



**CITY OF BELLE MEADE
MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA PACKET
JULY 15, 2025, 04:00 PM**



**AGENDA MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 15, 2025, 04:00 PM
BELLE MEADE CITY HALL, 4705 HARDING PIKE**

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION AND INTERESTED PARTIES:

This is to notify you of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC), with public hearing and public comment on the agenda items. Public comment will also be heard on any matters related to the MPC. Items for consideration are listed below and are available on the city website, www.citybellemeadetn.org. The meeting will also be available through Live Stream on the city website.

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Consideration of the minutes of the Municipal Planning Commission held August 20, 2024.

Attachment: [Minutes MPC August 20 2024.pdf](#)

III. New Business

A. The application of St George Church for a three lot subdivision at 105 Lynwood Boulevard.

Attachment: [MPC subdivision application.pdf](#)

Attachment: [66_LS-1892---105-Lynwood-Blvd---Nashville-TN---6-30-25---PLAT.pdf](#)

Attachment: [SUBDIVISION-REGULATIONS.pdf](#)

Attachment: [STAFF REPORT 105 Lynwood Blvd.pdf](#)

Attachment: [LS-1892 - 105 Lynwood Blvd. - Nashville TN - COWAN SUBDIVISION.pdf](#)

B. Recommendation on Ordinance 2025-7 to Amend Title 14 of the Belle Meade Municipal Code to Restrict the Provisions for a Pickleball Conditional Use.

Attachment: [Article - pickleball noise.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Ordinance 25-07 Pickleball.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Charles Leahy Belle Meade Zoning Comments.pdf](#)

IV. Public Comment

V. Adjourn

VI. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Municipal Planning Commission will be held August 19, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.



**MINUTES
MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION – REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 20, 2024, 4:00 PM
BELLE MEADE CITY HALL, 4705 HARDING PIKE**

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Nina Davidson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Commission Members Present

Vice-Chairman Nina Davidson
Haley Dale
Carter Dawson
Ashley Levi
Rusty Moore
Karen Rich

Commission Members Not Present

Chairman Gavin Duke
Scott Kendall
Larry Wieck

Staff Members Present

Planning Director Mary Samaniego
City Recorder Rusty Terry
City Attorney Doug Berry

Approval of Minutes

Consideration of the minutes of the Municipal Planning Commission held July 16, 2024.

Motion to approve: Dale Second: Rich Vote: All aye

Old Business - None

New Business

The application of Richard and Lauren Jacques, 911 Westview Avenue, MPC 2024-911, for building envelope determination for a corner lot.

RECONSIDERATION

City Attorney Doug Berry addressed the commission to explain the procedure for the evening, stating that the commission had approved the corner lot application of the Jacques at the June 25, 2024 meeting, Berry stated that approximately three to four weeks following that meeting that information had been provided by Clay Bright's attorney, Greg Cashion, that inaccurate information had been provided regarding the side setback from the neighbor (visa vie). Planning staff verified it was mistaken information, adding no one is saying it was provided deliberately, but the commission made a decision based on inaccurate information. Under those circumstances under the law, the commission has the responsibility, or discretion at least, to

reconsider its decision and that is what we are here for.

Berry continued that the procedure would be under Robert's Rules. There would need to be based on information provided a motion to reconsider the determination of June 25, with a second right away without discussion and then a discussion of the need or desirability of reconsideration. That discussion may include the merits of the decision. If you do agree to reconsider then the matter is back before you as if it were a new matter. No public comment is permitted on the motion to reconsider. If the motion passes, the fact that you voted one way on reconsidering the motion doesn't mean you must vote any particular way on the merits of the motion back before you. Then you are back to the main motion, and it is a two step process and at the point the applicant should re-present their revised plan, the commission would ask questions of the applicant, and allow public comment from affected neighbors. Then you would consider a motion to approve and proceed from there.

If the commission votes to not reconsider, then it is not reconsidered and it is over with.

If you agree to hear the matter and you make a motion to approve and it passes, then that is the new terms of approval. If you deny the new plan then it is denied and you are back to the plan that is approved.

- Dale: It is my understanding that there is not a revised plan. I thought the motion would be to reconsider the existing plan.
- Berry: I will need to have Planning Director Samaniego address that.
- Samaniego: A revised plan has not been submitted.
- Dale: For clarification, the motion to reconsider if a motion and second were to take place so we could have a discussion about reconsidering what we have already voted on, that would be to decide whether or not we still approve of the building envelope as previously approved.
- Berry: No, you may at that point consider additional conditions.
- Dale: It could either be to not reconsider our actions which would be voting down the motion and leaving it as is based on what was presented at the last meeting choosing to maybe adding conditions of some sort. Either way a motion and a second is required to discuss either option
- Berry: That is correct. Any action any board here takes requires a motion and a second.
- Dale: If we take Public Comment would you prefer that happen prior to the motion.
- Berry: If you get back to the main motion, you would have the applicant present if they want to, have the public present. And then get a motion and a second.
- Dale: If the motion to reconsider fails, we would not.
- Berry: You would be finished.

Motion to reconsider: Dawson Second: Rich

A board discussion ensued.

Vote: Dawson Aye, Levi Aye, Moore Yes, Davidson Yes, Rich Yes, Dale No

Catherine Sloan, Architect representing the Jacques at 911 Westview, reviewed the proposal as originally submitted.

Public Comment Opened

- Jill DeBona, resident at 915 Westview Avenue, asked about a picture showing the garage doors.
- Dale stated it was not required for this committee.
- Johnny Phipps, resident at 4406 Forsythe Place, spoke against the proposed plans.
- Clay Bright, resident at 909 Westview Avenue, spoke against the proposed plans, offering an optional plan he had created.
- Catherine Sloan stated the footprint was around 3900 and the overall square footage of the home is in the 5's and is not 7,000 square feet as stated by others. Sloan also provided additional details about the plan noting that if codes were followed the allowed square footage of the home would be 230 square feet.
- Richard Jacques, applicant, provided details on their plans discussing the hardship of the corner lot.
- Johnny Phipps, resident at 4406 Forsythe Place again spoke against the project inquiring about the code for the setback of the garage.
- Mark Zenker, resident at 915 Westview Avenue, asked for the board to explain moving the house toward Forsythe. City Attorney Doug Berry informed him there was no motion, asked that he state his objection, informing him he did not get to question the Planning Commission. Zenker stated moving the home closer to Forsythe would be a problem for him.
- Emily Tidwell, resident 905 Westview Avenue, spoke against the project.
- Lauren Jacques, applicant, stated they were not asking for a variance and were asking for a building envelope; expressing their desire to build stating they had been under contract on the property for over 5 months and had worked hard to design a modest family home.
- Clay Bright, resident 4406 Forsythe Place again spoke against the project.
- Richard Jacques, applicant, addressed the plan that Bright suggested for the building envelope.

During the Public Comment Period there were questions and comments from various commission members.

Note: Public Comment was never closed.

City Attorney Doug Berry reminded the Commission on their legal parameters. (Citing Belle Meade Municipal Code 14-103 Section 2) Noting it was appropriate to charge the commission with the law they were going to apply.

- Chairman Nina Davidson inquired of Planning Director Samaniego about the document submitted by Clay Bright.
- Planning Director Samaniego explained the plan as submitted by Bright.

A discussion ensued.

Motion to split the difference between the neighbors; move it two feet closer to Forsythe: Dale

Rich asked for clarification on the motion.

Dale stated the setback from Westview would now be 19 feet and the setback

from Forsythe would now be 28 feet.

Motion Second: Rich

A board discussion ensued.

Motion to amend the motion to approve the original building envelope as submitted to the committee: Dale

Motion fails for lack of a second.

Motion to change the setback so that it is not coming closer to the road than the existing house and not closer to the neighbor than the existing house, so the setback (assumed front as it is currently 70 feet) would remain at 70 and the side setback would be at 21: Dawson Second: Davidson

A board discussion ensued.

Levi requested Dawson to define the motion.

Dawson: The setback along Forsythe is 30 feet, the setback on Westview is 70 feet and the side setback between the neighbor is 21 feet and the rear setback is 60 feet.

- Dale: (To Dawson) Is your motion based on the proposal from Clay Bright.
- Dawson: Yes.

Planning Director Samaniego: Let me clarify, his (Bright) diagram shows the setback from Westview as 70 feet 8 inches and 21 feet 11 inches from his property line. I want to make sure we are down to the inch so we do not have to come back.

