

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING CDD's COCONUT PARK PICKLEBALL COMPLEX**

(Rev. 0 – 5/8/23)

The Brooks' CDD's appreciate the feedback and questions provided by the residents of The Brooks regarding the proposed pickleball expansion at the Coconut Park location. Rather than try and respond to each resident individually, the Districts have decided to develop this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to serve as one consolidated location to post, and answer, all your questions. Answers to some questions will only be finalized after the CDD Supervisors are able to meet and discuss at an authorized public meeting. Updates to this document will be issued periodically as more questions are raised and more information becomes available. You are encouraged to check back frequently to catch up on the latest additions.

The District Supervisors **Thank You** for your continued interest in the Districts' projects and activities.

## 1. Why are the two Brooks' CDD's building the proposed courts?

*The Brooks' CDD's are tasked with maintaining various elements of the infrastructure within the four communities of The Brooks as well as the common roadways and walking paths along Coconut Road and Three Oaks Parkway. The CDD's also own and maintain the area known as Coconut Park which is located at the Brooks' Town Center area adjacent to the Enrichment Center of The Commons Club. The CDD's are responsible for providing enhancements they feel are appropriate for keeping The Brooks on par with similar surrounding communities. Pickle ball is one of those amenities.*

*Pickleball has been the fastest growing sport across the US for the last few years. This is true within The Brooks as membership in the Brooks Pickleball Club has ballooned from its start in 2018 to over 1,000 members today. Many gated communities like The Brooks have been adding courts for the benefit of their residents in response to the sport's growth. Almost all newly constructed communities have pickleball as one of their amenities.*

*The Brooks' individual communities have evaluated adding pickleball courts to respond to requests from their owners. Unfortunately, all our communities are "land-locked" with no available open space to accommodate new pickleball courts. All have concluded that converting existing tennis courts for pickleball use is not a viable alternative. Coconut Park has the available open land and is centrally located to all four Brooks' communities. As such, it is the ideal location for the addition of courts.*

*One key consideration of owning a home in a planned development like The Brooks is maintaining the overall appearance and appeal of the community to maintain and increase its attractiveness to potential homebuyers. There have been instances in the*

*recent past where potential homebuyers have declined to consider The Brooks because of the lack of a high quality pickleball facility with sufficient playing capacity. While the availability of a quality pickleball facility may or may not increase home values, it can be a tiebreaker when competing with other communities in our area.*

*Because the proposed complex is a CDD funded facility, its planned construction will be paid for by all the residents of The Brooks through the resident's Non-Ad Valorem taxes over a five-year period. However, all on-going operating, maintenance, repair and replacement costs will be paid by an annual usage fee charged to the pickleball players.*

- 1.1. I thought The Commons Club owned the current courts, why are the CDD's involved with this project?

*The current expansion of the pickle ball facility is part of a process that was begun following the CDD's acquisition of what is referred to as the Coconut Park which consists of parkland, a playground, an interactive fountain, restrooms, a basketball court, fishing docks and walking paths. Coconut Park was established as part of the Brooks Communities transition from control by the developer, the Bonita Bay Group (which was under financial pressure due to the 2008 financial crisis), to its residents. The Bonita Bay Group was ending its involvement in the Brooks Communities and as part of that process, they were selling their property and interest in the Communities. The parkland was zoned for multifamily and commercial use. To prevent this land from being sold by the Bonita Bay Group to another developer and to assure the continued beneficial use of this property by the residents of the Brooks Communities, the TCC agreed to purchase the property. Subsequently, in 2010, the CDD's purchased the property from the TCC.*

*After acquiring the parkland, the CDD's began to consider how to best use the property for the benefit of The Brooks' residents. Those discussions identified additional amenities that could be built on the land. To get input, the CDD's surveyed the residents in 2012 and 2014. Based on the results of those surveys and discussions within the CDD's, it was decided to build three pickleball courts on the property. Those courts opened for play in late December 2015. Since then, the CDD's have monitored usage of the courts. Play has increased dramatically over the years. Enthusiasm for the game has grown, resulting in the formation of the Brooks Pickle Ball Club. Given the interest in the sport and the lack of available playing facilities elsewhere in the Brooks Communities, the CDD's have been considering adding additional courts for the last two years. As of April 2023, no final decision has been made about adding any courts.*

- 1.2. There are already three courts at the Coconut Park location, why are additional ones being proposed?

