

NSPC President's Report for 2021 -2022

What a year, and what a lot of water under the pickleball bridge!

Despite everything, more and more people are discovering that what we already know: that pickleball is a fun, easy-to-learn game and we're a great group of people to play with! As you'll see in Allan's report, our membership keeps growing, attracting many new-to-pickleball players, just as pickleball is growing internationally.

Since we play on public courts with permits, our ambitions are curtailed. However, with a few more hours of permit time at Murdo Frazer this year, and a desire to offer more level play options, we have begun organizing an evening ladder, afternoon round robin and skills and drills sessions. When new courts become available at Little Cates later in the season we hope to include more level play, more intro to pickleball and more youth programming.

That new Pickleball Canada registration system has proven useful too, as it allows us to administer events without buying additional software which in turn has meant more savings for future capital expenditures. As long as we play on public courts that is limited, but we keep dreaming!

Having Maggie Murch and her team focus on youth will grow and evolve local pickleball on the North Shore too. She has been invited to teach the teachers and plans to host an evening for families and several afternoons for secondary students. Thanks to everyone who is helping her.

Board Members and Volunteers

A big thank you to everyone who came through it with us!

Karen Wilson continued to organize play at Little Cates and advocate strongly for the East of Seymour community. JoAnn Harrington and Sheri Shepard have been our voice in West Vancouver. These three women have spent countless hours in meetings and writing emails, educating and urging District staff and Council members over the last year as we try to preserve and/or add courts to our neighborhoods.

Shashi Shrivastava and Betty Eisenhauer shared looking after the books, until Randy Reimann took over. Shashi will now resume organizing our socials and parties, so watch for the invites! Betty is stepping down from the Board with our thanks although we hope to hear about her experiences at Mahon from time to time.

Its hard to believe that Kit Chan didn't play pickleball before the pandemic but he's so keen that, besides being our equipment manager, he organized a mini-tournament last year and now has taken on organizing a Ladder for you to enjoy!

Valuable non-board volunteers are Aki Takeda who took minutes during those long discussions, Allan Gauthier who continues to address registration questions and keep our stats, Dave Visagie who so frequently cleans and dries the courts (do jump in and help him!), Maggie Murch who organized pickleball fun for local school kids when other activities were restricted, and Heather Fleming and others who ran our popular Intro to Pickleball sessions. Vyna Kerrey has been contributing her talents in the last months to ladder registrations, hosting coordination and t-shirts and thankfully has offered to join the board for 2022-23.

Then there were all the court hosts! Bravo everyone and thanks so much. More help is always need. Please host a drop in or round robin if asked. We are also looking for another person to share the Board work with a view to joining it.

COURT BUILDING NEWS

A Little History

It's easy to forget that NSPC is only 5 1/2 years old! As a result of NSPC advocacy the District of North Vancouver painted court lines in 2017 on the practice areas at Little Cates and Murdo Frazer Parks and we played with our own nets. It was only in 2018 that the first dedicated pickleball courts were built on the North Shore, on 29th St. in West Vancouver. In 2019 five permanent courts were opened in Murdo Frazer, followed a year later by four courts in Mahon Park.

West Vancouver and Noise

As pickleball grows, questions have arisen about the impact noise has on neighbouring communities. It's not just the ball, but the laughter and conversation that are causing

complaints, and you'll have read in the last year that pickleball courts in a number of communities have been closed because of it. A rule of thumb, only recently being advanced, is that courts should be 100-m away from homes but, of course, that's not always the case or possible.

In 2020 DNV added acoustical screening to the Murdo Frazer courts to address noise concerns. In April 2021, West Vancouver Parks restricted the hours at the 29th St courts (from 9-am to 6-pm.) and began looking for a new location. In the months since, NSPC reps have actively educated WVD Parks staff on pickleball in general and the various options in particular. It was NSPC who uncovered a 1999 geotechnical report that showed that tennis courts were possible at Hugo Ray!