Vote: Dawson Yes, Levi Yes, Moore Yes, Davidson Yes, Rich Yes, Dale Yes

Other Public Comment - None

The meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

Vice-Chair Nina Davidson

City Recorder Rusty Terry

Application

OWNER INFORMATION

Property Owner Email Address: Property Owner Phone: Is Owner Applicant? ☐ Yes ☒ No

PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Reason for Request:

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Name Address City, State & ZIP Telephone

In Step 5 of the Application, please attach the below document(s):

1. Survey/Final Plat (signed and sealed by a registered surveyor) of proposed lots

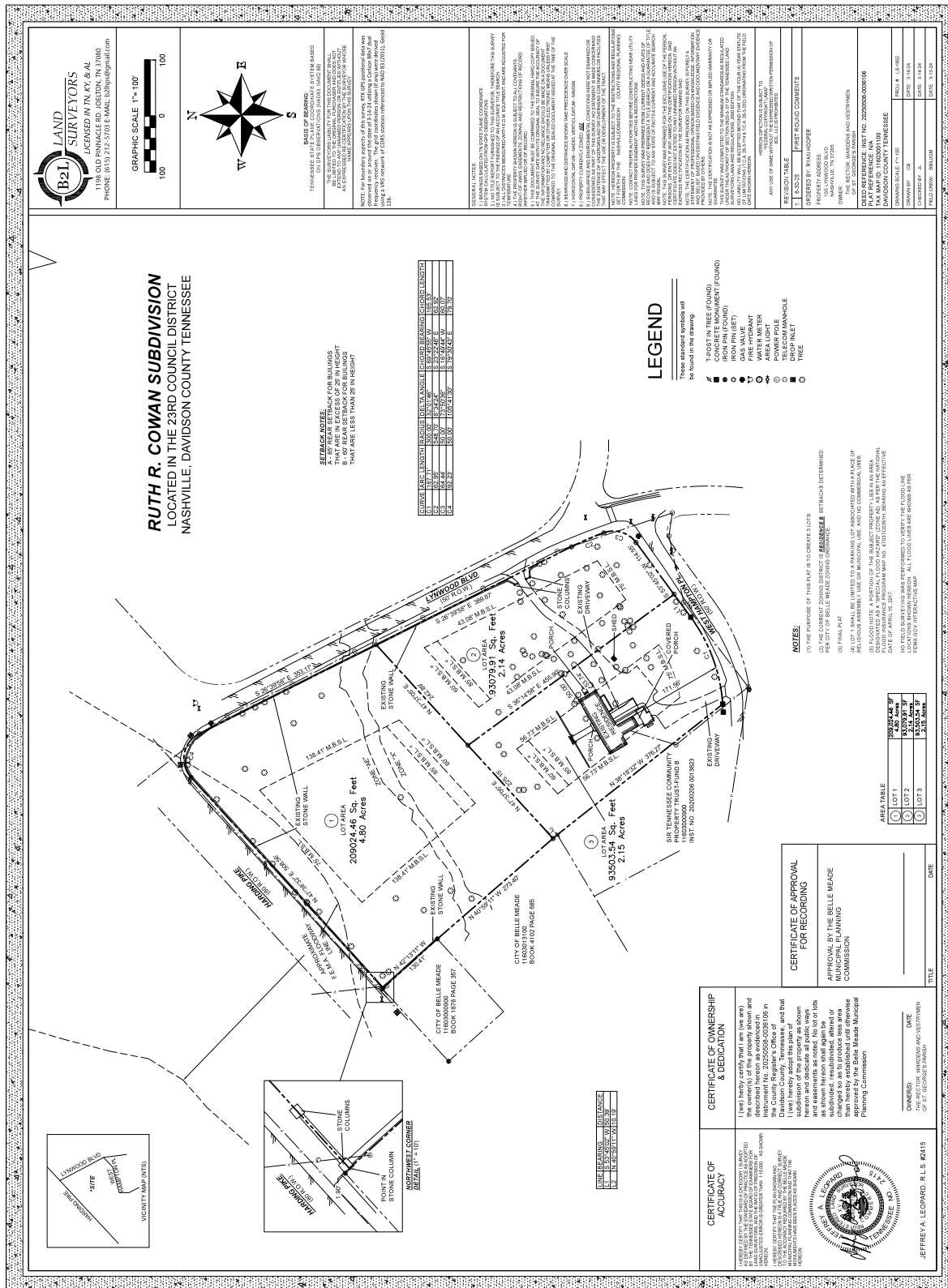
- Show existing and proposed structures
- Area in square feet and Building Envelope highlighted for each proposed lot
- Show all topographic elevations, existing grade, finished grade, Finished Floor Elevations for properties in the FEMA floodplain

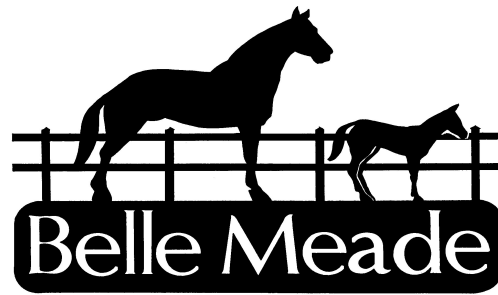
I certify under penalty of perjury that I am the owner or authorized agent of the above property and the information furnished by me is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that all applicable federal, state, county, and City of Belle Meade requirements for the work authorized by this permit shall be met.

Typed Signature of Applicant or Owner

Date

CLICK SAVE BEFORE CLICKING COMPLETE APPLICATION





**SUBDIVISION
REGULATIONS FOR
LAND SUBDIVISION IN
THE CITY OF BELLE
MEADE NASHVILLE,
TENNESSEE**

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SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF BELLE MEADE

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated, 13-4-303, and after public hearing as required by law, the following Subdivision Regulations are hereby adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Belle Meade, replacing and superseding subdivision regulations heretofore in effect. Regulations relating to horizontal property regimes, adopted on July 26, 1985, remain in full force and effect.

ARTICLE I PROCEDURE

1.01 Whenever:

(i) The owner of a parcel or parcels of improved or unimproved land, lying within the limits of the City of Belle Meade, proposes a sale or other development of such land which would result in the ultimate existence of more than one dwelling on such parcel or parcels, or

(ii) The owner of a parcel or parcels of improved or unimproved land, lying within the limits of the City of Belle Meade, consisting of two or more approved and platted subdivision lots, or two or more tracts described as separate single tracts in one or more property deeds recorded prior to August 16, 1950, proposes to combine such lots and/or tracts into a single lot or tract for the purpose of constructing thereon a single dwelling and other structures and/or uses accessory thereto, before negotiating such sale or beginning such development or construction, such owner (herein referred to as the "Developer") shall file with the Municipal Planning Commission of the City of Belle Meade a preliminary plat or map of such parcel or parcels of land for approval as a subdivision, or, in the case of multiple lots or tracts, as a re-subdivision of the same into a single lot, along with the filing fee as established by resolution of the Commissioners of

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the City of Belle Meade, to cover routine administrative expenses in connection with such filing, notices of hearings, review of documents, and the like.

(a) Such preliminary plat or map shall be prepared in accordance with the following requirements:

- (1) The horizontal scale shall be fifty (50) feet or less to the inch.
- (2) A vicinity sketch or key map at a scale of not more than one thousand (1000) feet to the inch shall be shown on or accompany the Preliminary Plat. This map shall show all existing subdivisions, streets, and tract lines of neighboring properties together with the names of the record owners of all neighboring properties immediately adjoining the proposed subdivision, or re-subdivision, and/or located between it and the nearest existing thoroughfares. It shall also show how streets and alleys in the proposed development may connect with existing and proposed streets and alleys in neighboring subdivisions, or undeveloped properties, to produce the most advantageous development of the entire neighborhood.
- (3) The Preliminary Plat shall show the following:
 - (A) Proposed subdivision name.
 - (B) Name and address of record owner, developer, and surveyor.
 - (C) North point, scale, and date.
 - (D) The boundary line (accurate in scale and description) of the tract to be subdivided or re-subdivided.
 - (E) The names of adjacent subdivisions or the names of record owners of adjoining parcels of unsubdivided land.

- (F) The width, location, and name of all existing or proposed streets and other public ways and areas.
- (G) Lot lines platted to scale.
- (H) Proposed water supply.
- (I) Proposed sewage disposal system.
- (J) The location of natural drains and proposed methods for the discharge of storm water.
- (K) Proposed use of property.
- (L) Reasonably accurate contour lines with intervals of five (5) feet or less. USGS contours are not acceptable.

1.02 Upon the filing of such preliminary plat or map with the Commission, it shall take appropriate action and indicate approval, tentative approval, or disapproval of the same within thirty days from the date of its submission and shall inform the owner of its decision. Such action by the Commission shall include the holding of a public hearing upon each application after notice by mail five days in advance of such hearing addressed to all affected property owners.

1.03 In the event the proposed subdivision, or re-subdivision, is approved by the Commission, such approval shall be evidenced by the signature of the Chairman of the Commission, and the date of its approval, and shall serve as authority for the filing and recording of a map or plat in the Register's Office of Davidson County, Tennessee. Such approval may not be entered upon the plat until the improvements are made or a bond is executed by the owner and accepted by the Commission, as referred to in Section 1.04 hereof, and such approval and a general description of the land thereby affected, shall be spread upon the minutes of the Commission. Before final approval of the Municipal Planning Commission shall be indicated on such plan, the City

Manager shall certify that the out-of-pocket cost of any services rendered or expenses incurred by the City incident thereto, satisfaction of which costs shall be the responsibility of the applicant, whether or not the plan shall be approved, have been paid, and that all conditions for approval as set forth in Section 1.04 hereof have been met.

1.04 In the event the map or plat is only tentatively approved, it shall be considered disapproved, with leave to the Developer to make such change or changes as are recommended by the Commission as necessary to obtain approval, and to resubmit the map or plat as changed. Such map or plat may be in the form of a further preliminary map or plat, or a final map or plat, as the owner may choose. If re-submitted for final approval, it shall meet the following requirements for a final plat, before it may be approved by the Commission:

A. Before approving the Final Plat of all or part of the proposed subdivision, the Commission will require that all improvements have been completed to its satisfaction and in accordance with such Plat; and that all street grading, paving and drainage plans, and the water supply and the sewage disposal system, be approved by the City of Belle Meade through its consulting engineers.

B. The record owner and such others involved in the actual development of the subdivision as the Commission may require, in lieu of the completion of the required improvements previous to seeking approval of the Final Plat, may post with the Commission a bond in form and amount and, with conditions and surety satisfactory to the Commission, providing for the securing to the public the actual construction and installation of the above required improvements within a period specified by the Commission and expressed in the bond. Said bond may also include amounts sufficient to secure to the Commission the final survey, the placing of required markers, preparation

and recording of final plats, and all expenses incurred by the City of Belle Meade growing out of the subdivision application, or in securing compliance with its regulations.

