

Alton Pickleball Courts to be Installed at Gordon Moore Park

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - After years of hoping, the Riverbend Pickleball Group, Alton Parks and Recreation Department and Alton Township have collaborated to install pickleball courts at Gordon Moore Park.

On Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023, community leaders met at the park to break ground for eight new pickleball courts. Construction will likely be completed by the end of the year with painting scheduled for the warmer spring months, so the courts will be ready to go by Spring 2024.

“For several years, the city has been recognizing the growing need for pickleball in the area,” Michael Haynes, Alton Parks and Recreation Director, said. “We’re just looking forward to the use out there. That’s what we’re all about: providing recreation to as many people in the community as we possibly can. And I feel like we’re going to reach a heck of a lot of people.”

The Riverbend Pickleball Group, which regularly organizes play for over 100 local pickleball players, approached the Parks and Recreation department a few years ago about installing pickleball courts. There were a few multi-use courts in Alton, but Haynes said “it was time” for Alton to have their own pickleball courts, especially as the sport grows in popularity and more neighboring towns install courts.

“The local pickleball players, the Riverbend Pickleball Group particularly, has been making it well-known that these are needed and money would be well-spent,” Haynes said. “We’ve been keeping our eye out for funding over the years, and Alton Township recently came to us earlier this year and basically said that they’ve heard that pickleball courts are very much needed in our community...and they wanted to pay for them primarily with Alton Township funds.”

[Alton Township](#) provides [many services](#) to Alton residents, and they regularly look for ways to promote development. With their financial assistance, Haynes and the Riverbend Pickleball Group located a site in Gordon Moore Park and coordinated with [McConnell & Associates of St. Louis](#) to start the construction process.

“The pristine natural site, located between Hopkins Field and the tennis center , affords ample parking, a natural windbreak provided by the surrounding trees and restrooms nearby,” the Riverbend Pickleball Group said in a press release. “The complex will be state-of-the-art with eight courts surrounded by an eight-foot fence and each individual court enclosed with four-foot-high fencing. There will be a 15-foot-wide alleyway dividing the north and south banks of courts, providing plenty of space for resting between games and spectator seating.”

Haynes said that pickleball is popular for people of all ages, especially senior citizens. The sport is fast-paced but still allows players to socialize, so he hopes the new courts will encourage people to “have some healthy competition and form bonds and friendships with other people in the community.”

The Riverbend Pickleball Group will manage the courts’ schedule, with some courts reserved for leagues and tournaments, others set aside for lessons, and plenty of time planned for community members to enjoy free, open play.

As a teenager, Haynes set up a pickleball court in his driveway so he could play with friends before the sport became popular. Now, as the Riverbend Pickleball Group and U. S.A. Pickleball Ambassador for Madison County Ruby Berghoff note, there are pickleball courts throughout the region. Alton will be the newest spot for players to enjoy.

“Five years ago, there weren’t any pickleball courts in the surrounding area,” Berghoff said. “Today there are courts in Bethalto, Cottage Hills, Wood River, Grafton, Godfrey, Jerseyville, and now we will soon have eight more courts in Alton.”

