From: Greta Watson
To: Public Comments
Subject: Please do not approve the Facility Use Agreement with the Baseline group
Date: Friday, September 23, 2022 6:31:34 PM

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To the City Council:

It is my understanding that you will be determining whether or not to approve the Baseline group's request to permanently reserve tennis courts in Grass Valley. I'm opposed to this for a number of reasons.

Tennis and pickle ball are vastly different in everything, from balls to racket/paddle, to court size and markings. To compare them to each other does not make sense. Pickle ball games last a few minutes, and players change partners and opponents after each game. It's very social, and can be very competitive or not at all. It is much more easily learned than tennis. And it has seen a tremendous growth in popularity in the past few years.

Tennis takes a lot longer to learn, sets can last from about half an hour to a couple of hours, and a match from an hour to several hours. A match includes not only skill level, but also fitness, and strategy. Tennis is most enjoyable when played with and against players of similar skills, fitness, and strategy. Tennis has not had much growth in the past few years, partly because of Covid, partly because some players are playing pickle ball instead of tennis, partly because it takes a lot of time and work to get good at it.

Here are my reasons for not allowing the Baseline group to make reservations:

1. Don't fix what isn't broken. The current system of first-come-first-served has been successfully used in Grass Valley and all over the country for many years. In the past year, I've had to wait only about ten minutes for a court, and only once or twice. I have provided the Baseline group with a method they can use in lieu of reservations, basically using e-mail to get a head count, and then using that to split the group in case two adjacent courts aren't available.

2. No tennis entity, whether public or private, has ever given any group the ability to make a permanent reservation unless that person is a teaching pro. Doing so will show preference to a small group of players, and will leave the rest of us as second-class taxpayers.

3. The Baseline group says they're open to all. However, they don't do singles, and the only doubles they do is similar to pickle ball rather than to tennis, so isn't something most tennis players would be interested in doing. And, their drop-in tennis isn't done by skill level, so isn't something most tennis players would want to do.

4. Where reservations for tennis courts are allowed, there is a paid person on site who administers the reservations and collects the court fees, for example, $11-$20/hour per court that's charged at Mountain View's Cuesta Park. Reservations are one-time only, and may be made a few days in advance. Many places prevent a player from reserving a court if that player or group already has an upcoming reservation.

5. The Baseline group has no concrete plans to improve tennis, and is making this request only to avoid having to wait for courts. Since that's not really an issue, they have no reason for their request. If the city council allows these reservations, what's to prevent other groups of tennis players from demanding equality and reserving the courts for their use? Where does it end?

6. The players who have signed the petition to deny the Baseline group's request far outnumber the number of players who are claimed by the Baseline group as members. And, how many of them are actually active members of the Baseline group? How many have dropped out when they found they weren't of the same skill level as the others? At the time of this e-mail, 70+ players have signed the petition against the Baseline group. The members claimed by Baseline have variously been stated as a dozen, about 25, or about 30. In any case, that's less than half of the current count against their request.

7. Grass Valley allows the pickle ball club to have reserved hours. During those hours, players not in their club have marked up the tennis courts on both the lower and upper courts at Memorial Park, as well as at Pioneer Park. Those markings are irritating and distracting to tennis players, who have had to try to get rid of them. Perhaps it was not a good idea to have permanent reservations by the pickle ball club? It is definitely not a good idea to do so for the Baseline group, as they are a small minority of tennis players in this area.

Thank-you.

Greta Watson