



Michael Zogg / Today's News-Herald

**Annette Henry hits the ball back over the net as her teammate Pat Rivard looks on at the pickleball courts at Dick Samp Park on Monday.**

# Anonymous donor kicks in \$250K for last four courts at park

By **MICHAEL ZOGG**  
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Any anonymous donor is kicking in the cash to construct the last four pickleball courts planned for Dick Samp Park – which will bring the total number up to 16.

The Lake Havasu City Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing at its meeting tonight to officially accept a \$250,000 donation and direct staff to start the process to build four more pickleball courts at the park. Assistant to the

City Manager Anthony Kozlowski said the donation has been made anonymously.

In 2016, designs were completed that laid out a total of 16 courts at Dick Samp Memorial Park, along with additional lighting, parking and other improvements to the park. The first four courts were constructed in 2016, and were quickly put to heavy use – especially during the cooler months.

In 2020, the council agreed to construct eight more courts along with concrete work and some of

other improvements in the 2016 plans. That project was completed in late April 2021, providing a total of 12 courts at the park. The cost of the project earlier this fiscal year was \$658,813, which was partially paid for with a \$100,000 donation from the Lake Havasu Pickleball Association.

According to meeting documents, this donation would cover the entire cost of the four additional courts at Dick Samp Park. The staff report says that the

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donor has committed to funding any additional costs above \$250,000 for the four courts if the project runs over budget – although the report notes that that offer is not binding, and the city would ultimately be responsible for any costs over and above the donation being accepted at tonight's meeting.

Local pickleball enthusiast Dean Koskela and Lake Havasu Pickleball Association Member Doug Frisbie both said they hadn't heard anything about the donation for four more courts, but they both said the eight new courts this spring have been put to good use so far.

With winter visitors starting to come back into town over the past few months, the eight new courts have made quite a difference for pickleball players in the city. Koskela said at its busiest so far this spring there have been as many as 70 to 80 pickleball players at the park at a time.

"With the new courts there has been a whole bunch of new interest – not just from the snowbirds but also from people who live here year round and just want to learn," Frisbie said. "That is fab-

ulous. We are getting kids out there too."

Even with more interest, Koskela and Frisbie both agreed that it has been much easier to get some court time at Dick Samp Park this winter with 12 courts than it had previously been with only four. Koskela said with four courts it was common to wait 45 minutes for an open court to play a 15 minute game of pickleball. He said now there are minimal waits for courts – if any at all.

"It gets used all day long," Koskela said. "There is general play in the morning, and a lot of the newcomers don't show up in the morning because they are self-conscious, so they might come more in the afternoon when there aren't as many people."

In addition to more interest, Frisbie said the extra courts have allowed the association to hold more events with round robin tournaments offered for various skill leveled players four days a week, and pickleball lessons in the afternoons. Frisbie said they are able to do those types of events on four courts, so there are always courts available for free play as well.