

RECREATION & PARKS COMMISSION 1/10/2024 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Hello Chair Smith, Commissioners and Staff

I AM Submitting the Following Comments into the Record:

1. The Commission Is Invited to the New Year's Mega Mixer, 1-22-2024, 5:30 to 7:30 PM La Strada Restaurant, Hosted By the Bayfront Chamber of Commerce \$10.00 for Non-Members
2. EL Cerrito Chamber Luncheon, 1-24-2024 11:30 am to 1:00 PM Los Moles Beer Garden, \$25.00 for Members \$27.00 for Non-Members Register on Eventbrite
3. The New Administrative Services Coordinator will be Coming Onboard Tentatively in the Spring

Sincerely
Cordell

- A. We urge dedicated courts, as opposed to having to put up portable nets. Last month a pickler required 5 stitches putting up a portable net.
- B. We do not see any tennis players at BTA.
- C. 100+ picklers wrote and attended the September 2023 Parks & Rec Commission Meeting to voice our desire for enhanced collaboration. We remain hopeful for a response.
- D. We appreciate the large container installed for our use. However, it is difficult for most people to open and close. It is housing the semi- permanent pickleball nets that should be permanent! We requested and appreciate **Greg Hardesty** who has approved a small container to be installed in the New Year, when the first rainfree day occurs. The smaller container will be theft proof, we promise!
- E. We welcome and encourage youth to play, as well as seniors

Kind regards,
Debbi Glosli

Dear Council Members:

We urge dedicated pickleball courts, as opposed to having to put up portable nets. Last month a pickler required 5 stitches putting up a portable net. We do not see any tennis players at BTA!!!!

100+ picklers wrote and attended the September 2023 Parks & Rec Commission Meeting to voice our desire for enhanced collaboration. We remain hopeful for a response. We appreciate the large container installed for our use. However, it is difficult for most people to open and close. It is housing the semi- permanent pickleball nets that should be permanent! We requested and appreciate **Greg Hardesty** who has approved a small container to be installed in the New Year, when the first rainfree day occurs. We welcome and encourage youth to play, as well as seniors.

Please hear our request!

Thank you,
Leigh Gronet
163 Lakeshore Court, Richmond, CA 94804

I am a resident of Richmond for 50 years and have enjoyed the many parks.
I have taken up playing pickleball, a senior of 73 years old and love using BTA courts.

It is very difficult for me to put up the portable net and open and close the storage container.
Since I have never seen a tennis player there, I hope that you will consider putting the permanent nets back. The courts have been very popular and such enjoyment for me.

Fondly,
L.P. Fry

Dear Parks and Recreation Commission,

If tennis players were currently using the single tennis court at Booker T Anderson Park, I would not be writing. But the fact is that they are apparently going elsewhere, leaving the court sitting idle. Idle, except that the space ends up being used for pickleball much of the time, requiring players to lug heavy portable nets, set them up, take them apart, etc. This is no small task, especially for an older person with physical limitations, as is evidenced by the serious injury that occurred recently when a player was attempting to assemble a portable net.

Please reconsider your decision to remove the four permanent pickleball nets that are sitting in storage waiting to be used by MANY pickleball players at Booker T Anderson. Leaving the remaining tennis courts in Richmond as tennis only and allowing the BTA courts to be pickleball only makes for a better experience for all players. Multi-use courts are a great example of 'decision by committee', a compromise solution that pleases no one, causing confusion over which lines to pay attention to and which to ignore.

If there was only one court space in Richmond, making it a multi-use court would be the only option. With the abundance of alternate tennis locations available, it makes no sense to insist that this one location must be multi-use to the detriment of the pickleball players. Tennis players have plenty of 'exclusive, unshared' space -- pickleball players deserve the same.

Cathy Taruskin
USA Pickleball Ambassador

Commissioners,

As a Richmond taxpayer, I would like to see Pickleball courts at BTA as permanent. In all my years in Richmond, I have never seen a tennis player play at the courts at BTA. We can get permanent Pickleball nets established there so the growing number of pickleball players can play without having to set up portable nets, or having to set up the very heavy nets that were provided by the City.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Lorraine Sommers
510-932-8455

Let's reinstate the dedicated pickleball courts at BTA instead of using portable nets that risk being broken or stolen in the difficult to open and close container. The permanent nets are there in the container so would be easy to reinstall. We requested and appreciate **Greg Hardesty** who has approved a small container to be installed in the New Year.

With more than 20 tennis courts in Richmond, tennis players have many other options for places to play, and tennis players don't seem to use BTA. And, youth and seniors all enjoy the pickleball courts and are welcome to play.

Thanks,
Jill Stockwell

I want to encourage the use of dedicated Pickleball Courts at BTA. We play there regularly as a group and have never seen anyone wanting to play tennis. We really appreciate the resurfaced courts, but the tennis court lines are confusing when playing PB. On the days we play we clean the courts of debris and dry any puddles from the rain. We want to minimize injuries associated with playing and with putting up temporary nets.

