



Special Meeting of Town Council

September 7, 2021

Following Committee of the Whole

Council Chambers, Town Hall

359 Main Street

Agenda

Call to Order

- 1. Approval of Agenda**
- 2. Motions/Recommendations from Committee of the Whole:**
 - a. RFD 043-2021: Pickleball Courts
- 3. Special Meeting Adjourned**

REQUEST FOR DECISION 043-2021

Title: Pickleball Courts
Date: 2021-08-30
Department: Parks and Recreation



SUMMARY

Pickleball Courts

As part of the approved capital budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year, \$145,000 was allocated for the construction of three pickleball courts in Rotary Park. Given space restraints and a desire not to encroach on green space used to support youth soccer, a decision was made to find an alternative location. An alternative location was identified, and Acadia University was asked about expanding the Tower Community Park by revitalizing the current Acadia Tennis courts (courts beside the Community Park). Officials from Acadia were supportive of this but requested one tennis court be included in the project.

With that, both the scope and the budget of the project increased. The new proposed site would have four standalone pickleball courts and one tennis court, which would also include pickleball lines in order to offer two additional pickleball courts as required. Basically, the number of pickleball courts has gone from three to six, and a new public tennis court has been added.

This has increased the costs from a budgeted \$145,000 to \$248,300 (including 10% contingency allowance), or an increase of \$105,300.

DRAFT MOTION:

That Council approve a \$105,300 increase to the Capital Budget to support the construction of pickleball and tennis courts as part of Tower Community Park and bring the total project approved spending up to \$248,300.

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1) CAO COMMENTS

One off requests that come to Council over budget after the fact are tricky, particularly when they are for community infrastructure projects under Council's discretion.

The main questions for Council, given the significant increase in project cost, are 1) would this project have been approved as it is now presented had this been the original request as part of the 2021-22 budget process? and 2) is the additional \$105,300 best spent on this initiative or is there another project that is a higher priority for this additional spending? In essence, using \$103,300 from reserves to move forward with this project will mean \$105,300 less to spend on another capital project.

2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 65

3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of staff that Council approve this increase.

4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

Town of Wolfville 2021-22 Capital Budget – Project Charter for Pickleball Courts.

5) DISCUSSION

The discussion is based on the value of investing tax dollars into recreation infrastructure. Initially, the intention was to add two or possibly three (based on grant funding) pickleball courts to Rotary Park. Once design started and consultation with stakeholders, specifically the Wolfville Soccer Club, it became apparent there was not great space within the park to support the addition of pickleball courts.

Consideration was given to other locations in town and there was general agreement to consider using the space occupied by tennis courts located on Acadia's campus. The location of these courts would be directly across from the current park the Town invested in a few years ago. The condition of the Acadia courts requires complete resurfacing, fencing, and new standards and nets. The size of the current court surface will be expanded to allow for dedicated pickleball courts in addition to lining the tennis court for additional pickleball courts.

Pickleball has been identified as the fastest growing sport in North America (US Pickleball Association), especially among seniors, and its popularity is evident in this region. The sport is relatively low-cost, easy to learn, and adaptable for all abilities (including wheelchair and "hybrid" versions). There are an estimated 75,000 Pickleball players in Canada. In Wolfville, the group playing at the local school includes over 40 regulars and often has a waiting list, and neighbouring municipalities report high competition

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for facility time for Pickleball. Several “ad-hoc” groups are known, but few “organized” groups (i.e. with Club status or the existence of an executive). The Town would encourage local players to organize themselves, with support from Town staff and the Wolfville Tennis Club. Attracting new users would increase physical activity opportunities in the area, and the location and trail connectivity would encourage users to arrive via active transportation methods.

Although there are municipalities and recreation sites that are lining tennis courts for both tennis and pickleball, the demands on Wolfville’s tennis courts are such that doing so would impact the tennis users – including the growing youth program. After discussions with the Wolfville Tennis club, the preferred approach would be to add dedicated surfaces to play pickleball. The Club recognizes the growth and popularity of pickleball. The Club also wants to make sure that the continuing growth and popularity of tennis in Wolfville is not impacted by mixed-use courts and is grateful to the Town for the ongoing investment in the tennis courts at Rotary Park. In addition, mixed-use courts prevent use of courts for sanctioned events such as Provincial tournaments.

In terms of the increase in budget there are a couple of factors at play, namely the increase in the number of courts and the addition of a tennis court as part of project.

Each of the three project components have been tendered. These include groundwork and surface prep, fencing, and court surfacing and lining.

Acadia currently has the lease document to authorize the use and access to the space. This is based on a ten-year agreement. No work will begin without the sign off on the lease agreement.

If approved by Council, work on this project would begin immediately. Given the progress on the first stages of the project – final court surfacing/lining - will be weather/temperature dependent, if temperature is not suitable for surfacing/lining this fall it will be finished as early as possible in spring 2022.

6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the 2021-22 capital plan, budget dollars in the amount of \$145,000 were allocated to build public pickleball courts in Wolfville. This amount is insufficient to allow for construction of the courts based on the current design and recent tender responses.

Approved 2021/22 Capital Budget \$145,000

Funding per 2021/22 Budget	
Capital Reserves	\$ 97,000
Provincial Grant	\$ 43,000
Other Contributions	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
Total	<u>\$145,000</u>

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If approved by Council, the added cost required to complete would increase to \$248,300 (including a 10% contingency).

Revised Funding

Capital Reserves	\$202,300
Provincial Grant	\$46,000
Other Contributions	<u>\$ nil</u>
Total	<u>\$248,300</u>

Note the original funding included \$5,000 contribution to go towards a practice wall for the tennis club. With the relocation of the pickleball courts, this contribution is no longer applicable. As illustrated above, the revised scope and cost of this project, based on tender results, requires an additional \$105,300 from Capital Reserves. In the short term this is not an issue as there are sufficient Town Reserves at this point in time. As noted during 2021/22 budget process, over the long-term capital reserves are expected to be depleted.

The Management Team has started work on the 2022/23 capital plan and there are early indications that capital reserve/debt funding options may provide additional flexibility over the next ten years. Any unexpected demand on reserves will limit that flexibility. If Council approves the extra for the pickleball courts, staff will factor that impact into the early drafts of next year's budget. It is too early to know exactly what projects might be negatively impacted, but there will be \$105,300 less to fund future projects.

7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

Reference the appropriate strategic directions from the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan:

- Economic Prosperity
- Social Equity
- Community Wellness

8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

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Council and community will be updated as project progresses.

9) ALTERNATIVES

Council could choose not to approve increase and thereby cancel project.

Council could choose or suggest an alternative location, which may lead to different pricing. This option could involve the project coming back in the next budget cycle giving Council a chance to balance with other priorities. This could result in the project being put off indefinitely.