



**RECREATION, CULTURE & WELLNESS DEPARTMENT**

Tuesday, April 06, 2021

**Subject:** Pelham Tennis Operations 2021

**Recommendation:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2021-0066-Recreation, Pelham Tennis Operations 2021;**

**AND THAT the Town of Pelham assist both pickleball volunteers and the Pelham Tennis Association in providing programs at the Centennial Park Tennis Court;**

**AND THAT the following fees, effective immediately, be included in the Town of Pelham user fee guide:**

**Family Membership \$150.00**

**Single Adult Membership \$100.00**

**Single Student Membership \$50.00**

**Single Senior Membership \$50.00**

**Children (12 years and under) Free**

**Lesson Fees will be determined based on competitive rates;**

**AND THAT staff be directed to update the Fees and Charges By-law to reflect these new fees;**

**AND THAT staff investigate funding opportunities for capital improvements to the tennis courts, due to base failure, resulting in cracking.**

**Background:**

The Pelham Tennis Association has been a great Community partner since 1977. The dedicated volunteers have worked with the Town to provide organized tennis opportunities by offering memberships, ladies leagues, men's league, lessons for all ages at the Centennial Park Tennis Courts in Fenwick.

From 1977-1991 the Town of Pelham was responsible for the administration of the tennis programs, by hiring an instructor/court monitor; purchasing equipment;

promotion of the programs, etc. The Association would collect all registrations and hand the money over to the Town to offset the costs of operations and improvements to the tennis courts.

In 1991, the Pelham Tennis Association had a strong membership and agreed to take over the Tennis program, setting their own fees and retaining collected revenues; purchase their own supplies; hiring and paying their supervisory and instructional staff. The Town agreed to continue basic maintenance of the courts during the year, and continue to contribute to a reserve fund on an annual basis in order to fund capital improvements to the courts, keeping them at a competitive level.

Over the last 30 years the Courts have had capital improvements every 5-7 years, mainly court resurfacing with colour coating; crack repair, etc. The court surface (base and playing surface) was rebuilt in 2004; a new fence was installed in 2005; new net post anchors and sleeves in 2011; and the playing surface was crack sealed and replaced in 2015, but now the base has failed. The Pelham Tennis Association has always contributed to the Capital improvements annually up to 50% of the cost. The final year of their last capital improvement agreement is 2022. Due to the base failure the courts are experiencing major cracking. Staff have received reconstruction estimates of \$275,000.00. Staff are investigating funding under the Healthy Communities Fund or Community Building Fund for this reconstruction. Both funding applications will be open later in the year. Either way the Tennis Court reconstruction will need to be identified in the Capital Forecast due to safety concerns. The Pelham Tennis Association agree the courts are still playable for the 2021 season.

Tennis and pickleball are both growing in popularity within the region, province and Town. Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in Canada, especially among seniors. This has been evident in Pelham with the growing registration and participation in pickleball programs at the Meridian Community Centre. During the warmer seasons, and now with COVID-19 precautions in place, there is an additional need within the community for minimal contact, outdoor activities, that are inclusive and accessible for the community to access. Over 60% of tennis in Canada is played in public parks, which shows the needs for outdoor facilities to accommodate the growing number of player's, Country, Region and Pelham wide.

Peter Bedard, President of the Pelham Tennis Association (PTA), presented to Council on September 23, 2020, expressing concerns around the condition of the courts, as well as the growing need to offer pickleball, and allow both sports to share one space. Mr. Bedard's presentation focused on a coordinated approach, which one year later, is being revisited as an approach the PTA is still seeking.

Assistance from the Town of Pelham, helping to support the PTA, by utilizing the resources and practices already in place, will create a partnership that benefits both the Town, the Pelham Tennis Association, and most importantly provides benefits to the community.

The Pelham Tennis Association (PTA) has contacted the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department looking for guidance on governance, as their current governing body, due to only having 2 members, is unable to complete all tasks required for the upcoming summer season. Due to COVID-19, additional requirements are in place pertaining to pre-registration, pre-booking facility spaces, screening, disinfecting and cleaning. This, in combination with an increase need from the community for outdoor, socially distanced activities, has lead the PTA to feel overwhelmed, and in need of assistance, which the Town of Pelham would successfully be able to provide with resources already available.