C. The Final Plat shall be drawn in India Ink on durable reproducible drafting material at a scale to be determined based on the development. The sheet shall have at least a one and one-half (1 1/2) inch binding margin on the left end and at least a one-half (1/2) inch border on the other three edges. If more than two (2) sheets are required, there shall be a key map on a part of the first sheet or on an index sheet of the same standard size.

D. The Final Plat shall show the following information:

1. The boundary lines with accurate distances and bearings, the exact location of existing or recorded streets intersecting the boundaries of the tract. The drawing shall be so oriented that the North Point will be directed to the top of the drawing, or as nearly thereto as possible, with the binding edge on the left.
2. Magnetic bearings and distances to the nearest established street lines or official monuments, which shall be accurately described on the plat.
3. The exact layout including:
 - a. Street names.
 - b. The length of all arcs, radii, internal angles, points of curvature, length and bearing of tangents.
 - c. All easements for rights-of-way provided for public services or utilities and any limitations of the easements.
 - d. Easements for the location and provision for the disposal of surface water.
 - e. All lot lines with accurate dimensions.

- f. Lots numbered in numerical order.
- 4. The accurate location with the identifying numbers, letters, or other symbols shown, including the material and size, of all monuments.
- 5. Location of all trees in excess of four (4) inches in diameter.
- 6. The accurate outline of all property which is offered for dedication for public use with the purpose indicated thereon, and all property that may be reserved by deed covenant for the common use of the property owners in the subdivision, and all property that may be reserved for the purpose of bringing about an orderly lot pattern in the future development of the surrounding areas.
- 7. Minimum front, side and rear building setback lines as required by the City of Belle Meade Zoning Ordinance as in effect from time to time.
- 8. Subdivision name.
- 9. Name and address of record owner.
- 10. North point, scale, and date.
- 11. Certificate of adoption and dedication by the record owner.
- 12. Total acreage in the area being subdivided.
- 13. Certification by a registered Civil Engineer or Surveyor recognized by the Commission to be proficient, to the effect that the plan represents a survey made by such engineer or surveyor and that the survey has an accuracy of 1:5000 or less as computed from field measurements without balancing or adjustment, and that all monuments shown thereon actually exist, and that their location, size, and material of the same are correctly shown.
- 14. An Owner's Certificate, which conforms to the requirements of these regulations.

15. Certificate of approval by the Commission.

E. When the Final Plat is submitted to the Commission for final approval, it shall be accompanied by closure sheets of (a) the entire tract, and (b) each individual block within the development to the required accuracy. The plat shall be accompanied by street and drainage plans bearing notations of approval of the City of Belle Meade, through its consulting engineers.

F. Upon approval of a subdivision plat by the Commission, the Developer shall forthwith file such plat in the Register's Office for Davidson County, Tennessee and then shall promptly furnish the City Recorder of the City of Belle Meade a certificate from the County Register of Deeds that such Plat has been duly filed for record. No building permit shall be issued for the construction of any improvements on any lot in such subdivision until such certificate of recording has been so furnished.

G. The approval of the Final Plat by the Commission shall not be deemed to constitute or effect an acceptance by the public of the dedication of any street, or other proposed public way or area on the plat.

ARTICLE II GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

2.01 No plan of subdivision will be approved which includes any lot for which a building permit could not be issued as a matter of right under any ordinance of the City, which is current and in force at the time such plan is approved, or which has been pending before the City Commission for a period of not more than ninety days, after passage on first reading. In making such determination, no part of the area of any dedicated street or road right-of-way, or of any common area held with others, shall be considered a part of the lot.

2.02 The plan of subdivision shall contain an Owner's Certificate which shall include, among other things, a dedication to the public of all streets, rights-of-way, utility easements and roads, a dedication to the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee, of all water lines shown on the plan and a dedication of all sewer lines shown on the plan to the City of Belle Meade. No professional test results or analyses of hydrologists, traffic or other engineers, or other experts will be considered by the Commission, no matter by whom conducted, unless the qualifications of the engineer or other expert conducting the test or analyses have been approved in advance by the Commission.

2.03 The Commission may impose other reasonable conditions suggested by the facts in a particular case, including but not limited to a requirement for traffic, drainage, or other studies – all to be made at the expense of the Developer - so that the public health, safety, welfare, morals and prosperity may be secured and preserved, in harmony with other developments heretofore located in the vicinity of such parcel or parcels.

2.04 The Planning Commission may also require the dedication of easements, not exceeding twelve (12) feet in width, for conduits, storm and sanitary sewers, gas, water mains and electric or other utility lines along all rear lot lines, and along side lot lines if necessary, or if advisable in its opinion. Easements of the same or greater width may be required along the lines of or across lots, where necessary for the extension of existing or planned utility lines. Whenever any stream or important surface drainage course is located in any area, which is being subdivided, the developer shall provide an adequate easement along each side of the stream for the purpose of widening, deepening, sloping, improving, or protecting the same.

2.05 The Developer shall install water mains, fire hydrants, conduits for telephone and electric service wiring, sanitary sewers, and gas lines required to serve the subdivision, all of which,

except for fire hydrants, must be placed underground. Such installation must meet standards and specifications established by the City of Belle Meade through its consulting engineers.

2.06 The Developer shall plant trees along all streets in the subdivision whenever there are no existing woodlands. Before the trees are planted the Planning Commission shall approve a plan showing the proposed locations, species, and approximate size of each tree and providing such additional information as the Commission shall request.

2.07 Survey monuments consisting of a permanent cap showing a closing point and identified by numbers, letters or other symbols set in concrete pedestal, six (6) inches by six (6) inches by thirty (30) inches, or otherwise approved by the City Building Official, shall be set at all angle points in the boundaries of the property being subdivided, at street intersections, and at intersections of curves and tangents along street right-of-way lines as required by the Commission.

2.08 Roads and streets shall have a grade not greater than eight (8) percent and must be built to follow natural contour of the land.

2.09 No land shall be subdivided for residential use if such land is considered by the Commission to be unsuitable for such use by reason of flooding or improper drainage, objectionable earth and rock formation or any other feature harmful to the health and safety of possible residents of the area and the community as a whole. In its determination of unsuitability by reasons of flooding, the Commission may rely on standards of (i) the Stormwater Management Ordinance of the Metropolitan Government of Davidson County, (ii) the City's Water Management Program developed pursuant to Phase II of the EPA's Municipal Storm Sewer and Water Management Program and (iii) all applicable statutes or regulations of the State of Tennessee and the Federal Government, and may require the subdivider to provide hydrology reports to assist in this determination.

(a) Land subject to flooding and land deemed to be topographically unsuitable shall not be platted for residential occupancy, or for any other uses which may increase the hazard of flooding, endanger health, life or property, or aggravate erosion, unless any plat including such land shall contain a notation requiring the owner of any lot shown thereon, as a condition to the construction of a structure, to first comply with such conditions and standards as may be prescribed by the City Building Official pursuant to Belle Meade Code §12-103. Any expense incurred by the City Building Official in the development of such conditions and standards shall be paid by the developer of the land being subdivided. Any other land within said plat, which does not comply with such conditions and standards, shall be set aside for such uses as shall not be endangered by periodic or occasional inundation or produce satisfactory or unsafe living conditions.

(b) Fill shall not be used to raise land in areas subject to flood unless the fill proposed does not restrict the flow of water and unduly increase flood heights.

2.10 In all subdivisions, due regard shall be shown for all natural features such as grade, topography, trees and water courses, and for historical spots and similar community assets which, if preserved, will add attractiveness and value to the property. Preservation of such features may be required as a condition of approval of a subdivision plat.

2.11 No final plat of land within the force and effect of an existing zoning ordinance shall be approved unless it conforms to such ordinance. Whenever there is a discrepancy between the minimum regulations noted herein and those contained in other official regulations, the highest standard shall apply.

2.12 The Planning Commission may require such conditions, in addition to those elsewhere set out herein, as will, in its judgment, promote the health, safety and welfare of the community at large and secure substantially the objectives of these regulations.

ARTICLE III
MISCELLANEOUS

3.01 Prior to the sale of any lot in an approved subdivision, the seller shall provide the purchaser with a copy of these Subdivision Regulations in effect at the date of sale.

3.02 If any part, provision, requirement, or condition of these regulations should be held invalid, this shall not affect the validity of the remainder, and the Planning Commission hereby declares it would have enacted the remaining parts, provisions, requirements, and conditions even in the absence of any provision found to be invalid.

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Staff Report

Agenda No.: IV.A.
Case No.: MPC 2024-105
Staff: Mary Samaniego, Planning Director
Applicant: St. George's Parish
Request: Three-lot subdivision Final Plat
Location: 105 Lynwood Boulevard

Summary:

The applicant/property owner is requesting a three-lot subdivision approval for the property at 105 Lynwood Boulevard.