*When the Brooks Pickleball Club (BPC) approached the CDD's to expand the current Coconut Park pickleball facility two years ago, their research of nineteen SWFL communities with Pickleball courts showed these communities had installed courts based on a ratio of one court per 368 residents--which equates to a Brooks' need for 17 courts.*

*At this same time, the BPC's membership was around 300 players. Today the Brooks pickleball players exceed 1,000. Membership allows them access to open play, reservation*

*play, and league play. During 1Q 2023, court demand was in excess of the available time slots.*

*Based upon a potential need for 17 courts, the CDD's engineering firm was tasked to determine the maximum number of courts that could be built over time at the CDD Coconut Park without encroaching on the existing playground, interactive fountain, and other facilities.*

1.3. Who is ultimately paying for the cost of these new facilities?

*The 3,615 Brooks units will pay all costs associated with the construction of the additional pickleball facilities. The CDD's will charge a usage fee for play on the pickleball courts after the new courts are built. This fee will cover all replacement, operation, repair and maintenance costs. The taxpayers will not be responsible for the costs associated with the courts other than the initial construction costs.*

*As soon as the Village of Estero approves the Phase 1 site plan, the CDD's will solicit bids and make a final decision on proceeding with construction of the four courts and social area. As demand grows and justifies the need for more courts, additional phases will be costed and voted on to provide the required funding.*

1.4. Will this project add to my tax bill going forward?

*Because the proposed complex is a CDD funded facility, its construction will be paid for by all the residents of The Brooks through the residents' Non-Ad Valorem taxes over a five-year period. However, all on-going operating, maintenance, repair and replacement costs will be paid by an annual usage fee charged to the pickleball players.*

1.5. Why isn't The Commons Club responsible for this project?

*The CDD's purchased the parkland property from The Commons Club in 2010. The parkland includes the basketball court, playground, interactive fountain, fishing dock and parts of the open space and walking paths. The existing three courts were constructed and are operated by the CDD's. Any additional courts that are built on the site will also be owned and operated by the CDD's.*

1.6. Has The Village of Estero approved this project?

*Approval of Phase 1 of the potential three-phase, demand-based, plan is expected in May 2023.*

2. How much will this total project cost?

*Site preparation and court construction companies have indicated that a Village of Estero approved site plan is needed before they bid on the project. At this point, only the first phase of the three-phase plan is being built. Each subsequent phase will be costed as*

warranted by demand and confirmation that the maintenance, repair, operating and replacement cost can be absorbed by the pickleball players. In other words, “build it only when needed”.

Once definitive construction cost proposals are received, the CDD Supervisors will hold a public meeting to consider the proposals, select the preferred bidder and vote on whether to approve funding and proceed to contract for Phase 1.

2.1. How much will each “phase” cost?

*The cost of each phase will be determined and considered by the CDD Supervisors at the time additional capacity is warranted by demand and confirmation that the maintenance, repair, operating and replacement cost can be absorbed by the pickleball players. Once firm quotes are received, the CDD’s will share that information with the Brooks’ residents.*

2.2. How will the on-going expenses be covered?

*The pickleball players will pay an annual usage fee which covers the maintenance, repairs, operating, and asset replacement cost at the end of life. These funds will be controlled and administered by the CDD’s. Taxpayers will not have to pay for the costs of the pickle ball facilities other than the initial construction costs.*

2.3. How will replacement costs (if needed in future years) be covered?

*Those depreciable items which have end of life limits will be identified. The dollar value of these items will be adjusted for inflation annually to establish the subsequent year’s contribution to the player’s annual usage fee.*

2.4. How much will on-going costs add to my tax bill each year?

*Your tax bill will not include any operating, maintenance or replacement costs for the pickleball facilities as these will be billed to and paid annually by the pickleball players.*

2.5. We pay taxes every year that are directed for the CDDs’ use. Don’t the CDD’s maintain a Reserve Account to pay for things like this?

*Unlike the four gated communities, the CDD’s do not maintain a reserve account. The Non-Ad Valorem portion of your tax bill is used to cover on-going maintenance expenses (e.g., lake water quality management, landscape maintenance, irrigation, walking path repairs, etc.) and any outstanding financing from the original development of The Brooks starting in 1998. All major new or replacement projects are paid for through specific “Capital Improvement Project” funds which are secured through loans or bonds and subsequently recovered through the Non-Ad Valorem billing.*

2.6. How are the funds from the Non-Ad Valorem tax bill we receive annually in November allocated?

*With the formation of the CDD's by Long Bay Partners, a subsidiary of the Bonita Bay Group, Long Bay partners borrowed money to create much of the infrastructure of The Brooks. This infrastructure includes 154 storm water retention lakes, 7.5 miles of landscaped roadway along Three Oaks Parkway, and Coconut Roads, the monuments at the intersection of Coconut Road and US 41 and at the intersection of Three Oaks and Williams Road, and the entire wire fence lines along Three Oaks and Coconut Road.*

