

June 22, 2022

To: City Council Members

Re: June 28 Hearing on Pickleball Courts – Venetian Golf & River Club

Petition No. 21-56SP

My name is Barbara Puccia and I reside at the Venetian Golf & River Club in North Venice. I **support** the application before the City Council, approved by the Planning Commission, for 3 pickleball courts to be located by the recreational amenities in our community.

Our CDD is our governing body elected by all of our voting residents and they were elected to represent all of our interests. They came before the Planning Commission two years ago with a proposal for pickleball courts which were to be located at a different site that was near Florida Power & Light power lines. The Commission asked the CDD to reconsider the location and resubmit a proposal placing the courts by the existing recreational facilities. This is exactly what is before the City Council today as approved by the Planning Commission.

Although there may be opposition to these courts by some of our residents, the CDD has weighed all the residents' wishes, not just those that are actively and vocally opposing the courts and has determined that it is in the best interests of the entire community to go forward with the pickleball courts. It is their job to make that determination on behalf of all of us.

We currently have tennis courts, exercise classes, a lap pool, recreational pool, a tiki bar, and a subsidized dining facility. Only about 300 people out of 2000 residents might actually use any one of these amenities, but in total these amenities serve almost the entire community. The only amenity we are missing is pickleball courts, and that is the number one most popular and growing sport in the country today. Because of its popularity, new developments will include pickleball as an amenity, even if they do not have other amenities. To stay competitive with these new developments and to satisfy the huge demand for pickleball, the Venetian must have pickleball courts!

The opponents cite three main issues:

Noise, Loss of Property Value, Proposed Park in North Venice

Noise: The residents who live near the proposed pickleball courts already live adjacent to our current recreational facilities. They have chosen that location with full knowledge of the noise they generate. Currently there is noise from our tennis courts where competitive matches can be loud, swimming pools with grandchildren who can make a lot of noise, outside exercise classes, and our tiki bar which hosts parties and get togethers with live music that is most definitely heard by the adjacent residents. In addition, these residents live in high density housing, four condo units per building with patios adjacent to one another so noise is to be expected from neighbors and every day there are yapping dogs being walked down the sidewalk in front of their houses. Pickleball courts will not add to the noise that already exists. There are also only about 58 residents that will be in close proximity to the pickleball courts out of approximately 2000 residents.

To further mitigate noise, the CDD's proposal includes sound abatement walls, and the engineer has done decibel studies proving that the noise before abatement is not problematic, so after abatement, it will definitely not be an issue.

Loss of Property Value: This is definitely not an issue in the current real estate market in Sarasota County. Any resident who sells their home with or without pickleball courts will be making a killing. Their property will have doubled in value or more in the past few years. If they lose a small percentage of that profit due to the proximity of the courts, they will still be making hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit.

Adjacent Park: There is a proposal to build a public park with pickleball courts a mile and a half away from our community. Although this a fantastic proposal which I fully support, the projected increase in residents in North Venice due to current development is approximately 7,000. Our new hospital is already filled to capacity. The pickleball courts in the new park will be hard to access given the volume of demand that they will generate. Three pickleball courts in the Venetian, will alleviate some of that lock jam. So, this proposal is not only good for the Venetian Golf & River Club it is also good for the entire North Venice community.

The cost of these pickleball courts was built into the budget two years ago with no special assessment or additional CDD increase. It was originally budgeted for \$175,000 but is projected to cost only \$75,000 due to a reduction in scope, so not only does it not cost the homeowners anything additional, it is \$100,000 under budget!

I hope you will vote in support of the pickleball courts and against the appeal of the Planning Commission's approval. Thank you for your time.

Barbara Puccia
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