Planning Considerations:

The following general factors, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

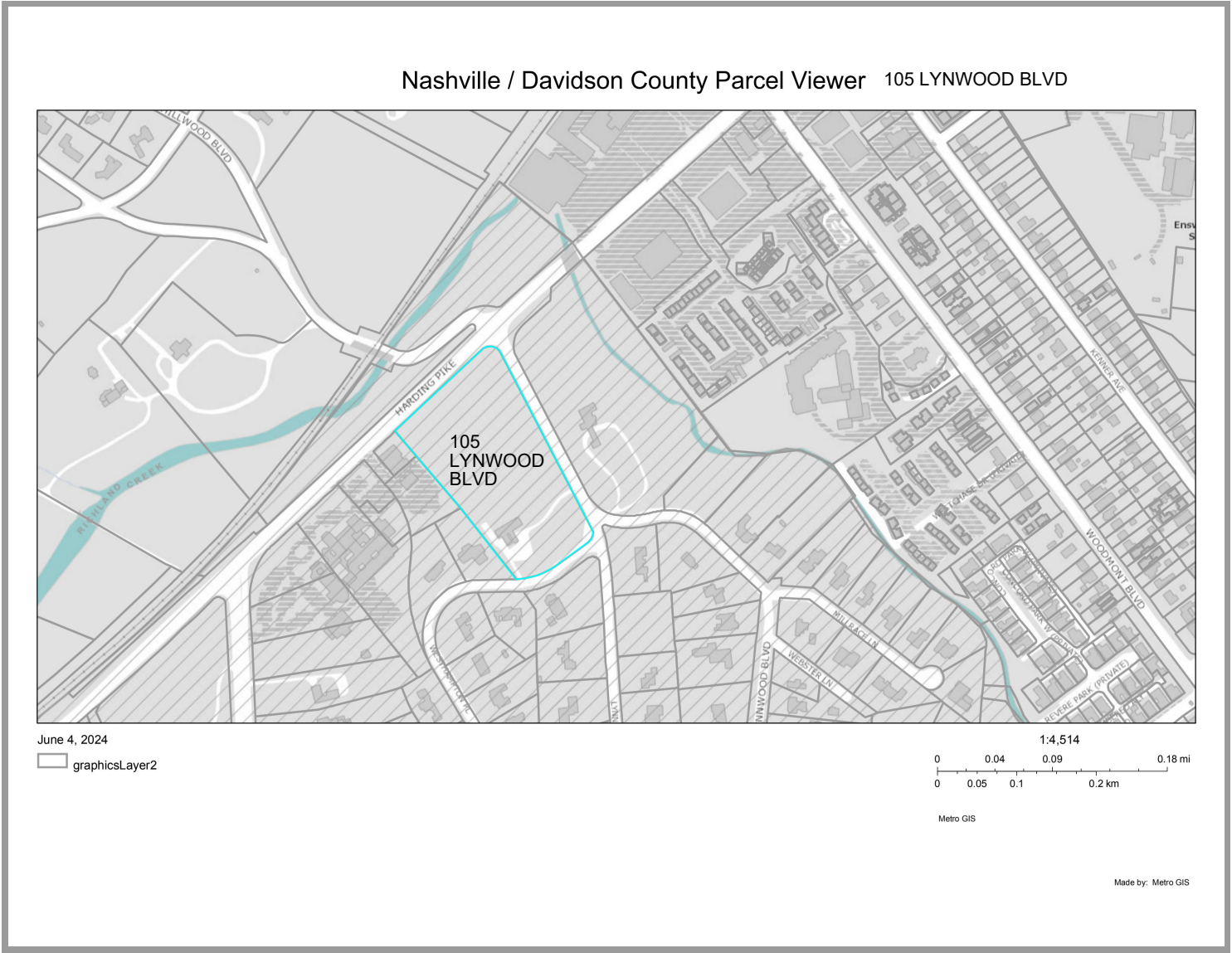
1. The subject property is 9.08 acres (395,525 square feet - SF).
2. The existing lot is rectangular in shape with frontage on Harding Pike (508.56 linear feet), Lynwood Boulevard (743.04 linear feet), and Westhampton Place (332.65 linear feet).
3. The property is located in the Residence B zoning district. This zoning district has a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. Proposed Lot 1 is 209,024 square feet, Lot 2 is 93,080 square feet, and Lot 3 is 93,504 square feet.
4. Lot 3 will include the existing historic residence (Lynmeade) constructed in 1913. The residence was designed by J.D.R. Carpenter in the French Chateau style. The formal front of the residence faces Harding Pike while there are driveway connections to both Lynwood Boulevard and Westhampton Place. It is anticipated that the existing access to proposed Lot 3 from Lynwood Boulevard will be removed and therefore the only access to the lot will be from Westhampton Place.
5. Lot 2 will be a new buildable lot for a single family residence in compliance with the Residence B zoning standards. It has enough road frontage along Lynwood Boulevard or Westhampton place to put a new driveway on either street for the new residence.
6. Lot 1 will not be allowed to be a buildable lot for a single family residence per the plat condition #4. The lot will be limited to a parking lot associated with a place of religious assembly use or municipal use (City of Belle Meade), and no commercial uses. Note that the no commercial use condition specifically prohibits the use of the parking lot as potential overflow parking or valet parking for any commercial use in the surrounding area. The approval of the proposed parking lot is under the authority of the City of Belle Meade Board of Zoning Appeals as a Conditional Use. The authority of the City of Belle Meade Municipal Planning Commission is to review the proposed plat in the context of the Subdivision Regulations only.

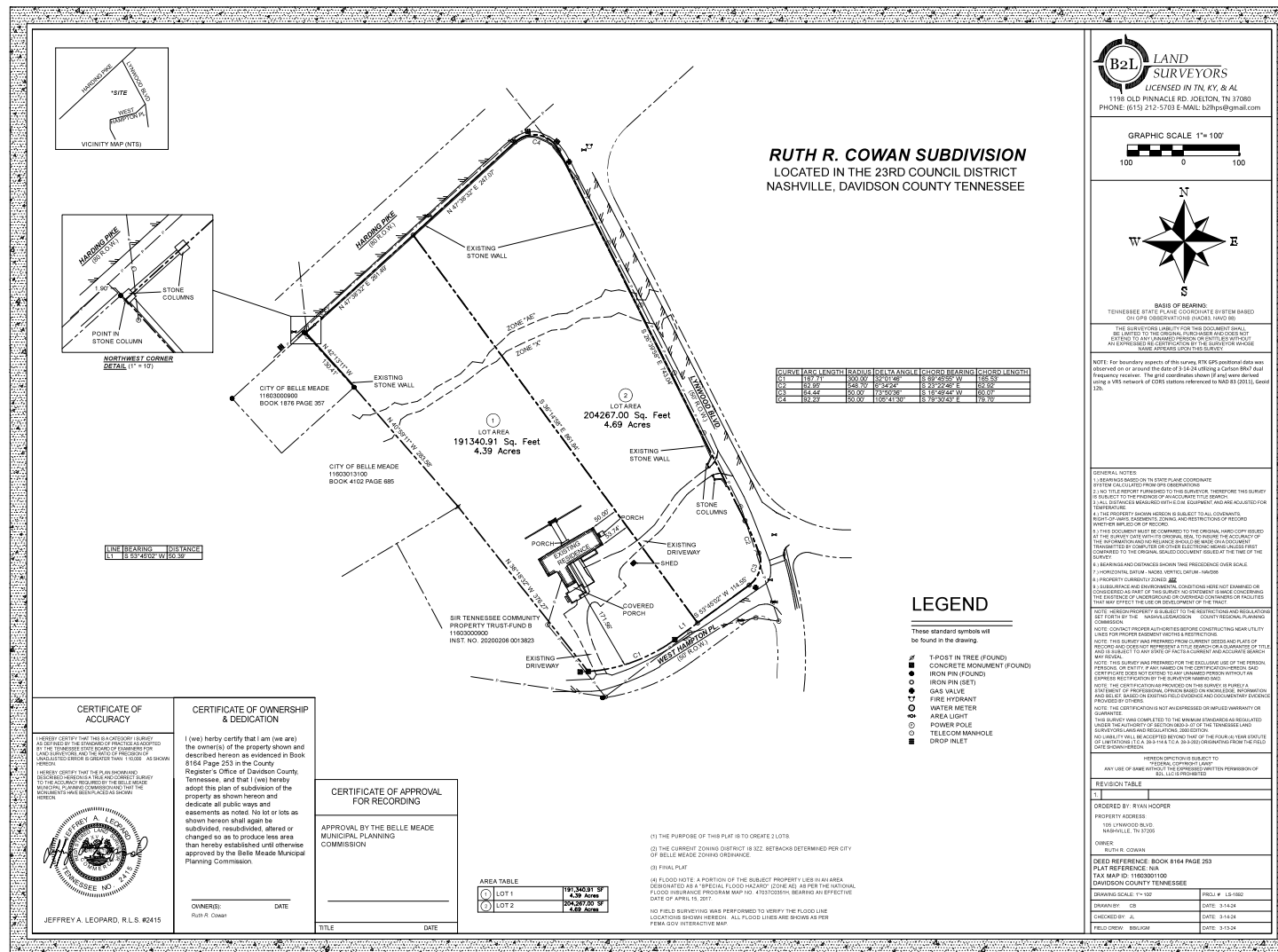
7. Because the subdivision is to create only three lots each with significant road frontage, no major public utility or road expansions are proposed.
8. The property has regulated FEMA floodplain for Richland Creek across the frontage along Harding Pike. Approximately 151,750 square feet of Lot 1 is the FEMA floodplain. There are no Zoning Code, Floodplain Code, or Subdivision Regulations that limit the amount of FEMA floodplain within a subdivision lot. The proposed parking lot, if approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals, will be required to compliance with all City of Belle Meade stormwater and floodplain regulations.
9. The surrounding area (calculated as approximately 1200 feet in all directions within the Belle Meade jurisdiction) includes all single-family residential lots. The lot sizes range from 11.15 acres (104 Lynwood Boulevard) to 0.79 acres (200 Lynwood Terrace). Of the 34 residential properties in the surrounding area, the average lot size is 1.74 acres. Proposed Lot 2 and 3 exceed that lot size average. It is staff's professional opinion that the proposed lot sizes and dimensions are compatible with the surrounding are.

