

Council was ‘thinking small’

If you happen to be a leader in the arts or business or the realm of politics, you sometimes have an opportunity to think big or think small, think long term or short term.

Last week, our city council chose to think small and think short term when they voted, by a margin of 8-3, to rip up a prime piece of urban green space (Bonnerworth Park) and replace it with a slab of asphalt in order to create a playground for aging baby boomers suddenly enchanted with the obnoxiously noisy pastime of pickleball.

This is thinking small because here we are in the middle of a climate crisis, indeed a climate emergency, according to the previous council, when every bit of urban green space should be preserved, protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of all and the salvation of the planet.

Instead, city council voted to replace green space with asphalt. When the rains fall, that gift from the heavens, which is meant to water the earth, will become runoff that ends up in storm sewers.

And for the seven or eight months of the year when the pickleballers have hung up their racquets, their playground will be nothing more than a barren, windswept, useless slab of asphalt.

Council’s decision was short-sighted because pickleball is simply a fad and all fads are short-lived. The overwhelming majority of pickleballers are aging baby boomers who will soon tire of their pastime, or be compelled to retire their racquets permanently due to deteriorating knees, hips, shoulders and other body parts, and today’s lovely Bonnerworth Park will be an asphalt wasteland.

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