We appreciate the large container installed for our use. However, it is difficult for most people to open and close. It is housing the semi- permanent pickleball nets that should be permanent! We requested and appreciate **Greg Hardesty** who has approved a small container to be installed in the New Year, when the first rainfree day occurs. The smaller container will be theft proof, we promise.

We welcome and encourage youth to play, as well as seniors. More young players have been coming out, some from school programs starting to incorporate PB into their sports programs. Its a great place to play and the people we play with come from Richmond and the surrounding cities.

John Cowee, Architect / PB Player
509 Ramona Avenue
Albany, CA 94706
510.517.8567

Dear Parks and Recreation Commission members:

I am writing to express my strong support for dedicated pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson park, as opposed to portable nets.

I play pickleball at Booker T. Anderson on a regular basis. I have NEVER seen any tennis players there. There seems to be no good reason to limit the dedicated pickleball courts to only two courts, since the others are not being used by tennis players.

Please consider adding more dedicated courts for pickleball players.

Thank you very much.

Robbi A. Cook
510-479-6432

Dear Madams/Sirs,

I am one of the senior ladies group who tries to play pickle ball weekly regularly, but often, we cannot find available courts to play on.

Booker T Anderson Park has 2 pickle ball courts but they are always full; it also has some portable nets to be set up, but they are too heavy and difficult for us to tackle. In fact, last year in September while we were playing there, we saw a senior lady fell down trying to set up the portable net. Ambulance was called and she was sent to the hospital.

My group of senior ladies are long time tennis players, but we have to switch to playing pickle ball now because pickle ball is less strenuous for us.

We strongly and sincerely urge you to please make the portable nets permanent and convert the Anderson Park courts into pickle ball courts for availability. After all, you seldom see anybody playing tennis there and there are still many other tennis courts around.

Sincerely submitted,
Sarah Lo

As a member of the greater Richmond community, I support the use of the Booker T Anderson courts as permanent pickle ball courts. The sport is a rapidly growing activity enjoyed by a broad group of the community, especially those who are underserved by other athletic opportunities. It is a sport easily accessible to seniors and others with moderate mobility issues.

Given that there are many other opportunities to play tennis in Richmond, a dedicated space for pickle ball is an appropriate use for these facilities.

Joe Carlson

All,

I encourage you to allow all pickleball nets at Booker T. Anderson to be made permanent. It's hard for me to imagine who would be disadvantaged. There's very little tennis played there, and plenty of other options nearby for tennis. On the other hand pickleball courts, particularly with permanent nets, are in great demand throughout the East Bay and would be used a great deal to much greater benefit.

Respectfully,

Alan Kaplan

Dear Richmond Recreational Director, City Councils:

We are writing regarding the Booker T Anderson (BTA) pickleball situation and plead to you to fully restore the courts with the dedicated pickleball nets. As you recall, you decided a few months ago to take away 4 courts so that people can still play tennis at BTA. We have gone to BTA at least 5X a week BUT we have NEVER seen a single tennis player. In contrast, we have had many pickleball players at BTA everyday. Thus, the "tennis" court at BTA is really there for NO ONE.

Although having a large container to store pickleball portable nets is a temporary solution, it nevertheless has several problems. For one, it is heavy to carry the nets and cumbersome to set up and to take apart. It could also

be dangerous. One day last November, one person fell over the rectangular bar of the net while putting it together by herself. As a result, she broke her nose, requiring 5 stitches at the hospital!

Finally, please note that pickleball is played by people from many ethnic background, including African American, Hispanic, Asian and Caucasian alike. For the last few months alone, we have met people originated from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan.

Please restore all 6 permanent pickleball courts for diversity and encouragement for people from all ages to play this fun and healthy sport.

Thank you for your attention.

Astar & Lulu W
residents at Richmond, CA 94803

Hi City of Richmond & Parks/Rec Department,

I've written in a few times now and will do it again. I'm not really sure what the resistance to pickleball is given the inclusivity and openness this sport and community provides. I imagine there are entire programs set up just to bring community members together and here we are trying to do it at our own cost but hitting walls and road blocks every step of the way. **I'm also surprised you are not more supportive of pickleball at BTA due to the decrease in drug dealings on and around the premises of the courts.** The decrease in drug dealing is significant enough that the neighbors are commenting and thanking us for playing. I'm sure there are programs set up just to reduce this behavior across the city. Here we are, pushing it out on our own.

