



Municipality of Port Hope

Staff Report

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Report Title: Racquet Club Agreement

Report to: Parks, Recreation & Culture Committee

Date of meeting: May 17, 2022

Report Author:

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Department responsible:

Parks, Recreation & Culture

Report Number: PRC-07-22

Recommendation:

1. That a by-law be presented to Council to execute an agreement between the Port Hope Racquet Club and the Municipality of Port Hope for the term commencing June 1, 2022 and ending March 31, 2027; and further,
2. That Council support staff's recommendation to install one pickleball court at the tennis courts located at the Town Park Recreation Centre to accommodate public demand for outdoor pickleball play.

Highlights:

- The current agreement between the Port Hope Racquet Club and the Municipality of Port Hope requires renewal.
- The Port Hope Racquet Club continues to work in partnership with the Municipality in developing programs for youth and adults.
- There is a community desire to seek opportunities for outdoor pickleball.

Background:

In 2002, the Municipality entered into an agreement with the Port Hope Racquet Club for use of the tennis courts at the Town Agricultural Park and use of the gymnasium for badminton programs at the Town Park Recreation Centre. This agreement has been reviewed and renewed since that time. The current five-year agreement approved by By-law 13/2017 expired on March 31, 2022.

The Port Hope Racquet Club has worked in partnership with the Municipality in developing programs for youth and adults. Programs include up to four weeks of summer tennis camps and winter indoor tennis which are delivered in co-operation with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC). Additional Racquet Club programs include badminton, various tournaments, lessons, and social events which are available to Club Members. The Club also has completed a Clubhouse upgrade, including an art piece and a small patio area.

Discussion:

The attached draft agreement outlines the conditions of use and responsibilities of the Port Hope Racquet Club and the Municipality for the use of courts located at the Town Park Recreation Centre. The courts are identified as public courts, with the Club having priority use for identified Club times.

The conditions listed in the agreement outline responsibilities of the Club and the Municipality. Club responsibilities include the payment of fifty percent (50%) of the annual tennis membership revenues of the Club (after deduction of the Club's liability insurance premiums) as a contribution towards the capital cost of the facility. It also includes an annual contribution of \$1,000 to be used towards repairs and operation of the tennis court facilities. Both payments are considered user fees for the court as established by this agreement.

Additional responsibilities of the Port Hope Racquet Club include: providing a junior program, providing and maintaining court windscreens, tools and equipment and managing the tennis courts during Club hours.

The Municipality of Port Hope assists with administrative and programming support, maintenance of lights, fencing, nets and posts, and provide storage of equipment.

Staff discussed the updated proposed agreement with representatives of the Racquet Club. Both parties have indicated that the existing agreement has worked well and therefore there are no significant changes recommended relating to tennis and badminton. The attached draft agreement includes a new five-year term, from June 1, 2022, and ending March 31, 2027 with terms and conditions similar to the former agreement. Adjustments include the requirement for proof of insurance, the removal of tax receipt option following review with the Finance department, as well as a staff recommendation to accommodate one pickleball court at the Town Park location.

Demand for public outdoor pickleball courts continues to be high. Courts at Caroline Street Park are underutilized, as players are dissatisfied with the aged, concrete surface and lack of shade. Upcoming remediation activities may render this location out of service and long-term investments are being considered. The courts at Welcome Park are well used, but due to the proximity to residences, adjustments to play to mitigate noise have been required. These adjustments are not acceptable to intermediate and advanced players.

Construction for the Town Park Expansion Project is slated to start this summer. Town Park Recreation Center is currently housing all Ruth Clarke Activity Centre programs, and with a near full return to day camp operations, space challenges and high volume are anticipated over the summer months.

With support from the Parks Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee, staff proposed the addition of pickleball court lines on one tennis court at TPRC to allow for outdoor play outside of designated Racquet Club hours, and received the following comments/concerns from the Club executive:

1. Concern with etiquette differences between the two sports and anticipation of disputes and harassment. Members commented on experience during a trial addition of pickleball lines in 2020 prior to court resurfacing. Staff did not receive complaints or concerns about disputes, however the racquet club executive noted that they did.
2. Concern that discussions with the pickle ball players about becoming part of the racquet club have been unproductive, and comment that fundraising by the Racquet Club has supported maintenance and improvements of courts, while pickle ball players have not contributed.
3. Concern that the pickle ball lines are distracting to advanced tennis players.
4. Comment that pickleball would not be covered under the Racquet Club insurance policy, which is through the Ontario Tennis Association.

After examining court usage and schedules, staff and the PRC Advisory Committee are recommending moving forward with addition of pickleball lines on one court, to accommodate recreational pickleball play on the public courts. Staff plan to implement a communication campaign to support etiquette for shared play areas, and support the promotion of Racquet Club activities, play and communication. Pickleball play would only be permitted during public use times (not during Club times) and therefore not affiliated with racquet Club programming. Additionally, staff will work with interested parties to examine the feasibility of the development of a formal pickle ball club to work in partnership with the Municipality to address future needs and development of pickle ball programming.

The recommendation is to install one court of the three located at Town Park for public use, using the same orientation and net as tennis, which would permit one recreational pickleball court (Figure 1). Staff are also installing 2 pickleball courts at the Jack Burger Sports Complex this spring. This opportunity will trial a product on the arena floor to reduce slip. PRC will communicate this opportunity and seek user feedback as part of long-term planning for future options.

Figure 1 Image of pickleball court on a tennis court- Cobourg, ON



Financial Considerations:

The contributions of the Racquet Club to the community in offering programming are well known. The Racquet Club manages the membership and program opportunities well, with partnership opportunities available to the Municipality. Ongoing staff support for tennis and badminton is available within the PRC regular operating budget, including both parks and program supports. Future considerations for establishing a pickleball club and developing permanent outdoor courts is included in the PRC short-term workplan and facility development targets for future budget and grant considerations.

Communication and Public Engagement:

Not Applicable

Conclusion:

The Municipality of Port Hope and the Port Hope Racquet Club have worked together to provide services and programs to the community since the construction of the Town Park facilities in 2002. This partnership has served the community well. 2022 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Club, and the execution of an agreement maintains the consistency and support for the operations of the Club.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – By-law XX-2022 – Port Hope Racquet Club Agreement