Staff recommends approval of the three-lot subdivision.

Attachments:

1. Location Map







Pickleball Sound 103 - Mitigating Pickleball Sound - Is Pickleball Compatible with Residential Environments?

Barry Wyerman¹ and Robert Unetich²
Pickleball Sound Mitigation LLC
1811 Woodlands Circle
Pittsburgh, PA 15241

ABSTRACT

The popularity of pickleball has created many avid players seeking more pickleball courts in community parks, apartment complexes, homeowners' associations, country clubs, and residential neighborhoods. Existing tennis courts are often used for both tennis and pickleball. Nearby residents accustomed to sounds from tennis will hear a louder sound from pickleball and a sound with different tonal qualities. Depending on the sound level and the distance from the pickleball court, pickleball sound can be a source of annoyance. Several explanations are given why community noise ordinances fail to properly address pickleball sounds. Sound mitigation strategies for pickleball play are described that follow traditional approaches for noise control at the source, along the path, and at the receiver. These approaches include use of commercially available acoustical materials, reorientation of courts, preferred paddles and balls, new site locations, and play schedules. The expected noise reductions for each option are outlined to help determine if pickleball noise can be compatible with residential environments. Estimates of minimum distances from courts where pickleball sound will not be an annoyance are made considering the background sound and the sound mitigation in place.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pickleball is a game played with two to four players using paddles, a ball, and a net on a court that is approximately one half the length and width of a tennis court (1). Each paddle and ball impact during a game creates a short pulse of sound that varies in intensity, duration, and frequency content (2,3). For homeowners near pickleball courts, pickleball sounds can become bothersome and intrusive.

Pickleball was created in 1965 in Bainbridge Island, Washington (4) and now has a worldwide following. Its growth is a result of players being introduced to this sport during winters in Florida or Arizona and then returning to their homes in search of pickleball courts. The rapid growth of pickleball has created a demand for more pickleball courts in communities across the United States and globally. Because the game is easy to learn and is very engaging, pickleball players are passionately committed to this sport. Apps exist to locate the closest pickleball courts for any zip code.

A common solution for adding pickleball courts in many communities is to use existing tennis courts and create dual purpose courts. Tennis courts found in community parks, apartment complexes,

¹ wyerbr@sbcglobal.net

² itsrnu@aol.com

homeowners' associations, country clubs, and residential neighborhoods are being used for pickleball. In some cases, tennis courts have been re-purposed as pickleball courts. In this case, up to four pickleball courts can be added in the space of one tennis court.

The popularity of pickleball has also created community and homeowner awareness of the unmistakable “popping” sound when a paddle strikes a ball. The unique time and spectral characteristics of pickleball play make these sounds easily distinguishable from other sounds. Pickleball sound levels and sound mitigation options are important to communities faced with a growing demand for more pickleball courts and to residents living close to any court where pickleball is played.

The location and design of these courts then becomes critical to avoiding noise complaints from residents who live nearby. A common question on social media is, “How far away do pickleball courts need to be to avoid noise problems?” There is no simple answer other than, “It depends.”

The purpose of this study is to show the differences between sound from pickleball and tennis, to review how noise ordinances address pickleball sound, to outline a measurement method and noise limit to properly quantify pickleball sound, and to describe pickleball sound mitigation strategies.

2. THE SOUNDS OF PICKLEBALL AND TENNIS

To compare the sounds from pickleball and tennis, the impact sound was measured with a ball drop onto a pickleball paddle and a tennis racquet mounted in a test chamber. The ball speed was 18.9 miles per hour at impact. Figure 1 shows the 1/3 octave spectrum and the maximum sound level for A-weighted, fast response (LAFmax) measurements for the paddle and the racquet impacts. The pickleball impact generates a higher overall sound level and has more high frequency content than the tennis impact.

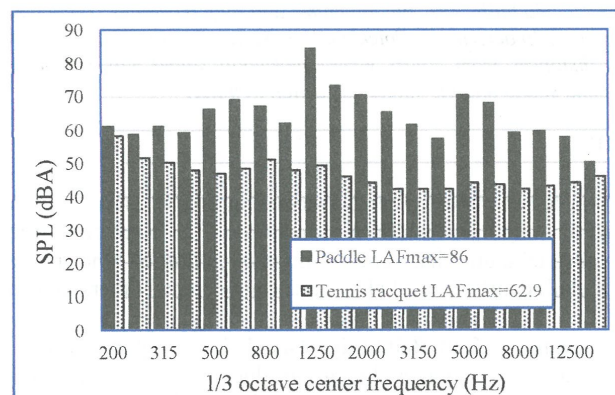


Figure 1 – Pickleball and tennis impact from a dropped ball at 18.9 MPH

The pickleball impact at 86 LAFmax is over 20 dB higher than the tennis impact at 62.9 LAFmax. This difference shows that pickleball can be 4 or more times louder than tennis. It explains why pickleball sound is receiving attention when former tennis courts are used for pickleball. The loudness of each pickleball impact can further vary based on the paddles and balls being used, the skill level of each player, and the force of each impact.

3. NOISE ORDINANCES AND PICKLEBALL

3.1. Community noise ordinances

Noise is sound that annoys. Community noise ordinances establish noise limits so that sound is neither annoying nor bothersome, even though it may be audible. These ordinances are not intended to establish a limit where sound is inaudible. They are intended to establish a limit where the presence of sound above a background sound level will not be objectionable. The background sound level is the result of wind, birds, normal ambient activity, and traffic.

Noise ordinances vary in their ability to quantify annoyance from pickleball noise. A survey of several noise standards for US cities shows several common themes.

- Failure to address impulsive noise – Measurement methods for continuous noise understate pickleball impacts and can conclude that these impacts are in compliance with a noise limit.
- A 5 dB penalty for any noise that is impulsive noise – This adjustment adds more substance to an ordinance but often omits the noise measurement settings. Even when a 5 dB penalty is added to an impulse measurement made with a slow meter setting, this will understate the loudness of a pickleball impact.
- Limits based on average values from fast settings – Average or mean values are several standard deviations below the maximum sound that can occur. These maximum sound levels are typically the cause of annoyance.
- Limits based on dB peak – Peak noise measurements are not applicable to pickleball noise because they do not capture the duration of the impact.
- Limits based on a subjective response – Wording such as, “It is unlawful for any noise that interferes with the enjoyment of life of a reasonable person” means that a noise complaint could only be resolved with a court case.
- Exclusion of noise limits for public parks or sporting events – This exclusion would assume that a prior noise study was completed with no noise issues identified before a pickleball court was constructed.

3.2. Recommended noise ordinance

A recommended noise limit for pickleball has been established based on an average LAFmax from several measurements and the background sound level. When the background sound level is below 47 dBA, the limit is an average of 50 LAFmax. The average LAFmax comes from 4 individual LAFmax measurements of 60 seconds each. When the background sound level is above 47 dBA, the limit is $LAFmax = \text{background sound} + 3 \text{ dB}$. This variable limit accounts for the presence of high background sound. This limit has been successfully used to quantify sound from pickleball, to evaluate the risk of pickleball noise complaints, to perform site studies for pickleball courts, and to evaluate the effectiveness of pickleball sound mitigation strategies.

4. PICKLEBALL SOUND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The common approach to solving any noise control problem is to investigate solutions involving the source, the path, and the receiver (SPR). Effective noise control at the source can eliminate the need for noise control along the path or at the receiver. This can mean either reducing the sound power of the noise or controlling the noise at the source before it travels along multiple paths to a receiver. Often, all three approaches must be used to achieve the desired noise reduction.

Several sound mitigation strategies are available for reducing pickleball sound. These options can be applied at the source, along the path, or at the receiver. Some options are more effective in reducing sound. Some are easier to implement. Some are lower in cost. Some are easier to control. Each option will be described, and then, all of these will be compared.

5. PICKLEBALL NOISE CONTROL AT THE SOURCE

5.1. Recommended paddles

As pickleball technology has evolved, so have the new composites and materials that are being used in paddle construction. This has resulted in many different paddle designs with over 1700 paddles approved by USA pickleball for tournament play. Some paddles produce lower sound levels than others. However, the technology has not evolved to the point where any paddle can be considered a stealth paddle.

Several paddles have been tested in a chamber to identify paddles with lower noise signatures than older, louder paddles (3). These recommended paddles can be from 3 to 7 dBA quieter than the loudest paddles. The key to reducing paddle noise is to reduce paddle vibration, shift the sound energy to frequency bands below 1000 Hz, and increase damping. The green paddle list by Sun City (5) includes recommended paddles for lower noise. These paddles will reduce but not eliminate pickleball sounds.

A mandate to use paddles from an approved list is always hard to enforce for recreational players who are accustomed to playing with a preferred paddle. To help with enforcement, a community could purchase enough loaner paddles so that all players would use the same model of a quieter paddle.

5.2. Recommended balls

While many plastic balls are approved for pickleball play, some balls produce slightly lower sound levels when struck with a paddle. The sound level difference among balls is much less than the difference among paddles. Balls have been tested in a chamber to select balls with lower noise signatures than some of the louder balls. These recommended balls can be from 1 to 3 dBA quieter than the loudest balls. These balls will reduce but not eliminate pickleball sounds.

A mandate to use balls from an approved list is always hard to enforce for recreational players. To help with enforcement, a community could purchase and supply balls that are considered quieter than the loudest balls and only allow pickleball play with this model of ball.

