



195 DANBURY ROAD • RIDGEFIELD, CT 06877 • PHONE (203) 431-2755 • FAX (203) 431-2761 • WWW.RIDGEFIELDCT.ORG

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Date:** April 4, 2019

**In Attendance P&R Commission (Circle):**

Phil Kearns

Barbara Dobbins

Gina Carey

Dennis DiPinto, Director P&R

**Guests**

See attached sheet

**Meeting called to order at:** 7:35am

**Sub-Committee (Circle):**

Annual Goals & Marketing Plans

Buildings & Grounds

Aquatic & Programs

Special Services – Community Out Reach

Budget & Policy

Strategic Planning

**Minutes:**

Motion to accept the meeting agenda made by Gina Carey.

Phil Kearns reviewed for the pickleball members the Parks and Recreation sub-committee's thoughts on the new pickleball adjusted fees.

**Group discussion with Commissioners and guests.**

The following guests spoke on the pickleball fees:

Ms. Ellie Hartog, Ridgefield CT

Jairo Contreras, Ridgefield CT

Margo Ingrassia, Ridgefield CT

Ron Giustino, Ridgefield CT

Ann Marie Sufgaro-Boehme, Ridgefield CT

Carol Justin, Ridgefield CT

Joseph Adams, Ridgefield CT

Letter read from Andrea Beebe, Ridgefield CT (Copy attached)

Ms. Sufgaro-Boehme proposed for consideration the implantation of a pickleball punch card system and summarized the benefit for the pickleball community. Ms. Sufgaro-Boehme stated that this type of pass is currently being used in Florida. (Flyer attached.)



# Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources



Starting  
April  
1st

## Pickleball Punch Passes

Sold and accepted at all Sarasota County indoor pickleball program sites.

**10 plays for \$15 | 25 plays for \$37.50**



**Daily drop-in fees are currently \$2.**

Colonial Oaks Park  
Englewood Sports Complex  
Laurel Park  
Longwood Park  
Newtown Estates Park  
Venice Community Center  
Woodmere Park

For more information, please contact 941-861-5000.



VISA



IT STARTS IN  
**PARKS**



  
Sarasota County

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities. View the complete policy at [scgov.net](http://scgov.net) (keywords ADA compliance).



4 April 2019  
Parks and Recreation Meeting  
AnneMarie Surfaro-Boehme:

Generally, in most Parks and Recreation facilities, Pickleball is not attached to any specific membership. It is basically a drop-in program. In Ridgefield, Parks and Rec included drop-in basketball and previously drop-in Pickleball in the Recreation Membership for \$120 per year.

In Parks and Rec Spring/Summer 2019 Program Guide: Parks and Rec lists the rates of increase for Pickleball but does not list any other increases for any other programs or memberships. Also, the Parks and Rec booklet states, "We value feedback and have decided to increase Pickleball memberships...." but feedback not asked for anywhere else, on any of the other memberships or programs.

Ridgefield has always been on the cutting edge in modeling positive trends. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America. (USA Today) Pickleball is popular with all ages, especially now in the middle and high school levels. In Sarasota County, Florida played with people from the Midwest, southwest, Canada, Northeast. During spring break - we played with everyone-all ages from 18 to 80. **Pickleball does not age discriminate.**

In Ridgefield, our players can not afford this - \$120 to \$480. It is too high, and it's driving our players away. We need to get this rate lowered. We are asking that you please work with us.

We are here to propose a solution to the Pickleball problem at P&R. We ask the Commission to change the current placement of Pickleball in the Wellness Membership to the following proposals:

- \*\*Put Pickleball back into the Recreation Membership at \$120.
- \*\*Raise the rate of the Recreation memberships for all for drop-in Pickleball, drop-in Basketball, swimming, etc.
- \*\*Offer separate Pickleball Membership
- \*\*Offer a Pickleball Play Punch Pass**

## Guests - April 4, 2019

NAME	Address
Madden Road (Ridgfield Press)	132 Great Hill Road, Ridgfield
Ellie Hartog	108 Whipstick Rd. Ridgfield
Margot Ingrassia	40 Silver Spring Park, Ridgfield
Annette Marie Surfaris-Brehne	10 Thunder Hill, Ridgfield, CT
Jairo CONTRERAS	BARRACK HILL ROAD, RIDGFIELD
Ron Giustino	99 Blue Ridge Rd
JOSEPH ADAMS	44 LANGSTROTH DR.
CAROL GIUSTINO	99 BLUE RIDGE RD.
Robert Klaeger	108 Whipstick Rd.
TOM MCINTYRE	78 BRANCHVILLE RD.
LIZ GAFNEY	26 Kiah's Brook Lane
Ron Mosiello	9 FAIRVIEW AVE RIDGFIELD
Vic Tardino	18 Continental Court, Ridgfield, CT
Jane Byrnes	46 Woodchuck Lane Ridgfield



## Impact on Ridgefield

I know there are a lot of people speaking, so I'll keep my comments brief and to the point.

