



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Department

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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 12, 2016

To: Parks & Recreation Commission

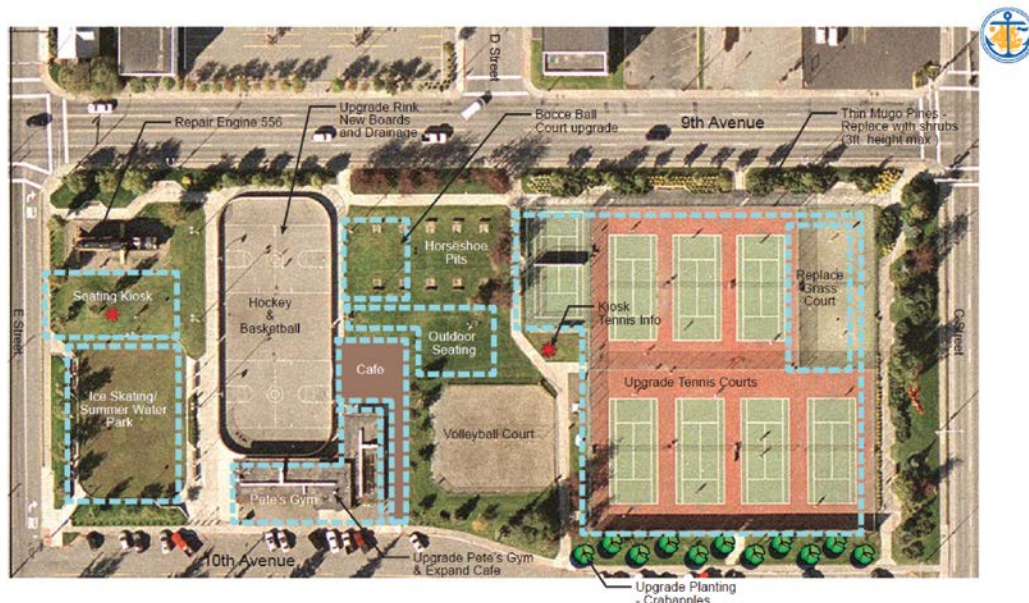
From: Josh Durand, Parks Superintendent

Project: **PRC 16-18:** Delaney Park Tennis Court Windscreens

OVERVIEW

On April 6th, Anchorage resident Mr. Albert Swank, Jr PE sent a letter to the Municipality of Anchorage objecting to the annual installation of windscreens at the Delaney Park tennis courts. Windscreens are installed seasonally by the Alaska Tennis Association to facilitate play on the tennis courts. Mr. Swank request that the windscreens on the north and south fence be removed.

Delaney Park is currently home to 9 tennis courts located in Zone 5, as identified in the Delaney Park Master Plan, between C Street and E Street.



Delaney Park Master Plan: Zone 5, Preferred Alternate



HISTORY

- In the 1950's, the first two (2) tennis courts were developed at Delaney Park between C St. and E St.
- In the 1960's, the original tennis courts were updated and three (3) new tennis courts were added totaling five (5) tennis courts.

- In the 1980's, redevelopment of the Delaney Park between C St. and E St. occurred, with nine total new tennis courts being constructed (previously 5)
- The 2007 Delaney Park Master Plan identifies 9 tennis courts (Zone 5 Preferred Alternate Map)
 - Page 33 Recommendation 10: "Hockey rink, basketball court and tennis court upgrade; improve all sport facility surfaces and install new facility amenities"
- In 2009, tennis courts were upgraded and a hitting wall was added

RESIDENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The letter cites four negative impacts to the property owners on 10th Ave. between C and D streets in recent years due to:

1. Historical expansion of the tennis courts from two courts to nine
2. Loss of street parking for adjoining 10th avenue residents due to increased tennis court activity
3. Complete loss of parking on the north side of 10th Avenue due to MOA Parking Authority selling spaces
4. Obstruction of the view for the property owners on 10th Avenue by the installation of opaque windbreaks.

More specifically, the letter cites concerns with the loss of visibility and other issues due to the "opaque windbreaks". The letter outlines the following issues:

- The fences are 10 feet high and when the windbreaks are up the adjoining property owners/residents are faced with nothing but an opaque green wall and loss of the view that they have enjoyed for over 50 years
- Policing authorities lose visual connection around the area. Of note, there is a halfway house on 9th Avenue within 200 feet of the north side of the courts
- Until recently, 10th Avenue property owners enjoyed an unobstructed view of the downtown area year-round, which is indeed their right. Property taxes for these residents are about \$500 per month, per property.
- Adjoining 10th Avenue property owners were never notified or consulted regarding the use of opaque windbreaks, nor was there a public hearing
- The 10 foot high "green wall" provides refuge for inebriates in and around the courts. In prior years the landscaping trees along the east side adjoin C Street became a major issue and living area for street inebriates. The parks and recreation group cleared away and dramatically thinned these items in recognizing the problem which still persists but of a lesser amount now.
- There is an increase in vandalism of the tennis courts and adjoining property owners during the summer months: skateboarders, dog owners playing fetch with their pets, underage drinkers and smokers after the tennis players have left for the evening. This creates additional financial impact both to taxpayers, Tennis Association and the adjoining property owners.

ALASKA TENNIS ASSOCIATION AND WINDSCREENS

The Alaska Tennis Association (ATA) is a USTA sanctioned community tennis association dedicated to promoting the sport of tennis in Anchorage and all of Alaska. The ATA is the most active group at the Delaney Park tennis courts. The Alaska Tennis Association host city and statewide tournaments, youth and after-school programs, and league play. The ATA installs windscreens at Delaney Park during the summer months. Based on materials provided by the Alaska Tennis Association, windscreens provide the following benefits:

- Tennis windscreens improve tennis court playability privacy and aesthetics
- Windscreens reduce gusting breezes and evens air flow which minimize the wind's impact on tennis ball shot travel
- They create a uniform dark background behind each player that increases visibility of the ball
- Windscreens create a privacy barrier to off-court activities
- They help minimize outside distractions for the tennis players
- Debris blowing into the court is greatly reduced benefiting the play with improved safety and the owner with reduced maintenance costs.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department request that the Parks and Recreation Commission provide direction to the Department.



Photos of the Delaney Park Tennis Courts from 10th Avenue taken on May 5th, 2016.



Aerial Image of Delaney Park Tennis Courts and 10th Avenue properties