A recommended paddle and ball combination for lowest noise should be evaluated for noise at a pickleball court to compare sound levels and reactions before any restrictions or community decisions are made.

5.3. Court time

Restricting court time has the effect of an on-off switch for pickleball. This can be controlled on courts with a gated entry that can be locked. However, restricted play time limits the hours of court availability. This is something a community should review based on the availability of alternate courts, the number of pickleball players, and critical times for noise such as early morning or late evening.

5.4. Enclosures

A simple solution to any noise problem is to build a box around the sound source so that sound does not escape. For pickleball, this means an indoor facility. The preferred enclosure for pickleball play could be a repurposed warehouse, a vacant commercial building, or a metal building. Air supported structures (known as tennis bubbles and often used for winter tennis or golf) can also enclose pickleball. The walls of an air supported structure do not provide as much transmission loss as a traditional building structure, but they may be sufficient for pickleball sound reduction. These enclosures keep the sound inside and shield nearby homeowners from pickleball sounds. An indoor pickleball facility could also provide year round pickleball play. The cost of such a facility is often offset by a membership fee or daily player fee.

5.5. New Site Selection

A new site is the equivalent of moving the noise source to a new location. Any new pickleball site should be far enough away from homes to avoid complaints from residents without incurring the added cost of sound mitigation. This does not mean that a new pickleball site must be remote from a city center. Alternative pickleball sites within a city center that are less likely to have noise complaints are sites near a highway, near an airport, or near an industrial zone. The higher noise limits of industrial zones, the higher background sound levels, and the lower land values of these sites often make them attractive sites for expansion of pickleball play.

Table 1 shows estimates for the minimum distance between a court and a home to avoid pickleball complaints by considering both background sound and sound mitigation. These minimum distances are determined using a reference LAFmax measured at 100 feet, sound attenuation at 6 dB per doubling of distance, sound mitigation, and a variable background sound limit. For example, if the background sound level is 45 dBA and no mitigation is in place, the minimum distance to the nearest residence should be 977 feet. At higher background sound levels and with added sound mitigation, this distance can be reduced.

Table 1 – Estimates of the minimum distance in feet from courts to avoid pickleball complaints (1)

Background sound (dBA)	45 dBA	50 dBA	55 dBA	60 dBA
Distance (ft)– no mitigation	977	687	377	202
Distance (ft)– 10 dB mitigation	292	202	103	48
Distance (ft)– 20 dB mitigation	77	48	17	1

(1) The distances in Table 1 are based on standard sound attenuation with distance. Variations in sound attenuation with distance occur due to wind direction and speed and to atmospheric refraction. The temperature profile above the ground can bend the sound waves upward or downward (6). This can result in increases or decreases in these minimum distances.

5. PICKLEBALL NOISE CONTROL ALONG THE PATH

5.1. Acoustical Barriers

Acoustical barriers block the direct path of sound that travels from a source to a receiver. A barrier must be massive enough to block sound that could pass through it. The recommended weight for a barrier is one pound per square foot. Even with a massive barrier, a small amount of sound still passes over the

top or around the edges of the barrier via diffraction. The sound reduction with a barrier is limited by the height and width of the barrier. If the barrier height is restricted due to a local code or due to the support strength of an existing fence, then the sound reduction over the barrier will be reduced. In this case, the weight of the barrier may be reduced below one pound per square foot.

The barrier must be solid with no holes, no gaps at the bottom, and no gaps between adjoining panels. Any holes or openings will allow sound to leak to the other side. Earth mounds and buildings can function as barriers if they disrupt a direct path of sound. Shrubs, bushes, and trees are not barriers even though they block a line of sight. They are not massive and solid enough to block sound. A small amount of sound attenuation may be achieved with a dense planting of hedges, but this would not provide more than 2 to 3 dB sound reduction.

The effectiveness of any barrier is controlled primarily by its height and then by its width. The barrier must be tall enough and wide enough to minimize the sound that is diffracted or bent over the top and around the edge. Figure 1 shows multiple ray paths between one sound source and one receiver over a 30 foot tall barrier around a pickleball court using sound mapping software (6).

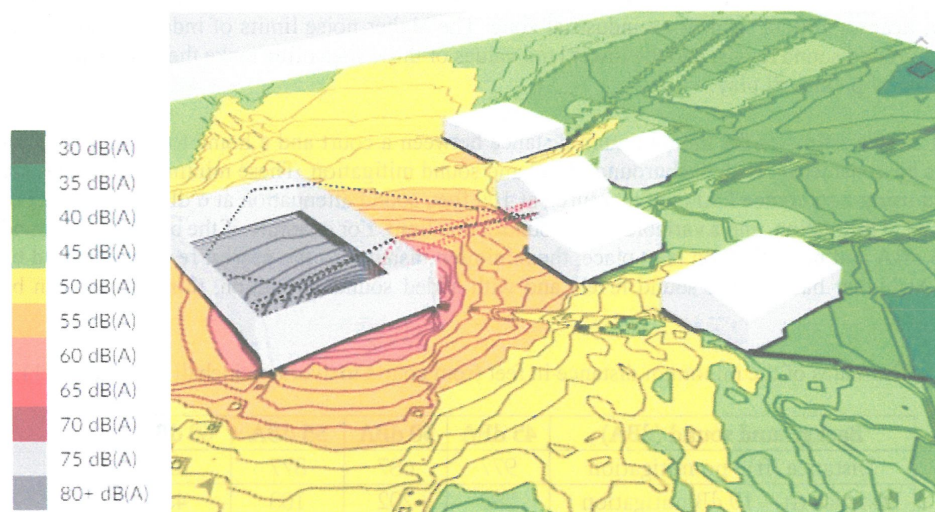


Figure 1 – Three dimensional sound map showing ray paths over 30 foot barriers to receiver

The sound attenuation by barriers 5, 10, 20, and 30 feet high was determined with the use of noise modeling software. Figure 2 shows the omnidirectional sound field from a pickleball impact with no barrier in place. Sound attenuation with distance is evident. The receiver positions are at 20 and 40 feet behind the source and at 20, 40, 80, and 160 feet in front of the source.

Figure 3 shows the sound field at the same receiver locations with a 10 foot barrier placed 10 feet from the source. On the source side of the barrier, a slight increase in dB level is seen. This is due to the sound from the front of the paddle being reflected from the barrier and combining with the direct sound from the rear. On the receiver side of the barrier, the sound level decreases with distance. At each receiver location, the difference between the sound level with no barrier and the sound level with the barrier is the barrier attenuation. Comparing Figure 3 to Figure 2, the change in sound level at each receiver

location is the added sound attenuation by the barrier. Similar sound fields were created for barrier heights of 5, 20, and 30 feet.

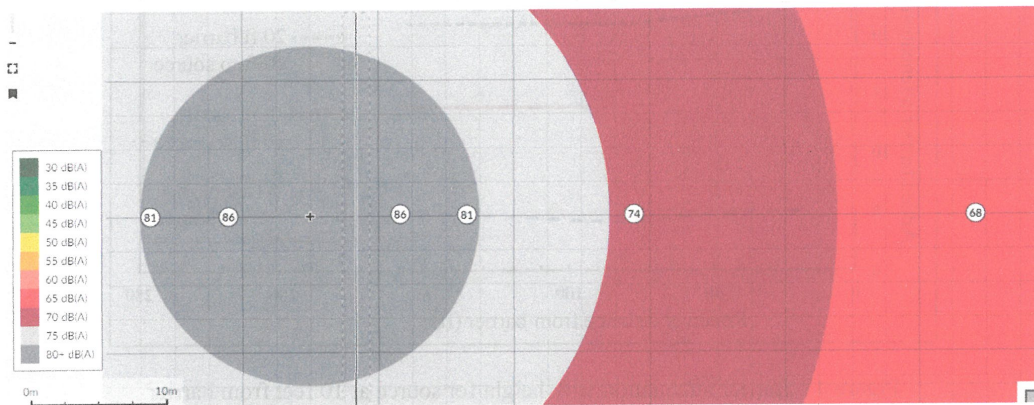


Figure 2 – Sound field with no barrier

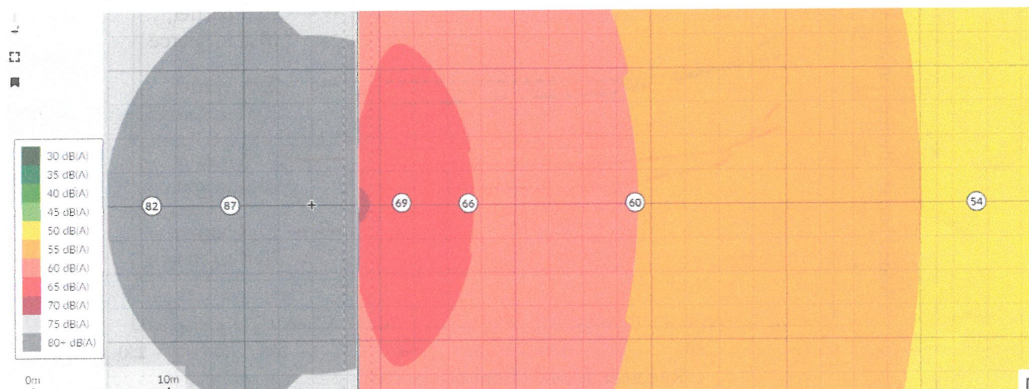


Figure 3 – Sound field with 10 foot barrier and at 10 feet from source

Figure 4 shows the added barrier attenuation at several distances from the barrier. This attenuation is in addition to the normal noise attenuation with distance. The greatest attenuation with a barrier occurs when the receiver is closest to the barrier. This is the shadow zone. At greater distances from each barrier, the added sound attenuation by each barrier is constant. A 5 foot barrier provides minimal sound attenuation, and a 30 foot barrier is unlikely to be feasible. Nevertheless, these heights are displayed to show where sound attenuation with a barrier reaches a limit. Therefore, further evaluation of 20 and 30 foot barriers will be investigated. Figure 5 shows the attenuation with 10 foot and 20 foot high barriers as the sound source is moved farther from the barrier.

