



Tennis and Pickleball at
Hunnewell: Space for Both

Article 24

Article 24: Motion 1: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow a sum of money to be expended under the direction of the Board of Public Works, for engineering services, bid documents, construction, reconstruction, remodeling, rehabilitation, of the Hunnewell Tennis Courts, which work shall include converting Court 8 to three (3) pickleball courts, and painting a pickleball court on the surface next to the hitting wall, including costs incidental and related thereto; and for the purpose of meeting such appropriation, to authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 7(1) of the Massachusetts General Laws, or any other enabling authority and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor; or to take any other action in relation thereto. (Board of Public Works)

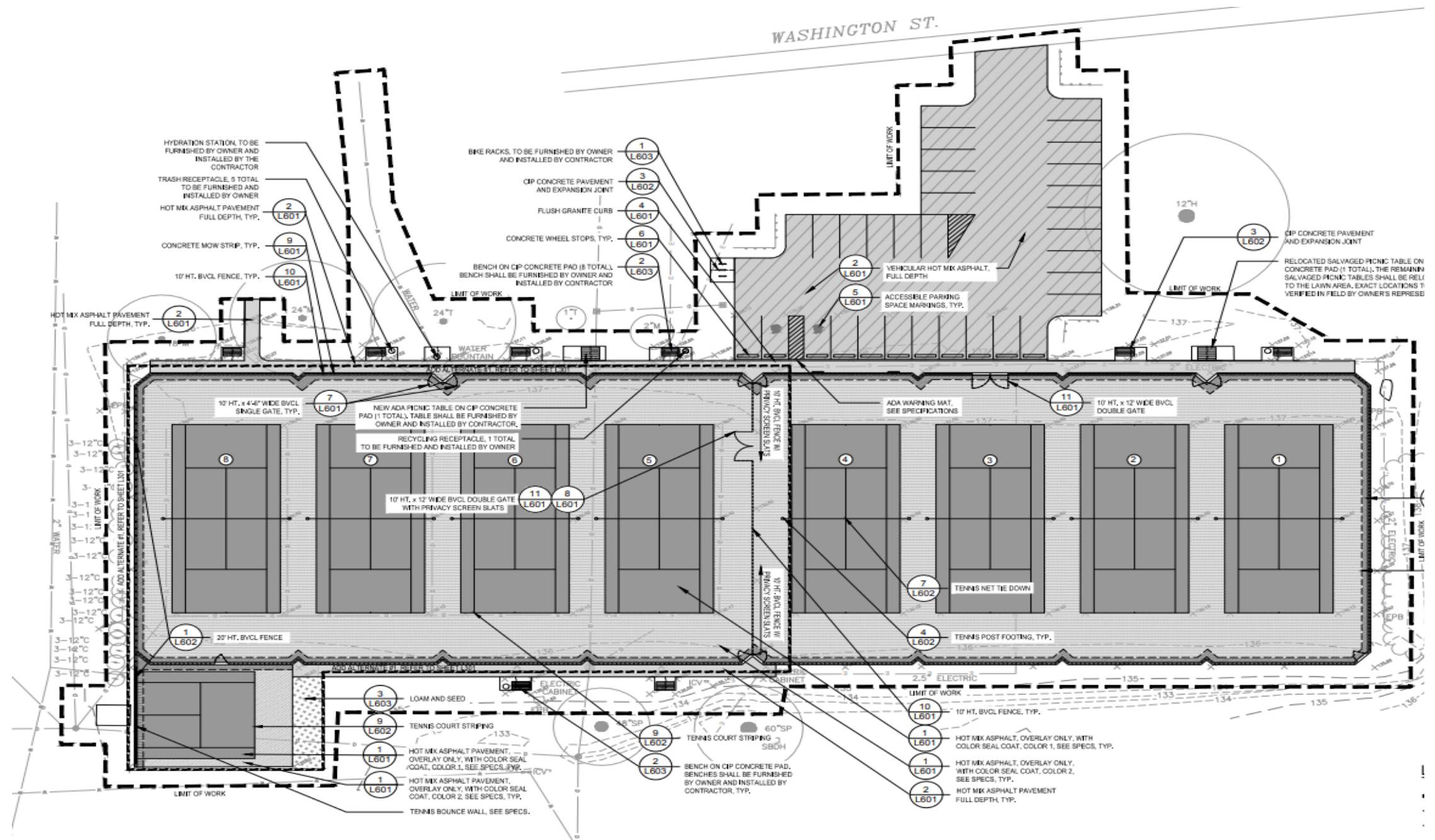
NRC Policy

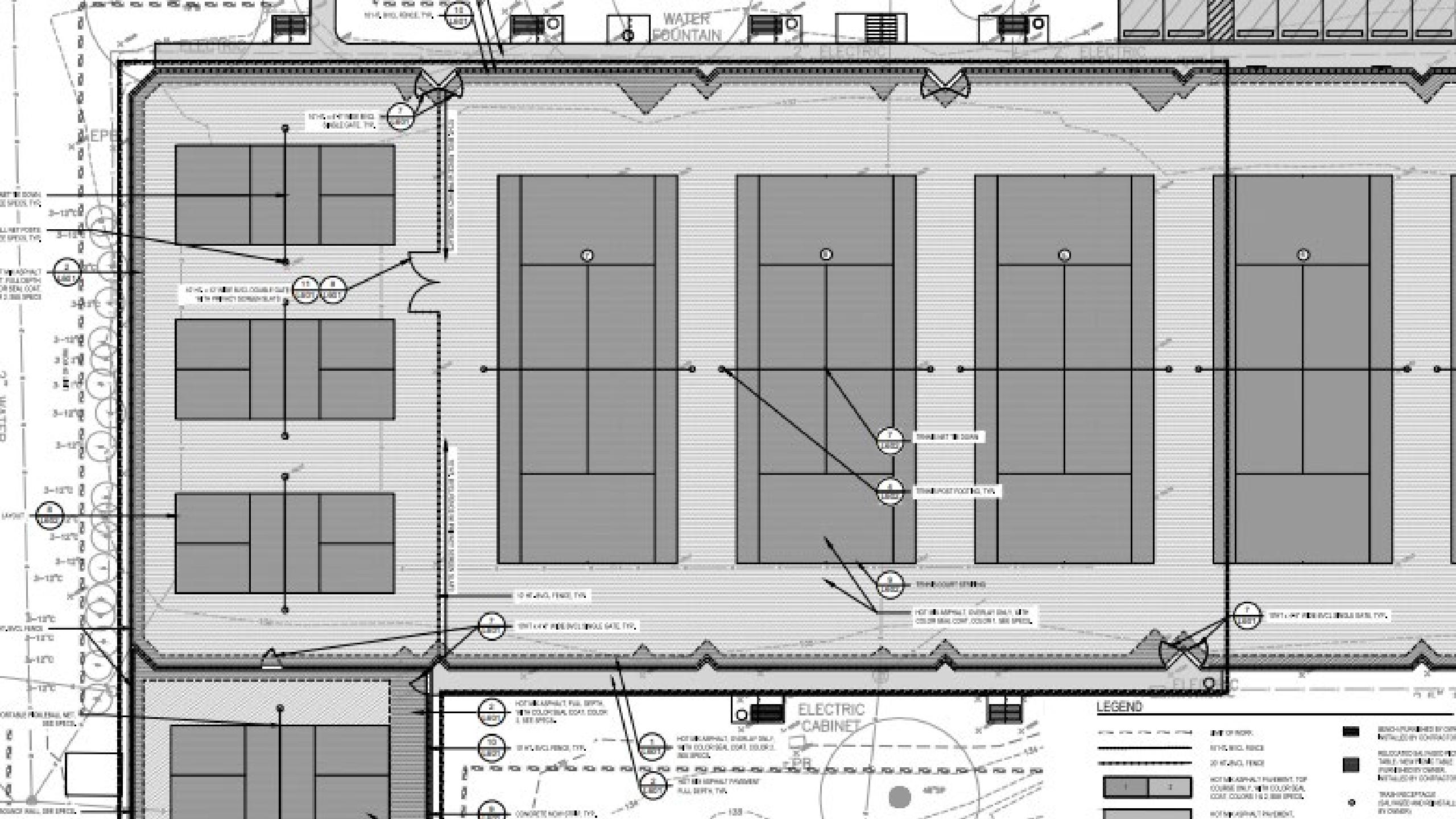
To encourage the maximum feasible use of Wellesley's open space that is compatible with protection of the Town's considerable investment in playing fields, park landscaping, grass, trees, flowers and shrubs.

- NRC addresses the needs of the entire town
- Managing active and passive space, maximizing active space while limiting loss on passive space

What is Being Requested

- Resurfacing Hunnewell Tennis Courts
- Conversion of Court 8 to 3 permanent Pickleball courts
- Expansion of bounce back wall space to accommodate 1 additional Pickleball court (temporary net)
- Realignment of internal fencing to separate Pickleball from Tennis
 - Needed for space
 - Allows for future soundproofing (if warranted)





Current demand for PB

For the third year in a row, pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in America, according to [SFIAs Topline Participation Report](#). Pickleball has grown 51.8% from 2022 to 2023, and an incredible 223.5% in three years, with every single age group seeing increased participation. While many have associated the sport with a higher age participation, the age group with the most participants, 2.3 million people, is actually the 25–34 age range. The sport added over 1 million children under the age of 18 from 2022 to 2023.^a

Reservations	Hunnewell	Sprague	Perrin	Schofield
2023 Pickleball	964	735	547	622
2024 Pickleball	371	396	99	663
Pickleball courts	4 hybrid	0 (4 hybrid closed)	0 (2 closed)	2 hybrid 1 stand alone

