

EMAILS RECEIVED REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

CITY OF ALBANY, CALIFORNIA



ALBANY CITY HALL
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE
ALBANY, CALIFORNIA 94706

Item 6-4 Ocean View Park Tennis Courts & Pickleball

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
MEETING DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020

From: [S.Shall](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Friday at 4 OV courts
Date: Friday, January 3, 2020 4:34:18 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Both of the courts are being used by tennis players. My kid is hitting against the wall because is no courts available

From: [S.Shall](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: List of OV Court Tennis Players
Date: Saturday, January 04, 2020 3:26:49 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Hello Parks and Rec Commisson.

The past 5 days I have been asking OV tennis players to add their name to this list, so you can see that there is a lot of tennis being played at OV, even in this cold, wet, and busy holiday season.

On sunny warm weekend days, there is tennis being played at OV all hours of the day. I have been sending you email sometimes when I am on the courts, giving you updates of the tennis being played there. Of course I am just one person, with a full time job, and a couple of kids, but I am trying my best to give you the data that the City cannot. Because reservations data is horrible data. Tennis players are a drop in community. Period.

I wish this topic was not on the agenda in winter, right after the holidays. Many tennis players are just coming back from vacation and starting to get back in the swing of things. Although I don't have access to a regional Meet Up group with 600 emails or \$10,000 of donor money in my bank account to show you, I have met some neighborhood locals on the OV tennis courts that want to keep the courts as is. Please find their names on the list in the link. I will continue to walk by the courts early in the morning and after work and see if I can get more names

Sara

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bTUmm_eviPGQmNXqdC6ZAEfE1DBcLsYaV6fhtIeujYU/edit?usp=sharing

From: [RICK SCHILLER](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Cc: [Schiller Rick](#)
Subject: Jan 9 Hearing: Pickleball at Ocean View
Date: Sunday, January 05, 2020 8:41:43 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Jan 5, 2019

City of Albany

Re: Jan 8 Hearing, Pickleball Courts at Ocean View

I am an active 72 year old who took up pickleball in 2018. Playing pickleball has become an integral, positive part of my life and playing pickleball has significantly improved my physical and mental well-being.

Happily for City of Albany planners, a tennis court that accommodates 2 to 4 players can accommodate 16 pickleball players in the same space. With the State imposing ever restrictive mandates on the creation of housing plus an aging resident base, pickleball solves multiple recreational needs.

I urge you to convert the two tennis courts at Ocean View to six or eight dedicated pickleball courts.

Respectfully,

Rick Schiller

From: [Chuck Temple](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Pickleball Courts at Ocean View
Date: Sunday, January 05, 2020 8:49:04 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Albany Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission:

This letter is in support of the conversion of tennis courts to pickleball courts at the Ocean View facility.

Pickleball is a unique gift to any community as it promotes exercise and community. As a former tennis player, I've switched to pickleball because of the pickup-style of play afforded by the permanent nets at the Cedar Rose Facility. There are always 8-24 people at this court when I play in the weekday mornings. Whereas used to loath solo runs in the morning - I now look forward to seeing 20+ friends while getting a workout.

Personally, I just started working a couple blocks from the Ocean View Park and would love to be able to play pickleball after work.

Best regards,

Chuck Temple

From: [Sylvia Spears](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Pickleball
Date: Sunday, January 05, 2020 10:43:51 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

I support permanent pickleball courts at Oceanview tennis courts. These courts will receive enthusiastic use by dozens of seniors and other players. They will be a boon to the community.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Leigh Gronet](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Ocean View PickleBall Courts
Date: Monday, January 06, 2020 7:49:08 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Hi,

I support permanent pickleball courts at Ocean View tennis courts. I live nearby and play 3-4 times a week. Since I live alone, I enjoy getting out, exercising, and building community. It is so important for my mental and physical health.

Thanks for your consideration,
Leigh Gronet

From: [Jean-Gabriel Bankier](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Letter in support of the pickleball court conversion
Date: Monday, January 06, 2020 9:51:20 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Hi! My name is Jean-Gabriel Bankier and I have started playing pickleball with my two boys ages 15 and 12 at the courts on Hopkins. We happened upon the courts by chance and now we are hooked. We play once or twice a week. It has created a little community for us around the game. What I find most remarkable is that there are regularly half a dozen or more people playing pickleball and people of all ages too. Add a court and you'll find demand will blossom just like it has in Berkeley.

Thanks,
JG

From: [Therese Omnes](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Cc: abcpickleball@gmail.com
Subject: January 9, 2020 Meeting Agenda Item: Conversion of Oceanview Tennis Courts to Pickleball Courts
Date: Monday, January 6, 2020 1:14:52 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Hello and Happy New Year, Council members!