*The resident's Non-Ad Valorem tax bill is comprised of two parts--the principal and interest remaining from those original loans and the annual operating and maintenance expenses required to maintain the infrastructure throughout The Brooks. The annual operating and maintenance charge is currently \$652.88. The \$652.88 pays for all the maintenance of all the roadway landscaping, the cost of 50+ million gallons of irrigation water used on the roadway landscape, the cane toad remediation program, the maintenance of the 154 lakes to ensure the EPA water quality is met, the planting of littorals along the lakes' perimeter to minimize lake bank erosion, the repair of lake bank erosion and the clean-up of all our roadways after tropical storms and hurricanes. The storm water management system has performed as designed with no flooding of any residences during any of the hurricanes over the past 24 years.*

*The CDD's have been financially responsible with their use of taxpayer money. The Brooks enjoy some of the most attractive roadways in all of SWFL and an extensive system of lakes that allow wildlife and fish to flourish. Many a grandchild has caught their first fish from our lakes or watched how the pelicans, wood storks, and cormorants harvest fish as part of nature's circle of life.*

3. What is the full scope of the proposed project?

3.1. Are restroom facilities to be included?

*The CDD land has existing restrooms, so no additional restrooms are required.*

3.2. Will food/beverage services be included?

*No, food and beverage services are not included in any plans.*

3.3. Is there drinking water available?

*The CDD restroom building already has water and ice machines in the hallway.*

3.4. I've heard that the type of court surface is important for pickle ball, what is planned for the proposed courts?

*The pros and cons of a hard-surface (like the current courts), as well as a new cushioned surface, will be evaluated before any final decision regarding court surface is made.*

3.5. Are there "social areas" included in the project plan?

*Yes, the current site plan includes a social area as part of Phase 1. This area will be located within the fenced area and thus only accessible to players who have paid their annual*

usage fee. *This social area is the only social area planned for the entire 16-court complex and will be accessible to each phase if/when build-out continues.*

3.6. Is some kind of sunshade planned over the courts?

*No sunshade is planned over the court's playing surface. Shade benches will be provided for those waiting to play next. The social area is covered and has additional seats and tables. Ceiling fans are planned for the covered social area.*

3.7. What kind of security is being planned at the proposed complex?

*Courts will only be accessible through a single access point controlled by internet-based control software. Access will be limited to those players who have paid the annual usage fee. Also see FAQ 6.2 below.*

3.8. Will the courts be lighted?

*Yes, current plans call for the courts to be lit. The lights will be automatically controlled and energized until 9:00 pm daily.*

4. Noise is often a topic associated with pickleball play. What has been done to assess any impact from the proposed courts?

4.1. Has a professional noise evaluation been performed?

*Yes, a professional sound evaluation company has completed extensive sound testing at the proposed court locations as well as at numerous surrounding locations (including the closest residential area). The results show that sounds are below the maximum levels allowed within the Village of Estero noise ordinance.*

4.2. What noise mitigation is planned?

*Although not required, but acting as a good neighbor to The Commons Club, additional sound mitigation actions utilizing noise reflecting barriers on the east and north sides of the Phase 1 courts will be installed. The professional sound study already completed has shown that no additional reflecting sound barriers are needed for any future expansion in the number of courts in order to meet the Village of Estero requirements.*

4.3. The Commons Club is obviously the closest neighbor. What will be the noise impact on their activities—especially yoga and meditation at the gazebo?

*The general goal for pickleball sound mitigation is a sound level at or below ambient noise level. The sound mitigating actions planned utilizing reflecting noise barriers and a higher fence were taken specifically for that purpose. In addition, for further benefits during meditation, the existing interactive fountain can be turned on as the cascading water provides an additional masking benefit.*

4.4. What is the closest residential location and what will be the noise impact there?

*The closest residential area is the Hidden Lakes condominiums in Spring Run. The noise measurement taken next to the closest condominium building registered negligible pickleball noise--below the high level of ambient noise coming from the traffic on Coconut Road.*

4.5. What will be the noise impact on the wildlife that frequents the Coconut Park area?

*The noise level of the existing three courts has not had any reported effect on wildlife. The noise study indicates that while the frequency of balls being hit is greater with additional courts, the probability of all balls on sixteen courts being hit at exactly the same time is statistically unlikely so there is no added multiplying effect to noise being generated.*

5. What is the Brooks Pickleball Club?

5.1. Who can join the Brooks Pickleball Club?

*Only Brooks homeowners, or legal residents, who live in one of our two CDD's, or those who rent a Brooks CDD home (where the homeowner has legally transferred, through their homeowner's association, their property rights to the renter), may join the Brooks Pickleball Club.*

5.2. What are the annual dues to belong to the Brooks Pickleball Club?

*Current 2023 annual dues are \$35.00. However, this is different from the annual usage fee to play on the courts which will be instituted with the construction of the four new courts and social area in phase 1 of the expansion project. Future dues are expected to be significantly higher than today's rate.*

