

Outline for Oral Remarks supporting PowerPoint Presentation to Municipality of Grey Highlands on behalf of Pickleball Club of Grey Highlands:

- *Personal Introduction*
 - Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Members of Council
 - My name is Wayne Bumstead
 - I am the Chair of the steering committee for the Pickleball Club of Grey Highlands
 - I reside in Grey Highlands on Blue Jay Crescent with my wife Melissa Dennison
 - I have not lived here all my life, but I did grow up in Flesherton and Markdale and am a proud graduate of Grey Highlands Secondary School

- *Pickleball Club of Grey Highlands Introduction*
 - I am also a pickleball enthusiast and in early May of this year I recruited five other like-minded locals to form a steering committee
 - We shared a common view that the growing population of pickleball players in this area needs an effective voice
 - The other committee members are Norm Green, Doug Alton, Karen Alton, Reid Dennison and Julie Prendergast, all of whom are present here today
 - We concluded that forming a non-profit sports club was the best way to proceed with our vision
 - PGH is affiliated club of Pickleball Canada and Pickleball Ontario
 - Affiliation provides many benefits, including \$5 million liability insurance coverage and sports injury coverage for our members
 - We have a website and have adopted a phone app for scheduling pickleball playing times and events for our members

- *Mission Statement*

- Early on, we published a Mission Statement setting out our values, guiding principles and initiatives
- Despite the shortcomings in local pickleball facilities, which I will speak to momentarily, we have experienced a rapid membership take-up and are currently nearly 60 members strong
- We believe this shows an enthusiastic embracing of our Mission Statement
- It represents support for our key initiative, which is to work toward the development of better pickleball facilities in Grey Highlands, which are suitable for conducting pickleball programs for all ages

- *Current Trends in Pickleball as a Sport and Recreational Activity*
 - Pickleball has been widely described as the fastest growing sport in North America
 - Based on surveys conducted by a national research company on behalf of Pickleball Canada in each of the last 4 years the growth has been “explosive”
 - The screen in front of you provides some key data from those surveys:
 - The number of pickleball players in Canada grew from 350,000 in 2020 to 1.37 million as of January 2023
 - 45% of those play 4 or more times per week
 - The age group showing the fastest rate of growth is young adults aged 18 to 34
 - This dispels the commonly held perception that pickleball is just for seniors
 - Another trend that is not covered in the surveys, but which I can speak to personally, is the popularity of “pickleball destination” travel – destinations which have invested in developing pickleball facilities are realizing significant economic benefits by attracting avid pickleball playing visitors

- *Why Is Pickleball So Popular?*
 - I offer 7 main reasons:
 - It is a healthy recreational activity
 - It is highly social (mostly played in a doubles format)
 - It is easy to learn and become proficient
 - The personal investment in required equipment is quite low
 - All that is required is a pair of running shoes and a paddle, which can be obtained for less than \$100
 - It can be played by all ages, from youths to people in their senior years; parents can play with their children, grandparents with their grandchildren
 - It promotes gender equity – at the recreational level, men and women compete against each other without a significant disadvantage based on gender
 - It has a small physical footprint – 4 pickleball courts take up roughly the same space as one standard tennis court

- *References to the Emerging Demand for Pickleball in the Grey Highlands Recreation Master Plan*
 - This slide shows quotations from the Grey Highlands Recreation Master Plan which make reference to pickleball
 - found in
 - the Multi-Use Sport Courts Overview
 - the Indoor Recreation Facility Recommendations (Arenas); and
 - the Outdoor Recreation and Parkland Recommendations
 - They speak for themselves and I leave it to you to refer to them at your leisure, however there are two main points to be taken:
 - The Recreation Master Plan confirms that there is an emerging demand for pickleball facilities in Grey Highlands
 - The Recreation Master Plan contains a strong recommendation that the development of pickleball court facilities should be planned in consultation with organized member based groups

- *The Need for Pickleball Courts in Grey Highlands*
 - There are NO dedicated public pickleball courts in Grey Highlands
 - Pickleball is presently being played on surfaces designed for other purposes that have been adapted for pickleball
 - All of these adaptations are player-made and makeshift - none have been professionally created
 - All of them are limited by the physical characteristics of the locations
 - **Outdoor Courts**
 - There is only **one**
 - At Flesherton Memorial Park, a pickleball court outline has been hand-painted on the basketball surface
 - This court has the least physical limitations of all the available public courts
 - Still, further work is needed to improve quality of play and to address safety concerns
 - Erosion on the steep hill at the back of the court results in rocks, dirt and debris continuously coming onto the court – a barrier needs to be installed to prevent this
 - There are surface imperfections that require repair
 - The court and lines were hand-painted by non-professionals and should be marked out with a proper professional painting job
 - There are overhanging branches that need to be cut back

- **Indoor Courts**

- **Two** courts have been created by outlining them with tape on the floor of Osprey Community Hall
- **Two** courts are outlined with tape in the Centre Grey Rec Complex Hall
- Court conditions at both these locations are problematic from quality of play and safety perspectives:
 - The halls have low ceilings which means the playing areas are undersized in height, which affects play
 - The available space is too small to allow sufficient space for two proper courts
 - the playing areas are cramped by the walls
 - the playing areas are too close to permit barriers between the courts to prevent balls (and sometimes players) from the adjacent court entering during games
 - These are hazardous and potentially dangerous circumstances for the players
 - “Local rules” have necessarily been created to modify play in an effort to try and make conditions safer
 - These are the only courts available for play during winter months
- **Three** courts are outlined with tape on the Markdale Arena floor
 - These courts are only available in the summer
 - They are also hazardous
 - The arena floor is polished concrete, which is the opposite of a proper court surface

- Slippery and dangerous
- These indoor courts are currently being almost exclusively used by the South East Grey Community Health Centre
 - Essentially to support a drop-in activity program for retired adults
 - No youth programs currently exist at any of them
- That is the public court inventory and I submit that it clearly shows that the residents of Grey Highlands are currently underserved by an absence of safe places to play pickleball that meet the needs of players of all ages

- *Recognition of Need for Pickleball Facilities in the Neighbouring Municipalities*
 - The Town of Blue Mountains, Township of Georgian Bluffs and Town of Meaford have all acknowledged their needs to meet the growing demand for pickleball and are taking initiatives to address their own lack of facilities
 - Good examples of what can be done exist in the Town of Blue Mountains and the Town of Hanover
 - Town of Blue Mountains
 - Four dedicated outdoor courts were constructed at the Tomahawk Recreation Centre
 - Six indoor courts have been created at the Beaver Valley Community Centre
 - However, only 2 of these 10 courts are available during the winter and TBM recently voted unanimously to examine options for adding courts to meet the “enormous” demand for pickleball facilities
 - Hanover
 - Partnered with the local tennis and pickleball club to convert two outdoor tennis courts into 6 dedicated outdoor pickleball courts

- *Request for Support of Pickleball Grey Highlands' Initiative*
 - A motion to support the initiatives of Pickleball Club of Grey Highlands by
 - Acknowledging pickleball as a high priority consideration in the deliberation of the Recreation Master Plan; and

- Providing Pickleball Club of Grey Highlands access to staff for the purposes of
 - examining options for the improvement of the court at Flesherton Memorial Park
 - examining options for the securing of new dedicated outdoor pickleball facilities in a central location and the inclusion of pickleball courts in any new or repurposed indoor facilities
 - securing access for our club events and programs at the various community facilities, including Markdale Arena, Flesherton Arena, and Osprey Hall, beyond what is currently being offered by SEGCHC

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION!