

From: Geoff Stensland
Sent: Tuesday, October 4, 2022 7:50 AM
To: parkboard <parkboard@bellevuewa.gov>
Subject: Badminton in the Park

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It was mentioned I should reach out to the park board with my input.

Regards

Geoff Stensland
Principal
Badminton America
The Bellevue Badminton Club

Hello Dave,

I am writing this as a long-time owner of a recreational gym in the city of Bellevue. I will briefly describe who we are.

In the early 2000's, to fill a void in recreational activities, I began to find ways to start a badminton club. The first attempt was in Seattle in 2003. After losing the lease in Seattle, I established the Bellevue Badminton Club in 2005. I was able to secure a warehouse in Factoria and built 5 courts. To date we have expanded our business and now have three facilities in Bellevue, Renton and Mukilteo totaling 36 courts. These are some facts about the Bellevue Badminton Club:

- Has 10,000 members that play at least once per month.
- Consistently hosts 425 juniors in our junior programs
- 85% of the juniors live in Bellevue
- 80% of the players come from Bellevue
- Bellevue has two of the top Olympic prospects for our sport in the US

Badminton is much more popular outside the US mainly due to lack of facilities. As Bellevue has become more diverse, badminton participation is very high in our area and the number of people playing rivals any other sport including Tennis.

Much like tennis, badminton needs a dedicated facility due to the needs of high ceilings (30') , correct ventilation and good visibility to play the sport at the highest levels. Trying to put badminton in any of the current community centers is like asking tennis players to use an empty parking lot. Currently, Bellevue Parks offers no badminton programming, nor does it have any facility that would be acceptable for badminton.

Arguably, the space taken up for any outdoor tennis courts could better suited for an indoor dedicated badminton facility. Badminton courts are smaller than tennis courts so land usage is more efficient with badminton. Five badminton courts can be placed on the area of one tennis court. Usage would be magnitudes higher than current use. Badminton can and does support year-round use and the city should try to serve a demographic currently underserved.

We would entertain paying for a badminton facility at any of the parks like Robinswood tennis center. We have talked in the past to the park department about this but the people in charge do not know of our sport or size and seemingly have ignored us. When the new community center was built up near Hidden Valley a few representatives visited us to discuss badminton and then did not get back to us. Since then, nothing has been done to make the facility acceptable for Badminton.

If the levy were to support this direction for our sport, I would be interested in backing it. I am available to speak to you about this and would offer my help and expertise in this direction at any time.

Regards,

Geoff Stensland
President
Badminton America
