

Agenda for 6/21/2017 Meeting

Attending: Jim Wilson, Vance Remick, Dick Tate, Jen Johnson, Robb English, Diane Cashion, JB Marr, Brad Hemminger

Absent: Linda Wu, Gracia Berry, Dennis Caren

Meeting chaired by Brad Hemminger, notes by Brad Hemminger.

Items from discussions at 6/24/2017 Town Hall

Followups with P&R:

- Lights off at 10:30pm; Have been changed to go off at 10:30pm. Discussed and would like them to go off at 11pm as people often play that late in summer. This is what P&R tennis courts do. Robb will get them changed to turn off at 11:00pm (they will go OFF at 11pm, even if you punch on at 10:59pm).
- Lights turn on time (clarify). Discussed two options available; programmed to go off certain time before daily sunset (up to 99 minutes). Other option is have fixed turn on times that they can be turned on by. We preferred the second (fixed time) as it makes is easier to convey to players, and have them know when they can turn on. Brad to work with Robb to setup annual schedule for turnon times. Right now stay on start time of 6:15pm.
- Storage box: P&R has put in at most facilities. See bocce ball one (small size) as example; homestead fields have large (6'x6'x3'). Possible one is softball field at Ephesus that is not used and could be used at pickleball courts. Could be combination or key lock. Combination locks can be changed if code gets out. Determine what size we want (what goes into it). Thoughts about contents
 - Hold: first aid, balls, paddles, lost & found, ...
 - AED (is this important for this group). Can have audible alarm if left unsecured. Robb is working on this for all athletic facilities.
 - One in lifeguard office, and storage closet in gym.
 - Easy access (big bin might not be best); perhaps upright cabinet
 - Security: not able to broken into.
 - On court or off court. If heavy requires separate concrete pad.
 - Have ones that double as bench.
 - Robb will forward to us P&R resources that carry such items. Up to CHPB to determine best choice.
 - JB to lead this.
- Night light at Ephesus. Robb will check on possibilities. Jen suggested putting some inexpensive solar lights along entrances in meantime. Robb said this would be OK. Jen will do this.

- Water fountain at Ephesus. There is water fountain behind the bathroom. CHPB should advertise this better as it's not visible to players. It is not handicap accessible. Robb will investigate this as well as possible upgrades to facilities.
- Webcam. Helps know if people are there playing. Know if courts are playable (wet). Good for security issues (vandalism, etc). Robb will bring this up with P&R. This is something that is becoming technical feasible, and P&R will be considering for facilities in future. We noted there may be privacy issues that require further discussion.

Informational Kiosk at Ephesus courts (new item came out of above discussion).

Robb suggested Kiosk for communicating schedule, playing information, ambassadors pictures. Steering committee, etiquette/code of conduct, etc. This is great idea, and would meet several needs. Robb will investigate for us.

Court rotation system for mornings.

Discuss possibilities. Propose something to membership (specifically to group playing in mornings). Looking for something to help create positive atmosphere? Ambassador/SC welcoming new players.

We had lots of feedback from players suggesting having something to (1) have fair and easier to understand way to rotate players on/off courts; (2) facilitate players getting to play at the level they wish. We discussed many types of systems used at other places. This is a complex issue and will likely require some additional work. However, we were in agreement that we should have an agreed upon protocol to help with this as we are having more times (primarily mornings, evenings) with players waiting to play, and when issues arise. We agreed that we should have a system and follow it to avoid issues, and to facilitate people requesting play (and potentially at certain level). We will use the paddle saddles as mechanism; have 2nd set to go up on East side of Ephesus courts. We should work with each playing time group to figure out best use of saddles for them. For the mornings, proposed trying two divisions of courts (one side of three being INT to ADV (courts 1-3), and the other BEG to INT (courts 4-6). It would help to utilize the newly proposed signage to indicate this on the courts. The ambassadors and steering committee should set good examples of this, and communicate to players on the courts. Once we have new paddle saddles up, we will send out an announcement.

Court Behavior.

How to help folks feel comfortable expressing when they are uncomfortable at court due to others behaviors? Should they ask Ambassadors/ST to intervene? Who should enforce? (relate ambassador's discussions with Joe Borelli and P&R about having P&R enforce behaviors, not Ambassadors/ST).