Long before pickleball was ever spoken about in Richmond and even to today there is very little to NO tennis played at the Booker T Anderson park. I wish it was played more because it would mean actual funding and support for more courts and better places to play. We resurfaced the courts based on donations received from pickleballers, corporate sponsors along with a grant from the city. Somehow a negative sentiment spread across the city and parks and rec department because what came next is dreadful. 1) A city council meeting was held with zero representation from the pickleball community. I listened to this call and was enraged at the way folks spoke about the sport, the mission and our community. Utter disgust at how we were made fun of, and dragged through the dirt. All for a sport that brings people together from all walks of life. 2) Signs were removed without warning because of assumptions that this was a for-profit endeavor. I assure you if we were making money on this then the fencing wouldn't have holes, and the storage of supplies wouldn't be so hard to work with. The assumption and lack of respect and communication shows there is no open-ness. 3) I have emailed several times to get signs back up. The emails go unresponded. We need a city logo on our "open play" sign which tells community members when they can come and learn the sport, play with others and have fun. I have asked but never received a file for the city logo.

I urge anyone that is part of Richmond Recreation department to pause and reflect on what happened. Here we are bringing folks together but are getting pushed out. I'm at a loss. I used to be proud of being a Richmond resident and now I scoff at it.

Lila Del Rosso
Richmond Home Owner since 2019, resident since 2017

City of Richmond's Parks & Recreation Department:

I am writing to highlight Richmond's community's pressing need for dedicated pickleball courts. As a pickleball enthusiast, I am highly concerned after noticing how the voices of over 100 pickleballers expressed during the September 2023 Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting have been ignored since no response or action has been produced in over five months.

I'm also worried about the current situation that forces pickleballers to set temporary nets on tennis courts, which is impractical, unsafe, and fosters competition for both groups to enjoy their respective sports fully.

While a bit of progress with installing a container for pickleball equipment has to be recognized, its usability is complicated due to difficulties opening and closing it. The community needs stronger/semi-permanent or, even better, permanent pickleball nets to ensure accessibility and convenience for all enthusiasts.

There's a strong reason the number of pickleball players keeps growing: it is an inclusive sport that has successfully brought together seniors and young individuals. More actions that align with the larger goal of installing dedicated pickleball courts should be made to accommodate them.

A sport like that deserves more importance and attention than the one received by the city of Richmond, and the provision of these courts in the city will further enhance inclusivity and encourage more individuals to participate.

I strongly exhort the city to prioritize the construction of dedicated pickleball courts, assessing the increasing interest and the many benefits it offers our diverse community.

Finally, thank you for your time and consideration. I expect a positive response and proactive actions toward establishing dedicated pickleball courts in the city.

Thanks,
Carmen Padrón
510-9282486

EMAILS BELOW RECEIVED AFTER THE 1:00 PM DEADLINE:

Hi,

I'm writing to strongly request dedicated courts, as opposed to having to put up portable nets. Last month a pickler required 5 stitches putting up a portable net.

Pickle Points:

- More bang for your buck with 4 pickleball courts in the space of 1 tennis court.
- Pickleball popularity is growing very fast: 156% in 3 years!!!

<https://www.pickleheads.com/blog/pickleball-statistics>

- - We do not see any tennis players at BTA.
- - 100+ picklers wrote and attended the September 2023 Parks & Rec Commission Meeting to voice our desire for enhanced collaboration. We remain hopeful for a response.
- - We appreciate the large container installed for our use. However, it is difficult for most people to open and close. It is housing the semi-permanent pickleball nets that should be permanent!

- - We requested and appreciate Greg Hardesty who has approved a small container to be installed in the New Year, when the first rainfree day occurs. The smaller container will be theft proof, we promise!
- We welcome and encourage youth to play, as well as seniors!

Thank you!

David Rodriguez

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many thanks to the city for installing the storage container at B.T Anderson Park. I am one of the volunteer hosts dedicated to ensuring that the community has an enjoyable experience at B.T.A. Park. We welcome everyone to join us in the wonderful game of Pickleball. We find it brings the community together for fun and exercise and builds new friendships. We have a good number of other racket sport players discovering how much fun pickleball is and joining us to play regularly.

We do need to address the unforeseen problems setting up and taking down the portable nets on a daily basis. Many players have difficulty moving the nets and setting them up. The nets are too heavy for many to move and I, myself, injured my rotator cuff carrying them. Six permanent nets would make it far easier for the kids and seniors to enjoy playing anytime without the need for assistance.

Warmly,

Sanford Chan, Broker/Owner

Mandalay Realty

925-895-3777 cell

Hi Recreation Commission,

I am a 30 year resident of Richmond. I am writing to request that the courts at Booker T Anderson continue to serve as Pickleball Courts. I find putting the posts in and out too difficult and I'm concerned about potential injury from lifting those heavy posts. Since the courts were changed to 2 permanent instead of 6 permanent courts, I don't go often anymore. I'm not exercising as much and when I do, I often go elsewhere. I live close to BTA and would love for them to be accessible again. I have NEVER seen anyone with a tennis racquet go there. I like the park and the crowd that comes to the park for all of its activities. It's time to give the PB players a court too.

Thanks,

Dori

Dori Maxon PT, MEd