I am a member of the Pickleball Association and have been playing pickleball in Albany over the last several years.

I currently play at Cedar Rose courts but find myself having to wait in line to play. I am 65 years old, on a limited income, and find this sport to be essential to my living a healthy lifestyle. However, I need to be able to play for longer than an hour or so a few days a week and at a free public location where there are enough courts to accommodate the growing numbers of pickleball enthusiasts. (Have you tried it?)

I respectfully request your Yes vote of getting the City of Albany to convert the two tennis courts at Ocean View (900 Buchanan) into 7-8 permanent pickleball courts.

In appreciation and good health,

Therese Omnes

From: [Lydia Ruiz](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Oceanview Pickleball court conversion- yes please
Date: Monday, January 6, 2020 5:34:08 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

I live not far from the oceanview courts and play there frequently- when the lights work! I mostly play after work and on weekends. I am fairly new to the sport, I started playing at the Albany HS gym a year ago during the wet winter months.

Please consider converting Oceanview to permanent pickleball courts.

I have found a welcoming Multi-generational community of very nice people at oceanview. Pickleball offers a fun and easy to learn sport and is especially good for seniors of all physical abilities. I work in health care (Kaiser Permanente) and I believe pickleball can enhance physical and mental well being for seniors. (For all ages as well). The ripple of positive health effects of pickleball across the community is tremendous. Friends and relatives tell me of weight loss, lower cholesterol and new friendships. It has certainly enhanced my well being.

Thank you for considering our request- I realize there are many factors to weigh.

Sincerely

Lydia Ruiz

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Randi Hepner](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Ocean View Conversion
Date: Monday, January 6, 2020 5:38:43 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

I'm 65 and relatively newly retired. Pickleball has been a life changing experience for me.

It has provided me with exercise in addition to friendly social contact with others.

I full heartily support the conversion at Ocean View.

Sincerely,
Randi Hepner

Sent from my iPad

From: [Connie Wong](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Ocean View Tennis Courts Conversion to Pickleball Courts
Date: Monday, January 6, 2020 8:51:38 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

1/6/2020

This is yet another letter I have shared with the City of Albany in support of converting the Ocean View tennis courts into dedicated permanent pickleball courts.

I am a healthy active adult who attributes my good physical & emotional health in part to playing pickleball. The more I play pickleball, the more I want to play pickleball! The more time I'm around happy fun loving pickleball players, the more I want to be around happy fun loving pickleball players!

For any of the tennis players who may miss playing tennis at Ocean View, please come to El Cerrito. We have plenty of tennis courts to share with you.

Sincerely,

Connie Wong
El Cerrito Resident

From: [Darrell Hoh](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Support of Ocean View pickleball courts
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 9:17:07 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

To Whom it May Concern:

I'm writing in support of converting the rarely used tennis courts at Ocean View to permanent pickleball courts in the near future.

I've been an avid pickleball player for just over two years now. Since that time, I've met more than 300+ people along with way on the courts. I can't tell you what a wonderful sport this has become in my life both physically as well as socially.

Don't get me wrong, I love all sports including tennis but what I've found is the few amount of tennis players who will occupy a court at any given time. Pickleball courts seem to be filled with waiting lists whenever I venture out to a court on a non-rainy day. The difference is a tennis game may take quite long with generally two players on the court. With pickleball, you will generally see four players on a court. Games typically take 12-15 minutes versus a much lengthier time for tennis as pickleball is faster paced.

Up to four pickleball courts can replace one tennis court thus it's possible to have 16 players on all courts versus two to four players on one tennis court, maximizing the use of recreational space.

The cities of Walnut Creek, Concord, Oakland, Berkeley, Vallejo and Benicia all have pickleball courts. There is a need to fill a void for the City of Albany to offer permanent courts for the residents of Albany.

Should you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

--

Darrell Hoh
Realtor® since 1988
DRE#: 00981094
[DarrellHoh.com](#)

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From: [john swindell](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: In favor of Pickleball
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 9:46:47 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

My name is John Swindell I've lived in
20 years

I can't wait forever

Hurry up with the pickleball dedicated courts

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Neil Ramos](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Pickleball at Ocean View Park
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 9:47:46 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Dear Albany Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission,

I support the conversion of the shared-use courts at Ocean View Park to dedicated pickleball courts. I play both tennis and pickleball and am an Albany resident.