5.3. Is the Brooks Pickleball Club an officially recognized organization?

*Yes, the Brooks Pickleball Club, Inc. is a Florida non-profit corporation. In addition, the club's application for Federal tax-exempt status as a 501(c)7 membership club is pending.*

5.4. Is the Brooks Pickleball Club insured?

*The dues mentioned in FAQ 5.2 were first collected in March 2023. Now that the club has income, it has requested insurance proposals. There are currently two proposals pending and the club expects to choose one very soon.*

5.5. Is there a membership cap for the Brooks Pickleball Club?

*No, not at this time.*

5.6. Does the Brooks Pickleball Club have a website?

*The club currently uses the membership management capability of the CourtReserve scheduling product as a communication tool. A website is being considered in the future. The club also has a Facebook group.*

5.7. How do I find out more about the Brooks Pickleball Club?

Email the club at [BrooksPickleballClub@gmail.com](mailto:BrooksPickleballClub@gmail.com).

5.8. Who are the Officers/Board of Directors of the Brooks Pickleball Club?

*The current officers of the club, effective March 2023 are:*

<i>Randy Kemnitz</i>	<i>Shadow Wood</i>	<i>President</i>
<i>Ed Pieper</i>	<i>Shadow Wood</i>	<i>Vice-President</i>
<i>Sena Drawer</i>	<i>Lighthouse Bay</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Joe Alfenito</i>	<i>Shadow Wood</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>Gary Gotsch</i>	<i>Spring Run</i>	<i>At Large</i>
<i>Ron Trotter</i>	<i>Shadow Wood</i>	<i>At Large</i>
<i>Betsy Kenniston</i>	<i>Copperleaf</i>	<i>At Large</i>

6. Who will be able to play on the proposed courts?

6.1. Since the CDD's are public entities, it would seem that this would require that anyone from the general public will be able to utilize the proposed courts—is this true?

*As a not-for-profit public entity, the CDD's must offer the public the opportunity to play on the Coconut Park courts. However, the public will also be required to pay an annual usage fee which will be higher than the Brooks' CDD owner's annual fee. Both the Brooks' CDD owners and the public will still have free access to the existing playground, interactive fountain, restroom, walking path, and charcoal grills.*

6.2. The current courts are essentially “wide open,” how will access to the proposed courts be controlled?

*Each of the three existing gates will be fitted with an Internet-enabled lock which will control access to the courts. The lock can only be opened by a daily access code assigned to each player for the play period for which the player has registered to play using CourtReserve. The proposed additional courts will have the same method of access control.*

6.3. If the proposed apartment complex at the old Winn-Dixie location would eventually get approved, will those residents have access to the proposed courts?

*If the apartments are built, those residents will not be considered residents of The Brooks. Also see answer in FAQ 6.1 above.*

6.4. Will all Brooks' residents be able to utilize the courts?

*No, only those who have paid an annual usage fee will be able to utilize the courts.*

6.5. Can I bring my family and guests to play on the proposed courts?

*If you have paid the annual usage fee you may bring family and guests. However, you will need to pay a “guest fee” in advance through the SafePay function in CourtReserve.*

6.6. How will play time on the courts be scheduled/reserved?

*Once you pay your annual usage fee using SafePay in CourtReserve, you will use the CourtReserve software for making a reservation to play during designated play periods.*



6.7. Will there be “open play” periods for the proposed courts?

*Yes, there will be specific times for open play. However, this is still only for those who have paid their annual usage fee and make a reservation through CourtReserve.*

7. What entities are involved in building proposed pickleball courts throughout Estero? I hear that there are several projects being considered.

*There are discussions about multiple locations being developed for pickleball play. Some are public, some are private, and some are public/private partnerships. Most of these facilities are being considered as for-profit operations with other offerings beyond pickleball play itself. There are also multiple gated communities building new courts.*

7.1. What is the relationship between the CDD’s, the TCC and the Brooks Pickleball Club?

*Each of these organizations is a separate entity with their own purpose, responsibilities, membership and leadership teams. Because they often operate in close proximity to each other, and are all chartered to provide services that enhance The Brooks overall, and their members in particular, they continuously communicate with each other to maintain a good working relationship.*

7.2. What is the relationship between the CDD’s and the Shadow Wood Country Club’s efforts to build pickleball courts?

*There is no relationship between these two efforts. They are both being evaluated based on the need of their individual organization.*

7.3. Will the residents of The Brooks be asked to vote on whether the proposed courts will be built?

*There will not be a vote by The Brooks residents regarding the proposed pickleball expansion. This decision will be made by the ten elected Supervisors (five from each CDD). A majority of the Supervisors from both CDD’s must vote to approve funding and proceed with construction on a phase-by-phase basis before any part of the project will be initiated.*