In December WV Council ordered the 29th St pickleball courts closed as of April 30. The approval of Normanby Park as a temporary location with four courts was the result of the political connections of the West Van Players group.

Going forward, WVD Parks now has the budget to study Hugo Ray and Gleneagles Parks as future locations of new permanent courts. NSPC continues to advocate for eight or more new courts in West Vancouver to accommodate today's players and tomorrow's growth.

East of Seymour

Discussions with DNV staff and Council have been long and time-consuming. You may remember that in October 2019 NSPC asked DNV for:

1. *The addition of painted pickleball lines that allow for the formation of 4-6 pickleball courts on the Southwest corner of Cates Parks (Little Cates) court area by Spring 2020*
2. *The North Vancouver District begin planning for a dedicated 4-6 pickleball courts on Southwest corner of Cates Park (Little Cates) Court areas.*

In February 2020 DNV staff noted:

“that tennis courts are often under-utilised, and adding pickleball lines to existing tennis courts is cost effective solution that optimises existing courts. We do not have the real estate to add additional courts”

and that Pickleball was best accommodated at East Cates or Myrtle Park. Hurrah!

In July 2020 DNV hired a mediator to find agreement between NV Tennis Society (NVTs) and NSPC reps on which courts to repurpose. By December the mediator had withdrawn and by February the second of two DNV Parks engineers had retired. The chair of the NV Sports and Recreation Council stepped in to continue mediation along with the new temporary DNV Parks manager.

By June 2021 NSPC was prepared to accept the NVTs offer of two pickleball courts on a single shared tennis court. In July the contractor was ready to paint although negotiations on permits and signage for the shared court were incomplete. That's when NVTs organized a protest on the Little Cates tennis courts.

On September 23, 2021 DNV let us know that:

"the District will be proceeding this Fall with converting courts #3 and #4 at Little Cates to dedicated pickleball courts" and that the Mayor was committed to "walk up and play pickleball".

The new DNV Parks manager (the fourth in this process) assured us that lines would be painted as soon as the weather allowed followed by construction of permanent courts in the spring.

NSPC submitted a design for six pickleball courts at Little Cates in October but the DNV Parks staff proceeded with a more extensive evaluation of the park including parking and noise, consulting also with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation with whom DNV co-manages Little Cates. The result is that the park was found suitable for four pickleball courts only, to be built on courts 3 and 4 later this summer.

Of course, we are a little disappointed as, since October, we have been imagining a "grand house" on this site and now find that it only supports a "townhouse". However, we appreciate the assurance that these are here to stay. We are negotiating now with respect to the layout of those courts.

A Little More Water Under the Bridge

In February 2021 Tennis BC put out a document entitled Recommendations for the Construction or Installation of Public Pickleball Courts in BC Communities. In it, municipalities are encouraged to build dedicated pickleball courts without taking away from tennis, and multi-lining courts to share them was not recommended.

This was followed in November 2021 by a Memorandum of Understanding between Pickleball BC and Tennis BC which also encouraged the building of dedicated pickleball courts, consultation with the two groups and discouraged multi-lining except that:

"Adding pickleball lines to tennis courts is obviously better for pickleball players than having no pickleball courts at all."

West Vancouver currently has four multi-lined shared courts and another was to be added in 2022. Unfortunately, this MOU was given as the reason for WVD Parks staff to “pause” their program of adding pickleball lines to a single tennis court in locations where two or more courts were being refurbished. All this, despite Parks staff acknowledging that these courts did not attract the number of players that caused noise issues, nor were any noise complaints received.

Whew! Now you know the challenge and the successes! We made it through a pandemic, we are growing in numbers and facilities. There’s lots of great people.

Karen, JoAnn and I are staying on as NSPC Board members specifically because we are so determined to see the creation of those new courts! Thank you for supporting us in this journey!

Play on!

Estha Parg Murenbeeld

April 2022

Photo: February 1, 2022 Board meeting