Represents approximately 25% of all tennis + pickleball reservations

Wellesley Tennis Association withdrew from Playing Fields Task Force (defunct) while Wellesley Community Pickleball is 500 strong and growing

WPS Athletic Tennis Usage during Season

	Season	Courts	Days	Schedule	Hours
HIGH SCHOOL (HUNNEWELL)	Mid-March - June	1-8	M-F	2:30-6:30	160
		5-8	SAT	2:30-6:30	16
MIDDLE SCHOOL (SPRAUGE)	April-June	1-4	M-F	2:30-4:00	24

Sprague is used only 25% of the time that comparable Hunnewell courts are used during the WHS Tennis season

Finding a solution – Weston and Sampson Pickleball Study

Townwide site suitability criteria:

- Site access
- Distance to residence (500')
- Earthwork
- Tree Clearing
- Environmental impact
- Permitting
- Brownfield site
- Room to expand
- Traffic
- Parking

All areas of town surveyed:

- All town-owned land
- Local businesses with parking/land
- Colleges
 - Resulted in pilot program to put 3 temporary (tape) courts in Mass Bay Parking lot



Results of study – How did we end up at Hunnewell?

Options in town extremely limited – most fail one or more criteria

Primary recommendation was MOPO parking lot

Not pursued by Rec

Still viable solution based on all criteria

Hunnewell not selected due to proximity to residences (300' to Linden), however:

- Site has been in use for 2 years with no complaints
- Re-testing of sound found no measurable impact over existing ambient sound
- Ability to add sound buffers will exist based on fence placement

Current courts on Perrin and Schofield recommended by study results to be closed (Sprague closed by SC last month)

Timeline of process

- 6/10/24 Board allows for temporary lines at Hunnewell in expectation of resurfacing
- 12/5/24 Board initially reviews proposed Hunnewell solution
- 12/19/24 Board continues review and seeks input from WHS
- 1/9/25 Staff at WHS said “will adjust as needed” – NRC approves change of use
- 1/23/25 Warrant article signed
- 2/3/25 Recreation reviewed and support on 2-13-2025

Benefit of utilizing space at Hunnewell

Creates a pickleball solution for town

- Significant demand for use continues while locations to play in Wellesley is extremely limited and may be decreasing with Perrin/Schofield decisions

Significant cost savings in utilizing existing space vs development of new space

- \$50k additional cost to modify Hunnewell vs. \$500k+ for new space

No new environmental impact

- Uses existing surface with no vegetation impacted, no new impervious surface/regrading required

Pros and Cons of Article as proposed

Pros

3 Dedicated courts for Pickleball (1 add'l court with moveable net for bounce back wall)

Optimal playing surface

Allows for optimum sound buffering (if necessary)

No shared use conflicts

No need for portable nets

Court 8 can be easily and cheaply (\$10k) converted back to Tennis if alternative PB solutions are found

Cons

Reduction of 1 Tennis Court

Requires logistical changes for WHS Tennis practice due to loss of 12% of court space at Hunnewell

- Utilization of Sprague courts
- Changes to court time utilization at Hunnewell
- Potential reduction of overall team size

Pros and Cons of alternative solution to Article

Pros

- 4 Sharable courts vs. 3 Dedicated courts for Pickleball (1 add'l court with moveable net for bounce back wall)
- Allows for WHS Tennis to utilize one site (as currently done) for both games and practices

Cons

- Over-utilization of Hunnewell space vs Sprague space
- Requires use of 2 tennis courts vs. 1, results in shared use conflicts and a reduction of town tennis courts from 15 to 13
- Less than optimum playing surface for both Tennis and Pickleball due to line overlap (see next slide)
- Ability to add soundproofing dependent on fence placement (could be problematic)
- Option to create dedicated Pickleball space at existing site in the future eliminated (without cost)
- No dedicated Pickleball solution
- Use of portable nets comes with potential challenges (theft, storage, damage)

Prior Input on Dual Lines

NRC held Public Forum on Court Utilization on June 7, 2023. Suggestion to include pickleball lines at Hunnewell. Taped lines left residual marks.

June 10, 2024: NRC approves chalked Hunnewell Courts 7 and 8 through 2025 WHS Tennis season.

- “The use of pickleball nets scratches the courts, making the surface unsafe for tennis players using the courts. Furthermore, the addition of pickleball lines obstructs the tennis lines and prioritizes a trendy recreational game over the already popular sport of tennis.”
- “The lines as well as congestion in the area already jammed with other sports courts will make the parking lot and traffic both dangerous and further congested.”
- “Please, please, please do NOT add pickleball lines to the Hunnewell tennis courts!!!”
- “Adding pickleball lines and equipment will be a huge hinderance to the tennis community.”

Questions?