

April 23, 2015

## Tennis Courts at Bennett Park

I was approached by Emily Williamson sometime in March and was asked for assistance to either repair or replace the existing tennis courts at Bennett Park. Since that time, research has been completed on the cost to repair or replace the tennis courts.

Cracks in outdoor tennis court surfaces are very common in our Michigan climate. However, the cracks on the courts at Bennett Park have opened up to as much as two to three inches wide, proving there is no argument the tennis courts are in desperate need of replacement.

A few years ago a citizen took it upon himself to try and repair the courts. He received financial help, approximately \$5,000, from the Charlotte Area Recreation Cooperative. The repairs were helpful but were a band aid which only lasted for a short time.

Replacing the tennis courts is the recommendation received from Moore and Bruggink, Inc. and McKearney Asphalt and Sealing. Replacement would involve removing the entire existing court surface and replacing it. The expected life of the new tennis courts would be 10 – 15 years.

Removing the pine trees which line the tennis courts is also being considered. As the pine cones and sap from the trees are contributing in the deterioration of the courts.

## Funding the Project:

### Patronicity Grant – Growing Communities Together

The Charlotte Area Recreation Cooperative would apply for the grant. The grant for the tennis courts would be a community-based project. The community would need to raise \$25,000 and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) would fund \$25,000.

The remainder of the project, approximately \$75,000 will hopefully be funded by the City of Charlotte. The breakdown would be \$15,000 from the current fiscal year and \$60,000 in the upcoming fiscal year.

In today's economy families are tightening their belts. The rising costs of traveling find many looking for alternative ways to spend free time. Community courts allow citizens to stay close to home while remaining physically active in fun, social environment.

The tennis courts could be used for clinics and classes for all ages. They could also be utilized by the High School tennis programs.

Tennis is a unique lifelong sport accessible to almost everyone, surpassing the boundaries of age, gender and income level—and even mental and physical impairments.

There is no question replacing the existing tennis courts is a colossal undertaking that will be filled with bumps and frustrations. However, new tennis courts will be an asset to our community. With a collaborative effort between the Community, the City of Charlotte and Charlotte Area Recreation Cooperative, I believe this project needs to happen and the tennis courts will become a satisfying source of activity in our community for years to come.

Yvonne Ridge

City of Charlotte Council Member, District 1