

Agenda Item: 2.c

Meeting Date: July 27, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: City Commission

Date: 2023-07-14

From: Vince Gizzi

Subject: Stirling Park Improvements and New Proposed Pickleball Courts Location

Presenter(s): Vince Gizzi, Parks & Recreation Director; Lanie Sheets, Parks & Recreation Administration Superintendent

Recommend: Approve the recommendation for near-term improvements to Stirling Park and the construction of pickleball courts at Eagle Scout Park.

Epic Goal(s):

1. Create a vibrant, cultural experience that touches the lives of our community and visitors.
3. Promote Dunedin as The Premier Coastal Community, protecting and improving our natural resources for the enjoyment of all.

Boards & Committees: Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
US Military Veterans Advisory Committee

Budget Impact: \$700,000 is included in the draft FY 2024 budget for Pickleball Courts

Past Action: City Commission Workshop on December 3, 2019
City Commission Agenda Action Item on January 14, 2020

Next Action: TBD

Attachments: [A. Stirling Park master plan survey response summary.pdf](#), [B. Veteran Monument inventory.pdf](#), [C. Stirling Park and Pickleball PPT 7-27-23.pdf](#),

Background:

On March 18, 2003, the City of Dunedin entered into an agreement with Pinellas County to provide funding for the City to purchase the property then known as St. Andrew's Links Golf Course. The golf course was subsequently renamed Stirling Links Golf Course. The agreement required the property to be maintained, operated, and managed as a golf course. It also required a Declaration of Restrictive Covenants to preserve the site as open space for public recreational use in perpetuity. The use of the property can be changed from a golf course to other municipal uses at the exclusive legislative direction of the City provided any new use of the property complies with the Restrictive Covenants.

The City of Dunedin operated the golf course until March 31, 2020. A workshop was held on December 3, 2019 with a subsequent agenda item at the January 14, 2020 City Commission meeting to discuss the future use of the property. The decision to convert the property to a city park was approved by the City Commission. The City Commission also approved the renaming of the property to "Stirling Park" as well as to keep the driving range and golf practice facilities open with City staff. Phase one of the park amenities included converting the existing cart paths to walking trails, opening the access from the Pinellas Trail, installing benches along the trail, installing new signage and creating a "safety zone" adjacent to the two driving ranges.

It was also determined that a public input process would be conducted to determine the future amenities desired in the park. Potential future improvements could then be implemented through a long-range master plan and phased approach as funding became available.

The Parks & Recreation Department solicited input from the community in January 2023. A Community Meeting was held at the Hale Senior Activity Center on January 4, 2023. The presentation was also available on the City's website for those who were unable to attend. The presentation described the configuration of the park, existing uses, and points of consideration for any potential future amenities. One option for a master plan was presented. A survey was then conducted to receive feedback. The City received over 1,200 survey responses and dozens of emails. The results of the survey are included as an attachment.

Staff took the time to evaluate all of the input and suggestions. Additionally, staff re-evaluated all other park property to determine feasibility to accommodate our current recreational needs including dedicated pickleball courts and a future dog park. This evaluation included all factors such as spatial needs, parking, other support facilities, and the current activities.

One of the suggestions from the neighboring community was to convert Stirling Park to a veterans' park along with stormwater features. This concept was also presented to the US Military Veterans Advisory Committee. The Committee evaluated the request. They also explored and discussed the complete inventory of veterans' monuments and various recognitions located throughout the City of Dunedin. The Committee then recommended to

rename Stirling Park to “Donald Roebling Veterans Park”.

This presentation will outline the Stirling Park community input process and results, options for pickleball court locations, the inventory of veteran monuments in Dunedin, as well as the proposed near-term improvements to Stirling Park. City staff is recommending City Commission approval of near-term improvements to Stirling Park including improvements to trails, adding benches, and native terrestrial and aquatic plantings. Staff will work with the City Arborist and Stormwater and Sustainability Coordinators on the addition of native plantings and environmental education signage. Staff is also recommending repurposing the three tennis courts at Eagle Scout Park with eight (8) to ten (10) pickleball courts. These recommendations were supported by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee at their meeting on July 19, 2023.