Town Council  
From: Leslie Herman, Director of Parks & Recreation  
Date: May 30, 2023  
Subject: Pickleball Policy Review



Town staff was directed by council to report on a new pickleball policy by June 1, 2023 that was approved by council on January 30, 2023 and initiated on March 1, 2023 at Glyndon Park. The approved pickleball hours are as follows, with all other opening hours being for tennis only. Reservations, in two hour time slots, were made available to residents for pickleball play.

Pickleball - December 1 – last day of February

- Mon/Wed/Fri 10am to 5pm
- Saturday 10am to 1pm

Pickleball - March 1 through November 30

- Mon/Wed/Fri 9am to 7pm
- Saturday 9am to 1pm

### **Staff Action**

- Signage was posted at Glyndon Park Courts with pickleball and tennis hours of play. Also included in the signage is encouragement for pickleball players to use "quieter paddles" with a weblink to the suggested listing.
- The Town website was updated with the new schedule.
- Staff requested Ken Terrell with the Vienna Pickleball Club to post on their FaceBook page the new hours and recommendations for quieter play.
- As of March 1, 2023, staff received weekly updates from Ashish Khianey, a town resident representing the residents of Ainstree Court NE.
- As of March 1, 2023, staff received weekly updates from Ken Terrell, a town resident representing the Vienna Pickleball Club.
- Staff conducted random visits to the Glyndon Park courts to spot check usage of the courts.

- Pickleball indoor open play is available at the Community Center:
  - Thursdays from 6 – 10:30pm, April through November.
  - Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 11am – 1pm, September through mid-June
- Staff posted signage on May 19, 2023 that states:
  - No Pickleball - All Day Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday,
  - Monday, Wednesday, Friday before 9 a.m. and after 7 p.m.,
  - Saturday before 9 a.m. and after 1 p.m.
  - Violators subject to trespassing charges.

### **Neighborhood Feedback**

It was noted by the immediate neighbors, that while the majority of the regular players are following the rules, there are plenty of non-regular users that either ignore the posted rules or do not know the rules and play outside the allowed pickleball time. With the weather getting warmer, the situation has not improved. There is a concern that allowing open play will generate additional noise as the number of players will increase.

Neighborhood comments include the following:

- 1) Not in favor of open play, it's just too many people at once. It is a small neighborhood park that is not built for that kind of usage. Also, somehow there needs to be better signage and enforcement about the "no play" times. It gets old having to call the police if I want to be outside when they are playing during no play hours. Maybe start issuing actual fines and bigger signs when not to play.
- 2) I have noticed people playing a few times outside of permitted hours and once sometime a week ago the parking was overflowing again onto both Jean Place and Glyndon (Note, this is not during the baseball tourney/Viva Vienna weekend).
- 3) The situation definitely hasn't improved as the weather has gotten nicer. Our biggest issue isn't the rules themselves but that people continue to play off hours. We have been calling Vienna Police if we hear after 9pm (Haven't called on folks between 7 and 9, though they shouldn't be playing then), this has happened several times. The police have been responding within 10 minutes each time, which is not bad but very annoying to have to keep calling. One was told police had already been dispatched earlier that day.
- 4) I have spoken to folks 2 times, and had an experience where folks said they could break the rules because the rules weren't enforced.

5) I don't have an issue with open play in the morning as I work in the front of my home and the noise doesn't come that far in.

6) I think open play could be an issue not from the ball but from the amount of people congregating! We have rules in place - the first order of business SHOULD be, 'have they been following the rules'? If they have not then why are we even entertaining expanding their permissions?! The nearby residents are currently ATTEMPTING to live within the parameters to give this a go. The fact that we are not complaining all the time should be a sign that restricted hours/scheduled play does work! The focus should be on enforcing the hours and restrictions, if the pickleballers are unhappy with the current rules they are always free to play elsewhere!

7) We are trying to tolerate the play within the hours as best as we can - the limited number of people due to no open play is a big factor that is helping us and the other residents, I am not in favor of rolling that back. I am hopeful the town can find a way to enforce the after-hours play and the random play on off days that happens from time to time. Calling the police all the time does not seem to be the correct solution. I wonder if we can find a way to lock up the nets on off days/ hours - they don't belong to TOV to begin with!

