

Seaport Neighborhood Association

Dear City Officials, State Officials and Community Stakeholders,

We, the Seaport Neighborhood Association (SNA), write to express our opposition to the proposed Ballers LLC (“Ballers”) project. This development would introduce nine racquet sports courts, two lounge areas, background music, and alcohol service into the heart of our densely populated residential neighborhood.

Ballers first approached us in April of 2025 to share their proposal. In our subsequent meetings, we raised concerns specifically about noise and hours of operation. Unfortunately, many of these concerns remain unaddressed.

As a community, we embrace a dynamic and growing neighborhood. However, as currently proposed, we are firmly opposed to this project. The hundreds of residents surrounding the site simply seek the ability to work, sleep, and relax without the persistent and disruptive noise of paddle on ball from early morning until late at night.

Attached is our detailed Statement of Opposition, which outlines in full the significant concerns raised by residents and stakeholders regarding this project, including noise, lack of acoustic testing, liquor licensing, traffic, and more. We urge all decision-makers to carefully consider the impact this development would have on the quality of life in the Seaport community.

Sincerely,

The Seaport Neighborhood Association Board of Directors:

Sandra Barker

Terri Becker

Jennifer Culbert

Brendan Doherty

David Eagle

Sue Farrell

Norm Lind

David Morse

Alan Packer

Robin Stewart

Nick Zeoli



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Statement of Opposition to Experimental Pickleball Project “Ballers”

The Seaport Neighborhood Association (SNA) wishes to express its opposition to the proposed commercial pickleball court development in the Seaport district. While we understand and appreciate the increasing popularity of pickleball as a recreational activity, the way this project has been framed and advanced raises substantial concerns for residents, stakeholders, and property owners throughout our community.

Experimental Nature

At a public hearing held on May 20, 2025 (“Abutters Meeting”), the Ballers team and their representatives frequently referred to this proposed pickleball installation as “experimental.” See *Abutters Meeting Video*¹, May 20, 2025, at 46:10. This statement alone underscores the project's speculative nature and confirms that its impact on the surrounding area remains uncertain. Residents of the Seaport should not be treated as test subjects in an open-ended trial. We live in one of the most densely populated residential areas in the country and our neighborhood deserves well-considered projects, not experiments. The risks to community well-being, peace, and property values are too significant to be left to trial and error.

Pickleball Noise in Urban Settings

Across the country, pickleball courts have created well-documented problems for nearby residents due to the constant, repetitive “popping” sound of paddles hitting balls. This persistent noise, especially when it occurs for extended hours, has become a significant nuisance for those living nearby. Although the sound may not exceed ordinances regarding decibel levels, the noise is disruptive and has led to litigation across the country.

At the Abutters Meeting, the Ballers team refused to acknowledge the widespread concerns about pickleball noise. Instead, they posited that “they do not expect noise to be a factor at this location.” See *Abutters Meeting Video*¹, May 20, 2025, at 6:05. The Ballers team also represented that noise problems were only arising in quiet, suburban neighborhoods and that “they don’t think they have ever seen a lawsuit in an urban environment regarding pickleball noise.” See *Abutters Meeting Video*¹, May 20, 2025, at 49:25. This statement is abjectly false, as numerous examples show that noise disputes, including legal actions, have occurred in both urban and suburban settings.

In downtown San Francisco, residents filed legal action against a private club due to pickleball noise. See “*Another Pickleball Dispute Arises Between Downtown SF Condo Owners and Fitness Club*,” *SFist* (Dec. 10, 2024)², Also, please see “*Shattered Nerves, Sleepless Nights: Pickleball Noise Is Driving Everyone Nuts*,” *New York Times* (June 30, 2023)³ outlining issues across the country regarding pickleball noise.

These examples clearly demonstrate that pickleball noise disruption is not limited to quiet, suburban neighborhoods. The Ballers team's unwillingness to engage honestly with these well-documented issues raises serious concerns about their readiness to manage the potential impact on our community.