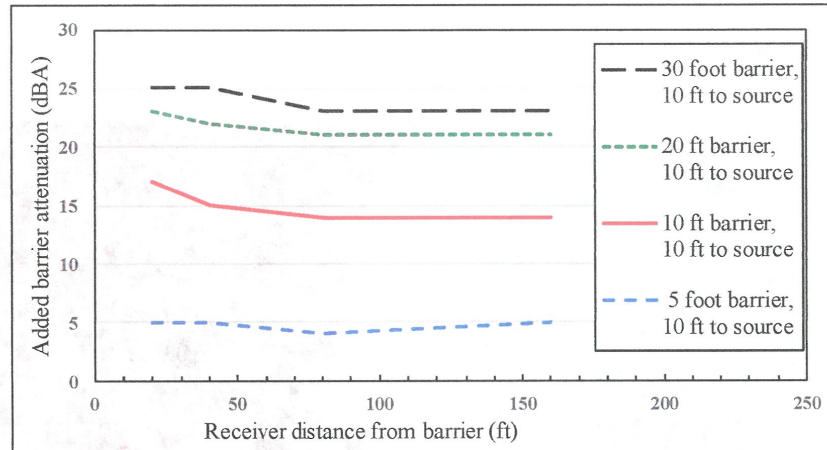


Figure 4 – Barrier attenuation with height for source at 10 feet from barrier

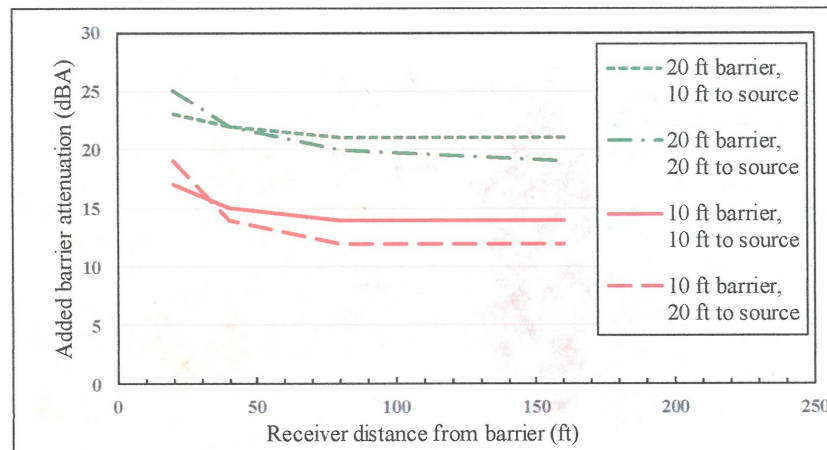


Figure 5 – Sound attenuation for 10 and 20 foot barriers for source at 10 and 20 feet from the barrier

These results from Figures 4 and 5 show the following conclusions for barriers.

- The greatest sound reduction with any barrier height occurs closest to the barrier - this is the shadow zone.
- The sound reduction with a barrier decreases as a receiver is farther from a barrier.
- An increase in barrier height from 5 feet to 10 feet provides an additional 10 dB of sound reduction.
- Smaller improvements in sound reduction occur with an increase from 10 feet to 20 feet.
- Beyond 20 feet in barrier height, the incremental sound reduction becomes less with barrier height.

The general guideline for a barrier is that lowest sound level will be measured with a receiver as close as possible to the highest possible barrier. If there are no homes exposed to direct pickleball sound on any side of a court, then a barrier can be eliminated on that side. In some cases, it may be best to enclose all four sides of a pickleball court with the highest barrier possible. A detailed acoustical mapping of any site is recommended to evaluate the noise reduction benefits of any barrier before a purchase is made. A contractor must be consulted to assure that an existing fence or a new fence can support the added weight of a barrier. Wind loads on the barrier are also to be considered.

5.2. Higher Barriers

Any increase in the height of an existing barrier will provide more sound reduction. Figure 4 shows that heights beyond 20 feet will yield lower incremental sound reduction.

5.3. Acoustical Barriers with Sound Absorbing Liners

Acoustical barriers block sound, but this blocked sound is then reflected in the opposite direction. If the reflected sound must be controlled for receivers in the path of the reflected sound, then barrier walls with sound absorbing surfaces should be used. The sound absorbing surface includes a weather resistant fiber covered by a weather resistant, protective, porous cloth. If reflected sound to an opposite side of the court is a problem, this can add 3 dB of additional noise reduction in this direction.

5.4. Court Reorientation

Changing the court orientation 90 degrees can achieve a small reduction in sound levels due to the directivity of the pickleball sound. The sound level to the side of a paddle is 3 to 5 dB less than from the front of the paddle but this is not a constant due to the movement of players on the court. If tennis courts are being converted to pickleball or new pickleball courts are being considered, then the court orientation should be considered for sound propagation.

6. PICKLEBALL NOISE CONTROL AT THE RECEIVER

6.1. Barriers

Barriers near the receiver provide the same sound attenuation with height and distance as barriers near the source. Figures 4 and 5 can be used to estimate barrier sound reduction near the source.

6.2. Sound masking

Sound masking is the introduction of a second sound that will override or interfere with the bothersome sound. Common outdoor masking sounds include the sound from a fountain, a waterfall, ocean waves, or highway traffic. Masking sound can also be artificially created with speakers to simulate any ambient sound. For masking sound to be effective with pickleball, it must be 6 to 10 dB or more louder than the pickleball sound. These masking sounds can literally "swallow up" a lower level offensive sound, but the offending sound is now replaced by a higher level masking sound. Even at a higher sound level, the continuous masking sound may be more acceptable than intermittent pickleball impulses. If this is to be considered, a trial is recommended using a Bluetooth speaker and several masking sounds like a waterfall or a fountain at different elevated sound levels. This is because the ear can selectively differentiate between sounds with different tonal characteristics.

7. NOISE MITIGATION COMPARISONS

Table 2 shows a comparison of each noise mitigation strategy at the source, along the path, and at the receiver. The legend shows how each strategy can be compared. The player and resident reaction are estimates based on responses experienced from these groups on multiple projects. In some cases, applying multiple strategies will have an additive effect. This means that 10 dB barrier reduction plus 4 dB paddle reduction plus 2 dB ball reduction can achieve a total reduction of 16 dB – if paddles and balls can be controlled.

Table 2 – Comparisons of pickleball sound mitigation strategies

Pickleball noise mitigation strategy	Maximum dB reduction	Cost to City	Ease of Control	Player Reaction	Resident Reaction
Control at source					
Paddles	< 7 dB	0	---	-	++
Balls	< 3 dB	0	---	+	+
Court time	on or off	0	+++	---	+
Enclosure	> 30 dB	---	+++	+++	+
Tennis bubble	> 20 dB	---	+++	+++	+
New site selection	unlimited	---	+++	+++	+++
Control along path					
Acoustical barriers 10 ft	up to 15 dB	--	+++	++	++
Higher barriers	< 5 dB	---	+++	++	+
Barriers with absorption	< 3 dB	---	+++	++	++
Site re-orientation	< 3 dB	-	+++	++	0
Control at receiver					
Acoustical barriers 10 ft	up to 15 dB	--	+++	++	++
Sound masking	6 to 10 dB louder	--	+++	0	-

Key	Description
+++	Most favorable
++	More favorable
+	Favorable
0	Neutral
-	Unfavorable
--	More unfavorable
---	Most unfavorable

The amount of sound mitigation required should always consider an ambient background sound level. A location near a busy highway or in an industrial zone with a higher ambient sound level than near a country club or community park will not require as much noise reduction. At a known distance from a pickleball court, Table 1 shows the sound mitigation required to have pickleball at an acceptable level depending on background sound level.