Thank you,

Neil Ramos

From: [Neil Ramos](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Pickleball at Ocean View Park
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 9:47:46 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Dear Albany Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission,

I support the conversion of the shared-use courts at Ocean View Park to dedicated pickleball courts. I play both tennis and pickleball and am an Albany resident.

Thank you,

Neil Ramos

From: [Joe Marin](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Pickleball courts
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 8:09:38 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Yes, permanent Pickleball courts would be a welcome addition to Ocean View Park. Youngsters and old-timers alike love this game, as evidenced by its amazing growth in the last few years. There is no doubt courts at Ocean View would get a lot of use while providing great recreation for residents and visitors alike.

I strongly support pickleball courts at Ocean View!

J. D. Marin
East Bay Resident

From: [Mike Hines](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Re: Pickleball
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 8:13:56 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

I support pickleball at the ocean view tennis courts! It will be awesome . Look to the new cedar rose courts in Berkeley to see why it is so good for the community ! Let's make it happen

>

> Mike Hines

>

> Sent from my iPhone

From: [Stephen](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Subject: Pickleball
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 9:55:01 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

To everyone:

I started learning to play Pickleball about nine months ago and it has changed my life. I could no longer play tennis because of the stress on my hips and knees. However, Pickleball has allowed me to become active again, losing weight and making new friends. The Cedar Rose courts are well used and most times I'm there, the tennis courts are unoccupied.

Let's share the courts as more and more people find the joy of Pickleball.

Thanks so much and Happy New Year!

Stephen

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bill Powning](#)
To: [PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE](#)
Cc: [Cathy Taruskin](#)
Subject: Ocean View Courts
Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2020 3:03:14 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL.]

Albany Park & Rec Commissioners,

I am writing in favor of converting the Ocean View tennis courts to permanent pickleball courts.

I know you have received many passionate appeals from both pickleball and tennis enthusiasts. Certainly both sides have merit and it is too bad that resources (land and financial) are limited. Deciding how to allocate resources, physical and financial, is a balancing act. Balance over time requires adjustment. When tennis courts were built pickleball did not exist. As the courts at Cedar Rose have shown, there are many more people using the one former tennis court than make use of the other two, newly resurfaced tennis courts. Shifting the balance at Ocean View does require eliminating two tennis courts but the benefits in terms of active use of facility seems clear to me for the following reasons:

1) **OCEAN VIEW COURTS HAVE BEEN UNDERUTILIZED FOR YEARS.** In her September 2019 report to the Commission, Chelle Putzer displayed a pie chart showing that 80% of the rental reservations for Ocean View tennis courts was for non-tennis events. As I said at the December meeting, I went around to Memorial, Ocean View and the new Cedar Rose pickleball courts in Berkeley a half dozen times this fall to see what was happening. Usually, there were one or two courts at Memorial in use by tennis players playing singles (one time all four courts were used for singles, so 8 players); usually all four pickleball courts were in use at Cedar Rose for doubles (16 players) with 2-10 people waiting); and no one was at Ocean View playing tennis except for one time when two people were playing tennis on one court.

2) **CASUAL (i.e. UNRESERVED) USAGE OF THE TENNIS COURTS BY PICKLEBALL PLAYERS GREATLY EXCEEDS THAT OF TENNIS PLAYERS.** Cathy Taruskin kept a log for six months of open play pickleball sessions at Ocean View on Wed. Fri. Sat. and Sun afternoons. (This was before the Cedar Rose courts opened). There were over 2,100 visits by pickleball players during that time. It's unfortunate that we do not have exact counts of casual tennis usage. However, due to the nature of tennis play (primarily singles who show up ad hoc) vs. pickleball play (where groups of 10-20 show up for pre-announced open play sessions), there is no evidence to suggest that tennis usage counts come anywhere near the counts we have tracked for pickleball.

3) **TENNIS PLAYERS HAVE MULTIPLE QUALITY OPTIONS FOR OTHER PLACES TO PLAY NEARBY.** There are abundant places to play tennis in Albany, Berkeley and El Cerrito including many with lights for playing at night and late afternoon in the winter. Our experience is that tennis players who find Memorial full tend to go to one of 18 tennis courts within 1.5mi (9 of them closer to Memorial than Ocean View). Since pickleball players were at Ocean View on four late afternoons a week, we would know if tennis players were showing

up to use the courts – they weren't.