Good morning, my name is Jairo Contreras and I've lived in Ridgefield for 19 years, enjoying a lot of what the town has to offer. Among those offerings is Pickleball. I started playing pickleball 9 years ago which was when Pickleball first started. In those 9 years, the only activity I have participated in at the Rec Center was Pickleball. In other words, without Pickleball I would not have used the Rec Center at all.

I played with the program at its peak, and now that it is on a downward spiral. Membership is declining and will unfortunately continue to decline because of the increased fees imposed by this committee. 50% of the players that once played on Sunday have cancelled their memberships at the Rec Center due to this fee increase. Large numbers are also dropping during the week. Once members' grandfather status expires, they will look elsewhere to play. I'm part of that large contingency that has left. My group consists of about 36 players. We didn't stop playing, we found a similarly priced venue, with better amenities which include better lighting, better flooring, and flexible hours. Now when we socialize before and after playing, it is not in Ridgefield, it is in another town. Both the club and the local businesses in that town have welcomed us with open arms.

Pickleball provides a positive economic impact by bringing providing an influx of out of town people, who may not otherwise come to Ridgefield. These people will spend money in our town and help offset the minimal expenses that the Pickleball program might have.

The benefits are not just monetary. Pickleball brings multi-generational groups together, enhancing the lives of our residents by keeping them fit and mentally sharp and improving the health and resilience in our older adults.

It disappoints me to admit that I will miss playing pickleball at the Rec Center with my other friends, as I will not be renewing my membership to the Rec center until they roll back their outrageous pricing.



Andrea

Statement- Pickleball Meeting  
April 4, 2019

To Mr. Kearns, Mr. DiPinto and the Commission:

Over the last several months we have done our best to be good representatives for our Pickleball community. We have spent countless hours researching and compiling data and information from around the country regarding costs, membership rates, health benefits and community opportunities for greater play for all ages.

We have shared our findings with you, as well as the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen. Many players and non-players have submitted their thoughts and concerns through private letters and meetings to/with you and the Commission as well as with Mr. DiPinto. Further, articles and letters have been published in the Ridgefield Press. Some comments made have caused resentment and distrust. Our seniors and in fact all of our residents deserved better.

My personal belief is that this never had to happen. If our concerns had been fully noted after our first meeting with this commission, then at that time a fair, reasonable and equitable solution should have been found. Unfortunately, that did not happen. What has ensued since the revised rates protocol for increases over 3 years has created a lot of hard feelings. But let's work to move past them.

My hope is that after today we can find a solution we can all accept. We want to continue to support our towns Parks & Recreation facility with the promise to keep building on what was started almost 10 years ago by Janice Pauley. We had the premiere program in the state until the rate increase was announced. We have already lost membership and drop in fees from players who no longer attend. Many of our out of town players who pay more have found other places where they feel more welcome. I myself, unless things change, who has the highest level All-Inclusive membership will not renew when my membership expires out of principal. Neither will my husband renew his Recreational membership as he only plays pickleball and uses no other facilities.

Pickleball can be more than a game for the Ridgefield community. The game itself is easy to learn, but the benefits are many. Let encourage everyone to try the game. Its inception was based on a game to be played across generational divides- where grandparents and parents could play with the grandchildren and children, Lets not be short-sighted. Many communities in Connecticut and around the country are recognizing the possibilities of supporting the growing and expanding interest in the game. I hope we don't get left behind.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Beebe  
378 Main Street

Fred Burke

1) El c:

- A) Cost: she feels very low as players set up + break down the courts + teach. No staff required except to check in
- B) Players contributed equipment - bats, mechanics, lockers at east ridge, a lobster machine
- C) Unutilized gym time

2) Hirco Cortese, 19 yr Resident

- A) Been playing 29 years only a part utilized
- B) Membership is declining; 50% of Sunday Player dropped because of fees; Moved to different clubs better amenities + lights

3) Margo Inyresa, 2013 Resident

- A) As a new resident she gave her good social + physical Access
- B) Prices to high for seniors

4) Ron Giustino, 99 Blue Ridge Rd, 32 year resident

- A) P/T to F/T at request of children
- B) Stop for Friends

- a) Prices in area  
Bethel - \$5 drop no membership) inside  
Greenwich 1 1 1 1  
Westport \$  
with \$6 drop in + \$5 drop in  
Newtown \$5  
Fairfield \$5 plus \$4 for \$20

Summer not plausible for prices

5) Ann Marie - Non Resident

- Most places its drop in
- Pickleball increasing
- Its the most popular sport
- Take it out of wellness
- No one answered why not basketball

\* - they would like to suggest a pickle ball  
Purch Party - that is electronic + track its purchased

Andrea BedBu - Main St - not renewing her Submission

Carol Justin. 9a Blue Ridge R  
2 people pay \$500 each

Joseph Adams - 44 Langst 42 year in business  
- Contributed for many years