8) I just wanted to give you all (council) a quick 'thank you' for enacting the new pickleball hours. While it is not an ideal situation for either side it seems to be a fair compromise. It has made a world of difference for the livability of our neighborhood just knowing we get a break every other day.

### **Vienna Pickleball Club Feedback**

According to Ken Terrell, spokesperson for the Vienna Pickleball Club, a major problem with the new reservation system is the loss of open play. Not having a period when the courts are open is causing confusion and creating awkward situations.

- Players have shown up and claimed a reservation but the person with the reservation is not there – no one wants to be in the position of being the cop and telling them they can't claim the court.
- Some people think you can't play unless you have a reservation, no matter how many times it has been explained on Vienna Pickleball Club postings and emails.
- People don't know whether to come because they don't know if there's an open court.

- On two occasions that Ken knows of, people made reservations but then the other players didn't show up. Courts have been held by one person for up to an hour before they gave up. The current rules allow them to hold it for the two hour time period but it created resentment with those that want to get on a court and can't.
- Some residents have shown up with reservations and are hesitant to ask people using the court to leave. And the people using the court are hesitant to ask the person saying they have a reservation to show them the receipt.
- In regards to the reservation system, the Town's website has too many pages to get through before a court can be reserved.

According to Ken, feedback received from many residents and nonresidents is that there is a need for open play.

- As of 5/10/23, Ken has received no feedback to support the current reservation system. It's not so much that people don't want to make reservations as it is that they don't have a group to make reservations for. They need an open play period to have people to play with. This is particularly hard for beginners because they don't know a lot of other players.
- Open play would be a better solution to those folks that do not want to make reservations, or don't quite understand the system.
- If non-residents did not come into Vienna to play, there would not be enough players to have games.
- Ken proposes open play be held Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 9am to 1pm. Reservations would be recommended after 1pm on these days.

### **Individual Comments from Resident Pickleball Players**

- There is support from resident pickleball players to move the start time to 8am due to the oppressive heat and humidity of summer for the 3 and ½ days per week allowed. If the number of hours in the day for pickleball play is a concern then ending play at 6pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday is an option and 12noon on Saturdays.
- There is support from resident pickleball players to keep the reservation system for pickleball. Groups of players have organized, over time, we have smaller numbers at the courts which has mitigated the noise. It took a bit of time to get organized but it seems to be working. The reservation system provides an advantage over non-residents to gain access to the courts.

### **Police Report**

Between March 1, 2023, and May 16, 2023, eighteen (18) noise complaints were received at Glyndon Park. Attached is the police report. The breakdown is as follows:

- 7 complaints – No Violation of Town Rules/Unfounded
- 10 complaints – Violation of Town Rules/Warning Given – players are made aware of the rules and they ceased to play pickleball or switched to tennis
- 1 complaint – Misc/unknown

### **Reservation Statistics**

The Town allows reservations for residents only during pickleball play times. Reservations are provided in two hour time slots. Reservations are made using the Vienna Parks & Recreation webtrac registration system. Based on reservation usage from March 1 – May 20 (45 days) the following stats are provided:

- 1) Courts were reserved approximately 37% of the available pickleball play time.
- 2) The 1 - 3pm time slot was the most frequently reserved.
  - 9 – 11am Courts were reserved 39% of the available pickleball play time.
  - 11 – 1pm Courts were reserved 35% of the available pickleball play time.
  - 1 – 3pm Courts were reserved 52% of the available pickleball play time.
  - 3 – 5pm Courts were reserved 25% of the available pickleball play time.
  - 5 – 7pm Courts were reserved 33% of the available pickleball play time.
- 3) Wednesday was the most frequent day reserved.
  - Monday – average # of reservations per day 9
  - Wednesday – average # of reservations per day 12
  - Friday – average # of reservations per day 6
  - Saturday – average # of reservations per day 2

### **Random Staff Visits**

Staff made 48 random visits to the courts at Glyndon Park during pickleball hours between March 1 and May 30. There are 4 courts that can accommodate 16 people total playing at one time. Based on staff observations:

- The greatest number of people on the courts at one time = 18
- The least number of people on the courts at one time = 0
- The average number of people on the courts at one time = 11