4) **MANY CITY RECREATION DEPARTMENTS ARE RECOGNIZING THE BENEFIT OF ADDING PICKLEBALL TO THEIR OFFERINGS.** Pickleball did not exist when cities developed tennis courts as a regular resource in public parks. Now, all over the country, cities are either creating new pickleball courts if they can or converting tennis courts. It would be beneficial to all residents of the East Bay shoreline cities if the separate Park and Rec Departments cast a wider view as they decide what facilities to develop, maintain and change. There are already many single use tennis courts in Albany and adjacent cities. There is only one venue dedicated for pickleball (the 4 new courts at Cedar Rose in Berkeley). In terms of the number of people already playing pickleball and how that number is rapidly growing, this is a discrepancy that needs to be addressed.

5) **THE PICKLEBALL POPULATION IS RAPIDLY GROWING.** The email group that was started when the Cedar Rose courts opened in August has grown to 380, mainly because people who go by are curious to give it a try and want to keep coming back. It has been wonderful to see families playing together and children on their own coming to use the courts. This, in addition to single adults showing up to wait their turn to play into the rotation since, informally, players know they will find others to play with every morning 10-12 and after 3pm.

6) **THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGULARLY SERVED BY 7-8 PICKLEBALL COURTS AT OCEAN VIEW WOULD EXCEED THE NUMBER OF TENNIS PLAYERS WHO USE OCEAN VIEW OCCASIONALLY.** We do not relish the idea a taking away tennis courts from people who would use them. However, it's important to compare the numbers: 32 pickleball players could play simultaneously, and many of these people play 3-6 times PER WEEK. In contrast, a maximum of 8 tennis players could play simultaneously (and this scenario has never occurred in our regular observations of court usage over the years), and these players are more likely to use Ocean View on an irregular basis. **Of the 26 tennis players who have taken the time to voice their opposition to the court conversion via emailed public comments (so far), only 3 claim to use the OV courts more than once a week. Some say they play at OV "regularly" or "often" but are not more sepeific, while the majority do not cite their own usage of theOV courts at all. Compare this to the scores of pickleball players who mentioned playing 3-10 times per week.**

7) **PICKLEBALL SERVES A GROWING SENIOR COMMUNITY THAT HAS LIMITED ATHLETIC OPTIONS.** As a lot of the emails you received attest, pickleball has made "athletes" out of people who either never played sports or had given up due to age and/or injury. As important, it provides an opportunity for social engagement and fun for many people. It is not an exaggeration when you hear people say pickleball has greatly improved the quality of their lives. Increasing opportunities for people to socialize and play is an investment in public health.

8) **PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THIS PROPOSAL OUTWEIGHS OPPOSITION** The number of public comments on this issue speaks volumes. Based on the PUBLISHED comments today, over 156 letters (86%) were in favor of the court conversion, versus 26 opposed. In December, some Commissioners expressed concern that the word had not reached all of the tennis players. We'd like to point out that a number of tennis players have told us they have not written simply because they don't object – they see our request as a reasonable and fair means of sharing city resources.

9) PICKLEBALL PLAYERS ARE WILLING TO HELP FUND THIS INITIATIVE. The local pickleball community has already raised almost \$10,000 to help the City fund the conversion and improve lighting. This is a very strong indication of the number of people who support this proposal.

We feel that you are looking at three options:

- 1) DO NOTHING In view of the public support and interest in pickleball, we hope this option is off the table. Dual striping is increasingly unpopular solution among both pickleball players and tennis players. Each sport deserves its own facilities.
- 2) COMPROMISE: Convert one tennis court to four pickleball courts. While this may seem like a reasonable compromise, it has several drawbacks. A fence will be needed between the courts to contain errant balls, reducing the playable area and making it even less desirable to tennis players. Also, with a 1-tennis + 4-pickleball court layout, there is no place for pickleball players to wait in line for a court (other than on the tennis court). Finally, without 7-8 pickleball courts the opportunity to hold leagues and tournaments and generate reservation income for the City will not exist.
- 3) CONVERT BOTH TENNIS COURTS TO 8 PICKLEBALL COURTS. This is the long-term solution we seek, for the reasons I've outlined above.

Finally, a note on timing. At the last Commission meeting Harriet Patterson mentioned that the work to convert the tennis court at Cedar Rose seemed to take a considerable amount of time. Cathy Taruskin and I were directly involved in working with the City of Berkeley on this initiative, and can probably answer any questions you have about it. It should be noted that (1) those courts were in much worse shape than Ocean View, with many wide and buckled cracks to fix; (2) the contractor was resurfacing 3 courts not 2 and had other work he was doing for the City at the same time (work on the bike path and a nearby basketball court); and (3) the court conversion was actually completed several weeks before the opening because the City wanted to finish landscaping surrounding the courts.

Thank you for considering this initiative.

Bill Powning