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**MAR - 2023**



### **Monthly Insight into the Elizabeth Park & Rec District**

# **EPR connections**

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## **Park Maintenance Spring Project Updates**

The Maintenance Team continues to remain busy with snow removal and equipment servicing this winter season, though they are anxiously awaiting and preparing for the Spring season and increased park visitation. With youth soccer practices starting within the next week or so, they are really hoping for some warm temps and sun to help spur the growth of beautiful green athletic fields for the upcoming season. An early season fertilization and spraying for weeds should help move things along. An improved batting cage is being rebuilt in Evans Park near the south baseball field after being damaged by snow last fall, and is made possible by a generous donation from Sun Valley Contractors, who provided steel poles for the support structure.

The team will also be shutting down Prickly Pines Disc-Golf Course near mid-March for its annual spring closure which allows for some spring vegetation to grow, helping with the mitigation of erosion. The closure also allows some peace for birds nesting in the spring. The course is scheduled to re-open near Memorial Day.

It has certainly been a long cold winter, but when its finally over, we'll do all we can to make sure the parks will be ready for you.

## **Board Pursues Improvements at Casey Jones Park**

Upon reviewing the recently completed Pickleball Feasibility Study, the Board of Directors has instructed staff to engage with design firm MIG to complete the site design and develop construction documents. The 4-court pickleball complex will be paired with an artificial turf ball field that was included within the recently developed master plan. Though the pickleball courts were not a part of the original master plan, the design team was able to incorporate the courts while minimizing impacts to other parts of the master plan. The new ballfield and pickleball courts will be located just south of the church off County Road 17. The area also allows for the potential expansion of courts should the demand grow in the future.

The pickleball courts will consist of a post tension concrete slab with fencing and net systems. Pickleball specific surfacing will be applied to the courts. There will also be some shaded seating / social space, accommodations for porta potties or a vault toilet, and an improved parking area. West of the pickleball courts and along County Road 17, the artificial ball field will be installed where the dog park currently sits. The dog park will be relocated to another area of the park as indicated within the master plan. The new parking area will be located between the two new amenities.

Once the construction documents are completed, the District will initiate the permitting process with Elbert County and issue an RFP for contractors interested in the project. The project will be funded within the existing District budget and cash reserves. It is anticipated that construction could begin in the fall of this year or spring of 2024 and require 2-3 months, dependent upon weather conditions and other factors.

# Program Registrations – NOW OPEN

## Adult Mixed Pickleball League

Registration is now open for our new adult (16+) pickleball leagues. We are offering a Beginner / Intermediate division as well as an Intermediate / Advanced division. Teams may consist of male / female partners or female / female partners only. Games are played on Tuesdays beginning at 10am for Beg / Int and at 10am on Thursdays for the Int / Adv division. Season begins April 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and ends May 9<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup>. Teams play (2) two 3-set matches each week. Fee is \$30 per team. Register at [www.elizabethpr.com](http://www.elizabethpr.com) or call the park office at 303.646.3599. Space may be limited, so register early.

## Youth Baseball

### T-Ball / Rookies (Co-Ed)

Ages: 4-6 / 7-9      Fee: \$50 / \$60

Start Dates: 5/6/23

All games played in Elizabeth on Saturdays – **REG ENDS 4/1**

### Minors / Majors (Co-Ed)

Ages: 9-12      Fee: \$115

Dates: Mid-April through June

Player Assessments Used to Determine Division:  
3/24 & 3/25

## ZUMBA Sessions

Keep up that New Year's resolution to get or stay fit and drop by the Casey Jones Pavilion for a rhythmic, active, and fun session of Zumba. Instructor Danielle Gregory leads participants through high energy, high paced movements that combine dance and fitness. Classes are held on Thursdays at 7pm and are appropriate for all participants at all levels. No registration needed, just pay \$10 drop-in fee at the door before class. See you there!

## Intro to Pickleball Class

Curious about or interested in pickleball but not sure how to start? Check out this new class designed to introduce you to the game in a relaxed non-competitive environment. You will learn game rules and strategy as well as participate in drills to develop the skills that will get you comfortable on the court. Instructor Lynn Watts is a former PE teacher and now pickleball enthusiast and coach. Session begins April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Classes held on Mondays at Evans Park from 9-10:30am. Cost is \$50.

## Message from the Director

### *Growing Pains*

Though there is a lot of community debate about the welcomeness of the growth occurring in and around Elizabeth, there is no hiding the fact that it is happening, and its impacts are being felt far and wide. While the District doesn't necessarily advocate for or against community growth, it is tasked with ensuring a growing population has a diverse park and recreation system that is meeting its needs and adding to the quality of life for residents. As more residents move into the community, greater pressure is placed not only on roads and water, but also on athletic fields, playgrounds, gyms, park space, and programs. The District has historically always accommodated every youth that wanted to register for a sport season and had the resources to do so. As long as a participant registered within the registration timeframe, we made sure they were placed on a team. With growing interest and participation however, we had to turn youth away for the first time this past basketball season. Unfortunately, there is just a cap on the gym space that is available in the community, and this dictates how many teams and ultimately, youth can play. This new reality, which we expect to extend into other sports, has sadly ended our ability to serve every youth who wants to play. Programs will now have pre-set participation levels and registration will close when a program is full, with all other interested participants being placed on the waiting list. Though gyms to support basketball are certainly a costly premium within the community and challenging to acquire, we are seeing the same issue arise with our field-based sports. The demand for baseball / softball fields this spring and summer is already beyond our capacity, and we are forced to limit team practices to one day per week from the two that were often held in the past. Pickleball players also made the District aware of the need for more courts to support their activity of choice, which the District is now pursuing. We will continue to work hard to balance the needs and desires of our user groups and schedule use of facilities as creatively as we are able, though do know that it is challenging. We will also continue to work to develop additional athletic fields and resources to support community recreation for our growing community. Thanks for your patience and understanding as we all struggle to manage the impacts we are seeing from this community growth, and be sure to let us know what other improvements / additions may be needed to your park system that we may not be seeing.