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During the Abutters Meeting, the Ballers team cited a Dallas, TX project as “the only proof they need” to be certain their project will not cause disruptions. They claimed that they couldn’t hear the courts from a third-floor unit above them and that Seaport’s more modern glass buildings offer better noise protection. Even if accurate, this comparison overlooks the fact that residents regularly open windows and use adjacent outdoor decks, spaces where pickleball sounds would carry easily and disrupt quiet enjoyment.

Lack of Acoustic Planning

At the Abutters Meeting, Ballers claimed that a study by WS Development showed the proposed pickleball courts would not cause disturbance. However, it was later acknowledged that no one from the Ballers team, or their attorneys, had reviewed the study. To our understanding, the WS analysis merely found that noise levels would remain within legal limits, an insufficient standard, given that pickleball noise is often disruptive, not because of its volume, but due to its repetitive, sharp, and percussive quality. Ballers also stated that an acoustic consultant had been engaged for the Boston site but later clarified that any study would occur only after opening. This raises further concern that the project will proceed without fully understanding or addressing its noise impacts.

Hours of Operation

The initial proposal by Ballers called for operations from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM daily. Ballers agreed to shift their opening time to 8:00 AM on the weekends, only upon strong community opposition raised during the Abutters Meeting.

This concession does not go far enough. Ballers has suggested that the existing ambient noise in the Seaport area will offset any potential disruption caused by their activities. While we question the accuracy of these claims, even if they were valid, it is important to recognize that ambient noise levels are significantly lower during early morning hours and at night, particularly on certain days of the week, making those periods more sensitive to additional noise.

One Day Liquor Licenses

The Ballers team seemed confident that they will not have a problem acquiring and using successive one-day liquor licenses, indicating to us that the Boston Licensing Board has been highly receptive to the Ballers concept. The one-day liquor licenses will conveniently avoid the scrutiny, public process, and financial commitment required of permanent license holders. Intended for occasional special events, the proposed series of licenses will be used to enable ongoing alcohol service without the safeguards, accountability, or neighborhood input that full license holders must meet. This practice undermines local businesses that have invested properly in full licensing and exposes residents to the impacts with little oversight. If the proposed pickleball project or its vendors intend to rely on this loophole, it would further demonstrate a pattern of circumventing formal processes, at the expense of both the community and responsible operators.



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Pier 4 Traffic Flow

An attorney, speaking on behalf of the Ballers team, stated that they anticipate “people walking to the location” in response to a question about the project's potential to worsen the ongoing issue of double parking on Pier 4 Boulevard. See *Abutters Meeting Video*¹, May 20, 2025, at 54:40.

This claim is unrealistic and dismissive of the community’s actual experience. The existing traffic disruptions caused by rideshares and frequent drop-offs are well-documented, and the failure to acknowledge them further erodes trust. While some patrons may walk, it is inevitable that ridesharing will remain a significant mode of access to the site.

Lack of Neighborhood Support

Notably, not a single resident out of 50+ attendees spoke in support of the proposed pickleball project at the Abutters Meeting. Included in the opposition at the Abutters Meeting were property owners and residents of the three closest abutting residential buildings. Additionally, the SNA has received a number of emails expressing grave concern and opposition to this project.

Conclusion

We urge all decision-makers and stakeholders to recognize the serious and lasting consequences this proposal could have on one of Boston’s most burgeoning residential neighborhoods. The Seaport is not an appropriate testing ground for speculative or disruptive commercial ventures, particularly those introduced without sufficient planning, transparency, or community input.

The Seaport Neighborhood Association opposes the Ballers proposal in its current form. The lack of proactive engagement with residents, unanswered concerns about noise and operational impact, and reliance on temporary licensing mechanisms raise deep concerns about long-term livability and precedent.

We remain committed to representing the interests of our community and are open to engaging in further discussions regarding this project.

¹ Ballers abutters meeting - May 19, 2025
[video1082560386.mp4](#)

² SFist – December 10, 2024
<https://sfist.com/2024/12/10/another-pickleball-dispute-arises-between-downtown-condo-owners-and-fitness-club/>

³ NY Times – June 30, 2023
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/30/sports/pickleball-noise-complaints-lawsuits.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap>

