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Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 10:23 AM

To: Wrinn, Michael <Michael.Wrinn@WILTONCT.ORG>

Cc: JKirincich@optonline.net; roxanewit@optonline.net; Marc Foodman <marc.foodman@gmail.com>;

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Subject: Lake Club Pickleball

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Dear Mr. Wrinn,

We are homeowners who live near The Lake Club. Several of us are Lake Club members and on April 7 we received an email from the club announcing development and renovation plans related to court facilities.

Among the items listed were plans to replace two tennis courts. In particular, The Lake Club outlined plans to change the surface of tennis courts 2 and 3 from Har-Tru to asphalt. One court will be converted to four pickleball courts with pickleball nets and lines. The other court will be a multi-use court that can be used for tennis, pickleball, basketball and other activities.

Courts 2 and 3 are located to the left of the club parking lot, closest to Thayer Pond Rd. The club noted in its email that construction should begin in August 2022 and be completed by Spring 2023.

As residents, we have serious concerns about The Lake Club's plans. We assume The Lake Club will need to apply for a building permit, and we strongly believe that this should also go before the Planning & Zoning Commission for the following reasons:

Notification of Neighbors:

The Planning & Zoning Commission process will initiate a formal notification of neighbors. Given the increased noise level and intensity of use that will result from these plans, neighbors should be notified of the plans and have the opportunity to express their views to the Commission.

Change in Use:

Courts 2 & 3 were built as Har-Tru tennis courts, and we presume they were approved as such. The club intends to remove the Har-Tru courts and build new asphalt courts for entirely new and substantially increased use. According to the club, one side will be dedicated to pickleball, and the other side will share a range of activities including tennis, pickleball, basketball, camp activities, and special events. In addition, while Wilton's zoning regulations cover the construction of tennis and paddle tennis courts, it is silent as to the construction of pickleball courts.

Increase in Intensity of Use:

Wilton's zoning regulations, in the section titled "Private Membership Recreation Clubs" (pages 88-89), state that the "intensity of use" of private membership clubs in residential districts "shall be limited by the Commission to the extent necessary to assure that the anticipated traffic generation and other external effects of such use shall not exceed that which would be expected if the premises were developed for permitted residential purposes."

Replacing two tennis courts with at least four, and possibly up to eight pickleball courts will result in up to 32 people actively playing on the two courts where there are currently no more than 8 people for tennis. This represents a multiplier in intensity of use of four times over the current use of courts 2 & 3. Before any action is taken by The Lake Club, the Commission should have the opportunity to evaluate the proposed changes to determine whether they meet Wilton's zoning regulations.

Change in Construction and Environmental Impact:

Currently courts 2 & 3 are [Har-Tru](#), a porous, soft surface that reduces runoff and soil erosion. The new courts would be asphalt, an impervious, hard surface with potential runoff issues, and which may regularly sustain temperatures 10-15 degrees hotter than Har-Tru.

Pickleball Noise:

Pickleball has been highly controversial in many communities across the United States in recent years. This is primarily because the sound of a pickleball being struck by a paddle is louder and higher pitched than what is typical in other racquet sports. It is intrusive and irritating in ways that tennis and paddle tennis are not. A [LA Times](#) article noted that the sound of a paddle striking a pickleball can exceed 80 decibels, or 25 decibels louder than in tennis (each increase of 10 decibels represents a doubling of the loudness perceived by humans). In addition, since pickleball is played on a court that is one quarter the size, the action is much faster and the time between paddle-to-ball strikes is shorter, resulting in the faster "pop-pop-pop" flurry of sound emanating from pickleball courts.

Residents living near pickleball courts have described the sound as [torture](#) and also have reported [health impacts](#) from the increased stress from the constant "pop pop pop" from pickleball which intrudes into their properties and homes.

When tennis courts in residential areas have been converted to pickleball, complaints and lawsuits have followed. A Google search of [pickleball noise](#) will return pages of news articles detailing these issues around the country. There is a growing recognition that placing pickleball in residential areas is problematic and should be avoided. In response, municipalities are moving or building these courts either indoors or in areas that are not near housing, or attempting expensive but imperfect solutions to mitigate noise from existing courts

In addition to the links above, this news video provides a good illustration of the problems pickleball creates when placed near homes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHLX8P-D1EA>. This Facebook page also includes interesting information about pickleball noise and its serious impact on neighbors: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/145879006219534>

In the last couple of years, the Lake Club has purchased portable pickleball nets and set them up for occasional use on the existing Har-Tru tennis courts. The noise from this usage is noticeably distinct and different from tennis and paddle tennis, and can be clearly heard at homes on the opposite side of Thayer Pond as well as at properties across the street from the Lake Club along Thayer Pond Road.

In its email, the club noted that in addition to permanent pickleball courts, it anticipates increases in instruction opportunities, intra-Club events and participation in interclub leagues. With a new pickleball program facilitated by dedicated pickleball courts intended to be used by members year round, pickleball at The Lake Club would go from an irregular activity, to a constant and pervasive one that will materially and negatively impact the neighborhood on all sides of The Lake Club. After members raised concerns about pickleball noise following the club's announcement, the club informed us that they are engaging an acoustic engineer to determine if mitigation strategies are warranted. However, we remain highly concerned. From what we understand about mitigation measures such as noise absorbing fencing, it would not be effective given the club's location and also could create other problems in terms of how such structures may fit into the residential neighborhood in which the Lake Club is located.

Thank you for your attention and please feel free to contact us if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Mary Chila (150 Thayer Pond Road)

Marc and Amy Foodman (46 Woods End Drive)

Joseph and Valerie Kirincich (140 Thayer Pond Road)

Ed and Laura Rowley (45 Woods End Drive)

Michael and Kathleen Solecki (60 Woods End Drive)

Roxane Witke (61 Woods End Drive)