With pickleball being in high demand at the Meridian Community Centre, this partnership would provide additional outdoor space, which could expand existing programming opportunities.

As Pelham strives to provide quality programs to the community they serve, this coordinated approach would not only allow for the expansion of programming, but would offer a strong support for existing members and advocates for recreation and sport within the community.

### **Analysis:**

Based on the needs of the Pelham Tennis Association (PTA), and the resources the Town of Pelham currently utilizes, a partnership would benefit both parties, and would lead to successful programming and further opportunities for community involvement. This would help to alleviate the stress of the PTA members, while also providing an opportunity for the Town to offer programs, leading to additional revenue, while also supporting a growing demographic of tennis and pickleball players who are already advocates of the Town facilities they currently utilize.

Through this partnership, the Town of Pelham will:

- a) Provide safe facilities; clean and sanitized washrooms; maintaining courts; provide a way to control access.
- b) Provide all programming by taking registration, instructor contracts and bookings, while also developing a plan for and monitoring contactless screening of participants for contact tracing
- c) Retain all program revenues to offset operating costs

- d) The marketing and advertising of programs, lessons and memberships both through the Town website and social media platforms
- e) Providing program insurance, as well as costs associated with being a member of the Ontario Tennis Association and the Ontario Pickleball Association.
- f) Promoting both tennis and pickleball volunteer opportunities through the existing volunteer data base, as well as through advertising, seeking passionate players who will take on active roles in a meaningful way
- g) Expanding on existing programming (ex. Adding after school programs, senior/retiree's programs, opportunities for beginners)

Through this partnership, the Pelham Tennis Association would be responsible for:

- a) Purchasing portable pickleball nets to be used on multipurpose courts to allow for additional playing space
- b) Contributing to the payment for painting additional lines on multipurpose courts if required
- c) Organizing volunteers to advocate for the facility, assist during busy program times and monitor the condition of the courts
- d) Organizing volunteers to help assist new players, teaching them the basics of the game
- e) Organize a strong group of both tennis and pickleball volunteers to work together to develop, promote and advance the interest of both racquet sports in Pelham

The community is eager to get out and be active after a long winter season at home, and many inquiries have been received awaiting an opening date for Pelham's community courts. The Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department is prepared to open these locations when possible, and will have portable washrooms available on site until park washrooms open in the spring.

### **Financial Considerations:**

In addition to expanding the opportunity for programs within the community, the proposed takeover of programming would also provide The Town of Pelham with additional revenue. Below is recommended 2021 fees and charges:

Family Membership: \$150.00

Single Adult Membership: \$100.00

Single Student Membership: \$50.00

Single Senior Membership: \$50.00

Children (12 years and under): Free

Lesson fees will be determined based on competitive rates

- \*Memberships allows for both tennis and pickleball play
- \* Registration for programs and memberships would give priority to Pelham Residents before opening up to open registration.

The 'Pickleball Club' currently has 32 players ready and willing to purchase memberships, and the PTA are hopeful that many of their 150 members from 2019 will be interested in renewing their memberships for the 2021 summer season.

In 2020, over 50 youth participated in regular lessons with tennis instructors, Marko Petkovic and Karen Wright, who would be encouraged to instruct again as Town of Pelham instructors in the 2021 summer season. Lesson fees and charges will set at a future date.

### **Alternatives Reviewed:**

No other alternative were reviewed.

### **Strategic Plan Relationship: Strong Organization**

The Pelham Tennis Association helps to serve members within the community through recreational programs and sports. This opportunity for the Town of Pelham to assist a local association through a coordinated approach will help to better serve the community, providing quality programs to new and existing members. This partnership will further strengthen the existing sense of community, while also providing an opportunity for the Town of Pelham expand on their current program offerings and generate additional revenues. This increase in revenues will also assist in offsetting costs to improve and refinish the courts due to seasonal wear as needed.

### **Consultation:**

Peter Bedard, President, Pelham Tennis Association  
Elaine Sommerville, Treasurer, Pelham Tennis Association  
James Fraser, Pickleball Club Volunteer

### **Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:**

None

### **Prepared and Recommended by:**

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Active Living Programmer

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Director of Recreation, Culture and Wellness

**Prepared and Submitted by:**

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