Reemphasize to membership. We asked P&R if there can be a process for notifying person when complaints are filed against them. Robb said this happens in basketball where there are leagues and referees, etc. Pickleball is different in that it's self regulated; there is no P&R direct supervision. So, the process is less transparent, in the P&R director has to make decision based on an complaints filed against a person. The director can choose to trespass individuals if necessary; however, this is very rarely done. It would be helpful to have more explicit description of inappropriate behaviors. P&R is working on code of conduct for each of its facilities. They hope to be able to put them on signage at facilities (or perhaps our kiosk). If people have concerns, and are uncomfortable expressing to the offending individual, contacting ambassadors is good option as well, so we know what current problems are in the community. It was suggested that ambassador be easily identifiable (and steering committee potentially too). A good way to do this would be having their pictures up on kiosk so players would be able to easily identify them.

How to know who's playing.

How to connect to other players. Whether to add global email list for all players? (easy to do and just see how it goes). Whether to add chat channel on webpages. More work to add.

We have just added new email lists for (BEG, INT, ADV, WOMEN). We will re-promote these to membership, and see how well they work, and whether players still feel the need for a "general" email list. Revisit in Fall 2017.

Side note: Brad shared that at other places the most common tools utilized for this are SignupGenius (<http://www.signupgenius.com/>) or Meetups (<https://www.meetup.com/>).

Portable Signs to indicate current court use.

Bucket of signs. Could we have placards for "League", "Challenge", "Free Play" ? that we keep in storage box?

We like the idea; we'll try some pilot signage. Vance suggested signage that hangs off the nets. Dick suggested signs that hang over top of divider fence, so two signs could be hang off each other. Vance will be in charge of piloting something.

Programming

P&R has helped keep our time indoors despite underutilization. They would benefit though from knowing if we aren't going to use space.

We will work on this, in combination with developing better utilization of indoor court time through programming and marketing of indoor courts during warm weather time periods.

Women's only time.

18 signed up as interested. Varied in when they'd like to play, and where (indoor/outdoor). Asked for someone to step up as coordinator but no volunteers.

Dennis: Court time for Women's Only can only lead to court time for Men's Only. This cuts into the total court time available. The prime time being 9 AM or so to noon and blocking courts during the prime time, I don't think would be a good idea.:

While there was some resistance to this, it was primarily because of hesitations about allocating more (scarce) court time, and that this is done informally already (i.e. people can sign up and play this way). However, there are reasons why it may be helpful (social aspects) to have fixed time for this. We are willing to try at underutilized times (i.e. don't displace/overlap existing programming, regular play times). Could also do specific one off events or less frequent (quarterly/monthly) to begin with, to gauge interest. Need to have coordinator to help organize, and bring specific proposal to steering committee for approval. Jen offered to be coordinator.

Singles Ladder League.

29 signed up. Nick Galvez volunteered to be coordinator. Mark Siewers offered to setup league software for this. We polled players on play times, and format, and have proposal. Nick drafted proposal: 3 courts, 2 hours once a week. Proposed using the 7-9pm using Wed night during July/August as pilot (while the Wednesday night advanced league is not active). Will have 3 levels of players, and players rotate through playing other players at their level. Mini tournament at end.

Approved for trial period during July/August for Wednesdays 7-9pm. If successful will need to look for another time spot due to league play resuming in September.

Chapel Hill tournament.

We would like to get your ideas on what would be important for "our" tournament. Robb English will be heading up tournament (run by P&R), with input from us. We have identified date: Oct
father/son, etc.

Desired values that the steering committee expressed for our tournament were "friendly, inclusive, more about fun than being supercompetitive". Suggested that we might include

special activities like parent/child play to attract more people to the event. Brad is working up plan with Robb for tournament to meet these values. They will present (by email) back to steering committee as this needs to progress quickly. Date for tournament is Friday 10/13/2017 through Sunday 10/15/2017.

New items

Nets off ground.

Jen Johnson: Jen's suggestion on rolling bottom of nets up to allow easier ball return. Proposal is to test on 2 courts. Can easily do with plastic ties.

