

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Erin Crouse, Chair,
Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission

SUBJECT: Potential Recreation Uses for the American Legion Property

DATE: February 17, 2016

At our February 17, 2016 meeting, the Commission considered a list of possible recreation amenities that might serve the community if they could be located on a portion of the American Legion property. The following are possible amenities that might work well in this area and are needs identified in our current Master Plan:

1. It appears that a road is being considered that would use a portion of Ephesus Park to connect the Legion property with Ephesus Church Road. If a road is built through the western portion of the park the existing restroom facility will have to be relocated and a new facility built.
2. Any such road should be routed through the park property in order to avoid the school property.
3. A greenway trail connecting Legion road to Ephesus Church Road would greatly increase connectivity. Any such trail should be built to standard Town design, be ADA accessible, and be designed for both bicycle and pedestrian use.
4. A dog park with separate enclosures for large and small dogs.
5. A large playground area to serve the eastern part of Town.
6. Picnic shelter and other picnic areas along the proposed trail.
7. Provide additional parking at the tennis courts.
8. Upgrade the ballfield at the school.
9. Recreational/cultural arts programming space near the proposed lake.
10. The lake should be designed with environmentally sound “best practices” rather than just “water to a grassy edge.”
11. Improve the Ferrell Road access trail (neighborhood connectivity)
12. A connection from Adelaide Waters Street.
13. A community center building.
14. An outdoor pool.

Members Present: Erin Crouse (Chair), Joe Battle, Regina Blalock, Joan Guilkey, Mary Musacchia, Bob Myers, Jochen Schwarz, and Raymond Wong

Members not present: Steve Price (Vice Chair)

CHAPEL HILL CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION

December 21, 2016

MEMORANDUM- AMERICAN LEGION PROPERTY

Mayor and Town Council

Town of Chapel Hill

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Mayor and Council

The Chapel Hill Cultural Arts Commission noted that The Chapel Hill Town Council on December 5, 2016, authorized the Town Manager to sign a contract to purchase the 35-acre American Legion Property at 1714 Legion Road for \$7.9 million. The Contract was signed by the Town Manager on December 6, 2016. The Contract provides, in Section 9, that the sale is contingent on the approval of the General Membership of Chapel Hill Post 6, American Legion, Inc. On December 15, 2016 the General Membership met and voted to approve the contract.

With this document Chapel Hill Cultural Arts Commission as part of the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department and Cultural Arts Division would request inclusion in the conversation and planning pertaining to any future development within the American Legion Property.

Through our public feedback meeting during the development of the Cultural Arts Plan, we heard the community express their desire to have "makerspace" and classroom space for the arts and artists within our community. Currently, most of these services are being provided by third parties (UNC, ArtsCenter, Teen Center, etc.) If at some point the Town elects to build on this property, this space would fill a major need for CHCAC and for Town of Chapel Hill residents.

Sincerely yours,

Dan Cefalo- Chair Chapel Hill Cultural Arts Commission

Chapel Hill Pickleball Legion Rd Planning Proposal April 2017

This document is a short summary covering status of pickleball in Chapel Hill, and suggestions for how the town of Chapel Hill, in particular the Parks and Recreation department, can help support the sport of Pickleball in Chapel Hill in conjunction with the potential development of the Legion Rd site.

History

Pickleball is a relatively new sport. It is a paddle sport created for all ages and skill levels. The rules are simple and the game is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players. Many kids and teenagers play it in physical education classes in middle and high schools. Seniors enjoy the social aspects and the ability to stay active. Tennis, racquetball and ping pong players love the competitive nature of the sport and advanced players regularly participate in competitive tournaments. In many ways it is similar in organization to tennis, and in many areas it is rapidly approaching tennis in interest level. The governing organization for pickleball is the USAPA (<http://www.usapa.org/>). "Ambassadors" are the local representatives of the national organization. In most locales, it grows slowly at first until reaching critical mass, then it grows very fast.

In December 2015 we meet with the town P&R planning committee, as well as with P&R staff, to provide input on the Pickleball needs of the Chapel Hill community. This resulted in the redevelopment of two tennis courts into 6 pickleball courts at Ephesus. This helped ease the overcrowding of the existing Pickleball facilities at that time (Community Center and Hargaves). The new courts opened in April 2016, and we have already filled them up, with play occurring early morning, at lunch, during afterschool (program we started with Ephesus afterschool), and evening play includes leagues, teaching clinics, and social mixers. In 2015 when we proposed the short term plan (6 courts at Ephesus) we also demonstrated the expected need for many more outdoors and indoor courts, and provided a 5 year plan for 2020, which called for 24 outdoor courts and 6+ indoor courts (same as this proposal).

Needs: Pickleball began in 2012 in Chapel Hill with a handful of players. In 2014 we had over 200 players, and at the end of 2016 we had over 500+ active players participating. We are tracking participation through registration at the community centers, and by counting them at play times at the outdoor (Ephesus courts). We expect to have well over 1000 active players by 2020, and unless we substantially increase the available courts, we will not be able to come close to meeting that need.

Benefits: The advantage of having a large number of dedicated courts in a single location is immense. This allows us to offer multiple play times at different skill levels, leagues, skill training and lessons, and social play events. We are in our first year of supporting league play, and we have grown 200% and had to waitlist another 50%. Very importantly, it allows us to offer tournaments, which not only grow the sport and offer competitive formats, but also brings in tens of thousands of dollars in revenue annually to the town. We are modeling plans on several other communities who have successfully built 18-24 courts. These towns now attract residents due to pickleball. Having a dedicated pickleball facility has been demonstrated to be a critical factor in the development of a strong local program nationwide.

Growth rate.

USAPA estimates around 77 million Americans have played the game. Between the years of 2010 – 2013 the USAPA tripled its membership and it lists a growth rate of 39 new Pickleball venues being added monthly. It has been growing even faster the past few years (latest numbers not released yet).

2020 Plan for Chapel Hill

Outdoor: Development of 24 outdoor courts. A possible location is the old baseball field located between the existing Ephesus Park and the current Legion building. It is already leveled and compacted (significantly reducing construction costs). This would also return 2 tennis courts to use.

Indoor: 6+ indoor courts in new two gym recreational facility. Each indoor basketball court can support 3 pickleball courts by adding lines to courts and using portable net systems. An indoor facility also better supports many sports including basketball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, etc.

Site Planning: 24 court Pickleball complex would require roughly 800' N/S by 300' E/W with courts arranged in a 4 across (E/W) by 6 courts down (N/S) grid, with bisecting horizontal and vertical walkways, shaded bleachers, small building with restrooms. Additionally parking for 200 cars close by.

We believe both the indoor and outdoor facilities to be critical to handle the expected growth of this sport in Chapel Hill by the year 2020. Given the time frame for the development of the Legion Rd property, and the lack of alternative sites in Chapel Hill, we believe that incorporating these elements is critical to the future of this sport in Chapel Hill, as well as making us a leader in the sport in this area. (The Triangle is on its way to becoming nationally recognized in Pickleball, and this could cement our reputation). Below is the St George's Utah (similar population) facility (24 public courts) built last year.

