

Pickleball players support courts at Rotary Park

Wolfgang Depner
News Staff

The association representing pickleball players on the Saanich Peninsula welcomes Sidney's investigation of Rotary Park located in North Saanich as a potential site for pickleball courts.

"(Saanich Peninsula Pickleball Association) would like to convey our full support for this initiative," read a letter from the association. "This site has both parking and washroom facilities and, in addition, meets the prescribed residential setbacks, thereby mitigating potential noise impacts."

Sidney council has tasked staff to investigate

placing dedicated pickleball courts in Rotary Park, a facility on Victoria International Airport lands used for baseball and softball. This process would see Sidney staff reach out to Victoria Airport Authority, Peninsula Baseball and Softball Association and North Saanich, where the park is located.

SPPA said in the letter that having the courts at Rotary Park would take some pressure off the courts located in North Saanich on Wain Road.

The courts have seen heavy use in line with the sport's growing popularity, but also conflict between users and nearby residents concerned about noise.

It was this aspect that prompted Sidney to hit the pause button on community consultations and designs for courts within Sidney's own borders, pending testing of acoustic panels designed to dampen the noise from the sport.

All three potential sites – Iroquois Park, Tulista Park and Brethour Park – lie well within guidelines developed in Saanich that indicate courts must be located 152 metres or more away from homes to potentially avoid the need for noise mitigation. Rotary Park, relatively far from residential areas and in an area accustomed to noise with its proximity to the airport and two busy roads, popped up on Sidney's radar after the SPPA had raised

the idea.

However, the facility is already heavily used and not everybody is thrilled with the idea of courts at that location.

In a letter to Black Press last month, Sidney resident Rick McCully wrote: "If North Saanich made a mistake by developing this facility (the courts on Wain Road) in their quiet rural sanctuary, don't attempt to placate the few privileged complainers by dumping it on Sidney's doorstep."

Coun. Terri O'Keeffe has questioned Sidney's ongoing search for pickleball courts. If SPPA wants to have courts at Rotary Park, it should approach North Saanich directly, she said.

Courtnalls launch society to fund grassroots mental health programs

Christine van Reeuyk
News Staff

A trio of well-known philanthropic brothers throw their weight behind grassroots mental health initiatives in Greater Victoria and across Canada with a new society.

Geoff and Russ Courtnall, both former NHLers, and youngest brother Bruce have a legacy of helping. The trio funded the Archie Courtnall Centre for emergency psychiatric care at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

The centre is named for their father, who died by suicide in 1978, and was funded by a series of high profile charity golf tournaments in the early 2000s. Since that time, friends and associates have hounded

them for ways to do more, Geoff and Bruce said during the official launch in Victoria Dec. 16 of the Courtnall Society of Mental Health. Russ was rooting from Los Angeles, guests were assured.

The society follows a four-pillar approach for funding – substance use, suicide prevention, community integration and children and youth, Bruce said. Under the children and youth pillar, the society recently funded the Victoria-based Buddy Check For Jesse, an organization Lindsay Goulet credits with helping her son in his mental health journey. It was created by Dr. Stu Gershman, who lost his son, Jesse, to suicide in October 2014.

Goulet's son Owen, 13, shared how his story of mental health changed from days

filled with anxiety to a person with anxiety and tools to help, such as counselling and medication.

In a Q&A format with mom to keep the teen comfortable, she asked: Why is it important to share your story?

"So people around the world know it's OK to struggle and feel bad, and they may take confidence from my story to reach out for help, which could cause a chain reaction where even more people reach out for help," Owen answered.

The Courtnall society will provide grants to grassroots mental health organizations nationwide.

Anyone in need of mental health support now can call B.C.'s 24/7 crisis line at 310-6789.



Lindsay Goulet snaps a photo of son Owen, 13, with Bruce Courtnall, left, and Geoff Courtnall during the Victoria launch event for the Courtnall Society of Mental Health. (Christine van Reeuyk/News Staff)

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