The was approved to pilot on two of the Ephesus courts. Jen will oversee this. We'll leave in place for a few months, and then solicit feedback.

Fourth of July party.

BJ: offered to repeat organizing the Fourth of July PB party that included a potluck dinner and then over to UNC for fireworks. Do you want to do that party again this year? I would need to get this out pretty quick if we were going to repeat the party.

This was successful last year, and we'd like to do again. It was approved.

Celebration for Jim:

BJ: (we have talked about doing something to recognize Jim, especially since he couldn't be at the 1 year anniversary of the Ephesus courts). BJ volunteered to do a Founders Day party to honor Jim Wilson as the founder of Chapel Hill PB. This would be a regular open play morning of Jim Wilson's choosing. It would be regular open play with refreshments provided by me and a special presentation to Jim as founder.

We have been planning to do something like this. This sounds good, and we're happy to have BJ arrange it. It was approved.

Fall Arts Festival

BJ: have some space and do a demo at the Fall Arts Festival in Chapel Hill. I am thinking about a small piece of street, maybe next to Parks and Rec with a net and four people dunking the ball. We could hand out printed material with information.

All I need right now is an ok to see if this is possible and if it would cost anything. It would be a good venue to show people what pickleball is and maybe let them try it out on a small scale.

Approved. We want to do more promotional events like this. Brad asked everyone to think of opportunities to promote the sport at events around Chapel Hill. We can easily demo (he has portable table tennis barrier that's five feet wide, or we could use a pickleball singles net) in a small space (like 8'x8'). Send any suggestions to committee. Robb suggested July 4th event. Jen suggested halftime at UNC basketball games.

Roles of Ambassadors/Steering Committee

(also was a new comment). For roles of Ambassador share full statement of Ambassador's role, and how most ambassadors work with communities around the nation. In most communities Ambassadors do most promoting, programming, etc. For CHPB we are a bit different with Steering Community (and transparency via publishing meeting summaries, and inclusion of P&R directly in discussions). Talk about main roles of promoting sport (including developing new courts), educating people about the sport and introducing players to sport, For Steering Committee helpful to remember that primary roles are promotion, helping people have a positive pickleball experience, and working with owners of courts (P&R, or private facilities) to offer programming desirable to our membership.

Brad, JB:

USAPA Roles of Ambassadors: <http://www.usapa.org/ambassador-standards-expectations/>

USAPA Effective Ideas for Ambassadors: <http://www.usapa.org/effective-ideas-for-ambassadors/>

We have surveyed what ambassadors do in many areas of country, and of course are very familiar with local ambassadors. There is quite a variance. In many cases ambassadors organize most everything, especially in smaller venues. In larger ones they coordinate more (like across clubs). In all cases they are closely involved with developing resources (courts), interacting with P&R and private court owners (to promote pickleball, and help with programming), promoting the sport, helping introduce players to the sport, and guide its growth. In Chapel Hill we have grown from small community where ambassadors regularly played with most everyone to where we have many venues and many playing times. As a result, it is generally more effective for players on courts to self regulate their behaviors (for instance the ambassadors to be representatives of good behavior, and be available to hear concerns, but not to be the on court "police"). We see this in similar size cities, and confirmed with regional ambassador (Joe Borelli).

Dennis (related comment): what I have often heard is that just showing up and getting to play / exercise is very nice. We must keep in mind that many who have gotten into P/Ball have not been playing other court sports for quite some time. I think this is what we need to keep as a first priority with perhaps some adjustments as needed.

Dennis: Personal mentors idea (from Rossmoor).

Gracia: I think you all as Ambassadors have done an excellent job in promoting Pickleball in our community and give plenty of information on where it can be played, hours etc. I don't think it is

mandatory that everyone sign up to be a member of USPA, in order to just okay and have fun! If some are inclined to do tournaments then sure, they need to sign up!
I did like your clinics for intermediates and look forward to them again. Would be nice to have spring as well as fall?

Comments were received, but this item was not discussed in detail at meeting; full discussion postponed until next meeting.

Programming of indoor times.

How to best utilize? Ideas?

Specific play levels? Women's only time?

This item was not discussed in detail at meeting; full discussion postponed until next meeting.

