

# **TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION**

## ***Parks & Recreation Committee***

### **Issue Briefing**

**Topic:** Pickleball Court Installation Recommendation

**Prepared By:** Donna L. Heller, Director of Parks & Recreation

**Date:** January 31, 2020

**I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:** Authorize the installation of dedicated Pickleball courts at Bala Avenue & Wynnewood Valley in place of the existing tennis courts.

**II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:** The Board should approve substantial revisions to recreation facilities.

**III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):** N/A

**IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

Pickleball is a racquet sport played on a hard court surface with a layout and game style most akin to tennis and badminton. Equipment includes wood or composite paddles, which are about twice the size of a ping pong paddle, a plastic, perforated ball (much like a Whiffle ball) and a center court net height of 34 inches. There are both similarities and differences between tennis and pickleball. Like tennis, pickleball can be played in games for singles or doubles. Scoring is similar in either game, as the serving side earns a point whenever the other side fails to return the shot. Differences between tennis and pickleball include the size of the court (four Pickleball courts can fit on one regulation size tennis court), center net height and the style of both the balls and rackets/paddles. Play also differs in several ways. For example, serves must be underhand, the ball must “double bounce” before volleys, and there is a “no volley” zone which extends for seven feet on either side of the net.

Pickleball is a social game which brings players together of all abilities. Some players create groups so that they can participate with similar skill levels as well as provide opportunities to mentor new players. The USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) is the national governing body for the sport of pickleball in the US and provides players with official rules, tournaments, rankings and promotional materials. They also have an Ambassador program which are volunteers who have pledged to promote the sport of pickleball and the USAPA in the local area they have applied to represent. Lower Merion has two Ambassadors, and we have discussed this plan with each of them. Although each approaches the promotion of pickleball differently, they both share the common goal of increasing participation and support the installation of 6 dedicated Pickleball courts at Bala Avenue & 8 at Wynnewood Valley in place of the existing 4 tennis courts.

**V. Impact On Township Finances:** Funds for the conversions to Pickleball courts are in the 2020 CIP appropriation with an estimate of \$80k to complete Bala Avenue & Wynnewood Valley.

- VI. Staff Recommendation:** Authorize the installation of 6 dedicated Pickleball courts at Bala Avenue & 8 at Wynnewood Valley in place of the existing 4 tennis courts.