The question of whether pickleball can be compatible with residential environments therefore depends on the distance from the court to the nearest home, on the background sound level, and the sound mitigation in place. Experience has shown that pickleball courts at 100 feet or less from a home will require extreme sound control measures to be compatible with a residential environment. Pickleball courts at 100 or more feet from a home will require moderate sound mitigation for pickleball sound to be compatible. Pickleball courts at 1000 feet or more from a home will be compatible without any mitigation required. In some cases, the distance to the nearest home may be too close to allow pickleball play even with multiple noise reduction strategies in place.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Tests show that a pickleball impact is 4 times louder than a tennis impact and has more high frequency content. This makes pickleball play on tennis courts a potential noise problem for nearby homes. Noise ordinances do not properly quantify the sound from pickleball impacts and often understate the level of

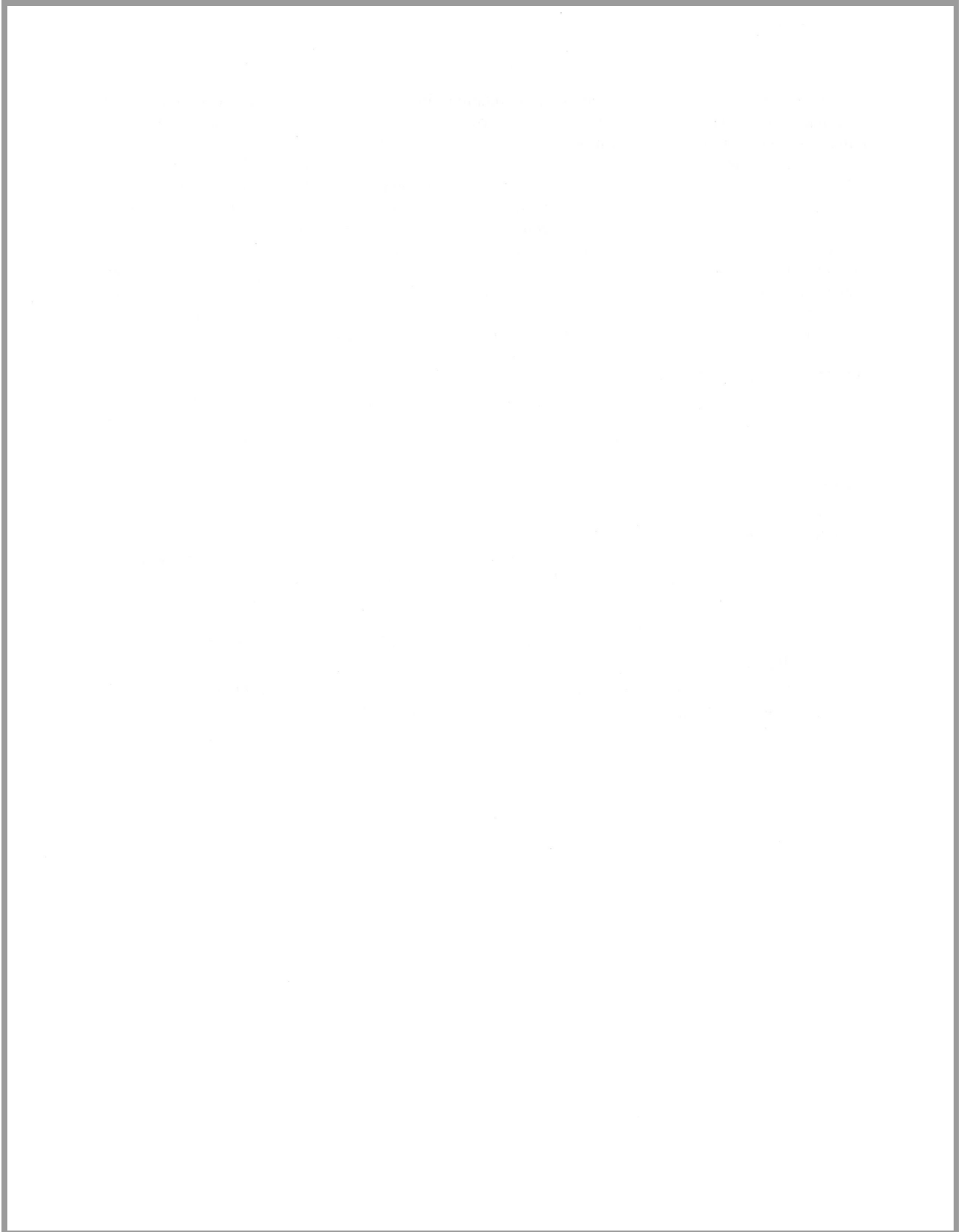
this impact. A variable noise limit based on the relationship between LAFmax and background sound level has been successfully used to evaluate the annoyance of pickleball sound and the amount of sound mitigation required to avoid annoyance. Several sound mitigation strategies have been described when sound from pickleball play must be reduced to be compatible with a residential environment. The most effective strategy is the use of acoustical barriers which must be as tall and as close to the sound source as possible for maximum effectiveness. Quieter paddles and balls can help reduce noise but may be difficult to enforce. In general, pickleball courts less than 100 feet from a home will require extreme sound mitigation measures to be compatible with a residential environment. Pickleball courts more than 100 feet from a home will require one or more sound mitigation measures to not be considered an annoyance. At 1000 feet or more from a home, pickleball courts will not require any sound mitigation. As the number of courts increases to meet the needs of avid pickleball players, acoustical engineers must consider these sound mitigation options for pickleball to be considered a good neighbor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge the pickleball players and the communities that have helped to evaluate and validate these strategies to achieve successful results for pickleball sound.

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ORDINANCE 2025-07

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE BELLE MEADE MUNICIPAL CODE TO RESTRICT THE PROVISIONS FOR A PICKLEBALL CONDITIONAL USE.

WHEREAS, the City of Belle Meade, pursuant to State of Tennessee zoning enabling legislation, Tenn. Code Ann. §§13-7-203 and 204, has adopted a Zoning and Land Use Control Ordinance (“Zoning Ordinance”) contained in Title 14 of the Belle Meade Municipal Code, which creates a municipal planning commission and establishes standards governing land use and the construction and improvement of structures within the City;

WHEREAS, the maximum allowable noise levels in the City of Belle Meade is 55dB(A) per Code Section 11-408. The average noise level for pickleball play in 60 – 70 dB;

WHEREAS, a buffer zone, or setback, creates distance between the pickleball courts and noise-sensitive areas like residences. A setback of 500 feet or more is often recommended to allow sound to naturally dissipate. This distance, coupled with natural barriers like trees or vegetation, can effectively reduce noise levels;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommends the proposed changes contained in this Zoning Ordinance amendment to the Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, public notice has been given and public hearing held on this Zoning Ordinance amendment in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. §§13-7-203 and 204;

NOW, THEREFORE:

SECTION ONE: BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF BELLE MEADE that Title Fourteen of the Belle Meade Municipal Code is hereby repealed and the proposed ordinance attached hereto as Exhibit 1 adopted as the Zoning Ordinance for the City of Belle Meade.

SECTION TWO: BE IT FINALLY ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF BELLE MEADE THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL TAKE EFFECT UPON PASSAGE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE CITIZENS REQUIRING IT.

Reviewed and Recommended by Planning Commission:

Passed on first reading:

Passed on Second Reading after Public Hearing:

Rusty Moore, Mayor

Rusty Terry, City Recorder

Exhibit 1

Section 14-202(2)(av) “Sports court.” Any dedicated hardscape area used for active recreation including, but not limited to, racquetball courts, ~~pickleball courts~~, basketball courts.

Section 14-204(4)(i) “Pickleball court.”

TABLE 2. USE SPECIAL APPROVAL, CALCULATIONS, PLACEMENT, AND CONDITIONS

Use	BZA Approval	Calculated as Gross Floor Area	Counted as Hardscape	Building Envelope Required	Special Conditions
Pickleball Court	Yes - CU	No	Yes	Yes	Maximum area of 30' x 60'. Pickleball courts may not be illuminated after 9:00 P.M. Minimum 500' setback from all property lines.

July 13, 2025

Charles Leahy
151 East Summit St
Harbor Springs, MI 49740

Belle Meade Planning Commission
Belle Meade Board of Commissioners
City Hall
4705 Harding Pike
Nashville, TN 37205

Re: Comments on Proposed Zoning Ordinance 2025-07 – Pickleball Conditional Use

Dear Members of the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners,

I am a retired engineer and attorney, now a researcher, following the pickleball noise problem in US and Canada.

I commend the City of Belle Meade for its thoughtful and proactive approach in drafting Ordinance 2025-07 to address the growing concern over pickleball-related noise in residential areas.

As noted in your findings, the decibel sound levels from pickleball sharply contrast with the quieter ambient noise levels typical in residential zones.

What is even more significant, and perhaps underappreciated, is the impulsive nature of the sound: a single pickleball court can generate approximately 900 sharp “pop” sounds per hour, each with distinct auditory prominence. These repetitive impulses are more likely to provoke annoyance and fatigue, especially when occurring in quiet neighborhoods.

Your proposed 500-foot setback from all property lines is a wise provision. Noise annoyance is naturally dissipated over distance, and this distance aligns well with recommendations in professional noise control literature and effectively balances recreational opportunities with neighborhood tranquility. Similarly, the proposed maximum footprint of 30 by 60 feet is prudent. It limits development to a single court per installation.

To further strengthen the ordinance you may want to consider:

1. Clarify the Definition of “Pickleball Court”: The ordinance should specify that “pickleball court” includes both permanent courts and the temporary lining or use of other hardscape sports surfaces, such as tennis or basketball courts. This clarification is necessary because temporary nets are often deployed on multi-use courts or driveways, which can lead to unintended noise impacts.

2. Measurement of Setback: The 500-foot setback should be explicitly measured from the edge of the 30 by 60 slab to the nearest property line. This precision is important to ensure consistency in enforcement and to align with the intended purpose of the buffer zone.

3. Restrictions on Rentals: The ordinance should prohibit court rentals and use of the courts during short-term rentals of residential properties. Rentals result in frequent turnover of players who are less attuned to neighborhood expectations and can degrade the quiet enjoyment of nearby homes.

4. Permit Review and Complaint Response: The Conditional Use Permit should explicitly allow the Planning Commission to reopen review if noise complaints are received. This would provide a mechanism for revisiting conditions of approval, such as restricting hours of operation or requiring additional mitigation measures.

5. Lighting Standards: Court lighting should require full cut-off, downward-facing fixtures to prevent light trespass and preserve nighttime residential character.

In sum, your draft ordinance reflects a careful and commendable balance between recreation and residential peace. With the additions noted above, it could serve as a model for other municipalities facing similar challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Charles Leahy, 313-402-8177
Member, Institute of Noise Control Engineering (INCE-USA)
Member, Acoustical Society of America (ASA)
Member, National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)

[Pickleball Courts in a Legal Pickle #ASA186](#)