Improve Communications between Governance (Steering Committee, Ambassadors) and members of Chapel Hill Pickleball community.

Bob Burns: Full and transparent communication between the players and those representing them is essential. I would recommend that notes and minutes of all pickleball related meetings between ambassadors, between ambassadors and the steering committee and between any representative or representatives and the Town of Chapel Hill be distributed/circulated/published fully and on a timely basis.

For most of the past three years too many decisions have been made and too many agreements reached without awareness, knowledge or approval of the players. All representatives of the players should be advocates for the players before they are advocates for the town or for USAPA.

You are likely aware that one of the primary responsibilities of Ambassadors as specified by the USAPA is to "Advise players of USAPA Board actions, such as rules changes and other important information." Attention to this responsibility would be beneficial to players and has not been included in communications to players previously.

Solicitation of USAPA memberships to players, another Ambassador responsibility not focused upon to date, should be attended to.

The recent commitment to have three Steering Committee meetings each year is a positive step. The steps necessary for full and transparent communication among all players should be one of the first orders of business of the players' representatives.

Gracia: Re: transparency, I think you have tried hard to do this by emailing the minutes of our last meeting at the Community Center for all to see. I was impressed by how quick your turn around time was! Perhaps the nomination process could be "better", to make people feel they know whom they are voting for and that they are not being coerced. I hope people did not feel that but not sure what Bob is suggesting?

Comments were received, but this item was not discussed in detail at meeting; full discussion postponed until next meeting.

Review roles and responsibilities of ambassadors and steering committee

Bob Burns: The roles of ambassadors and other representatives of pickleball in Chapel Hill seem outside the recommendations of both the USAPA and the NC District Ambassador, Joe Borrelli, and should be examined and altered as determined by the players.

According to the USAPA, Ambassadors' "PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY is to be the spokesperson and representative **for the USAPA** for all activities related to pickleball within the area they represent." Note that they are specifically representatives for the USAPA and not the players. I advocate for an organized group that are representatives of the players and their needs.

One easy way (but not the only way) this could be accomplished is by making the Steering Committee a separate group from the Ambassadors. They could invite the Ambassadors and a Town representative as ad hoc members but it would be the Steering Committee that would be the decision makers of all issues of play.

The other standards and expectations of ambassadors include nothing about play on the court, coaching or other forms of monitoring. Ambassadors cannot be chosen, appointed or removed from their position by players. There is no description of the length of term they serve.

According to Borrelli, "We need player support at these facilities to self-regulate play to keep things fair for everyone. **As an ambassador, we cannot be responsible for monitoring play at these venues.**" A leadership structure separate from but working with the Ambassadors should be established. This group should be selected by and responsible to the players. They should have specified terms of service and the boundaries of their responsibilities should be clear.

For communication to be full and transparent, the aggregation of names and email addresses of players and the use of that list should be the responsibility of the Steering Committee--or whatever group is the player representative group.

Complying with the organizational structure described by the USAPA and the District and Regional Ambassadors will benefit the growth and reputation of pickleball in Chapel Hill well into the future.

Brad, JB: This is mostly covered in two previous items (roles of Ambassadors/Steering Committee, Transparent Communications). Full and open communications is goal of current ambassadors and steering committee. Ambassador roles are well defined by USAPA and there are common behaviors around the country. Agree that "policing" is not role of ambassadors given our size. Disagree about capturing names, emails. This is important for communication, and a role USAPA suggests for ambassadors. Also, best done as ambassadors have more

continuity over longer period of time for managing this type of information, as well as website, etc.

Comments were received, but this item was not discussed in detail at meeting; full discussion postponed until next meeting.

Steering Committee Election process

Several people: steering committee elections, suggest having pictures of candidates

Bob Burns: steering committee election process suggestions

If and how future elections are conducted will vary according to changes in the governance structure. In general I have these suggestions for consideration.

--An election committee consisting of several players should be responsible for a nomination process of elected positions. Recommendations of this group should not be the sole entry to run in an election.

--Ballot eligibility, a vote repository (separate email account) and auditing of votes should be the responsibility of the election committee

--The Town should have no role in conducting or auditing elections for representatives of players

This item was not discussed in detail at meeting; full discussion postponed until next meeting.