

PETERBOROUGH REGION

Rally planned for Monday outside Peterborough city hall as pickleball controversy continues

Citizens are planning to rally outside city hall, on Monday evening, in objection to council's plan to build 16 pickleball courts in Bonnerworth Park.

By **Joelle Kovach** Reporter

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More than 250 concerned residents attended a rally to save Bonnerworth Park in Peterborough in May. Another rally is planned for Monday evening outside city hall. The Peterborough park is slated for a \$4.4-million development, including 16 pickleball courts. Clifford Skarstedt Metroland

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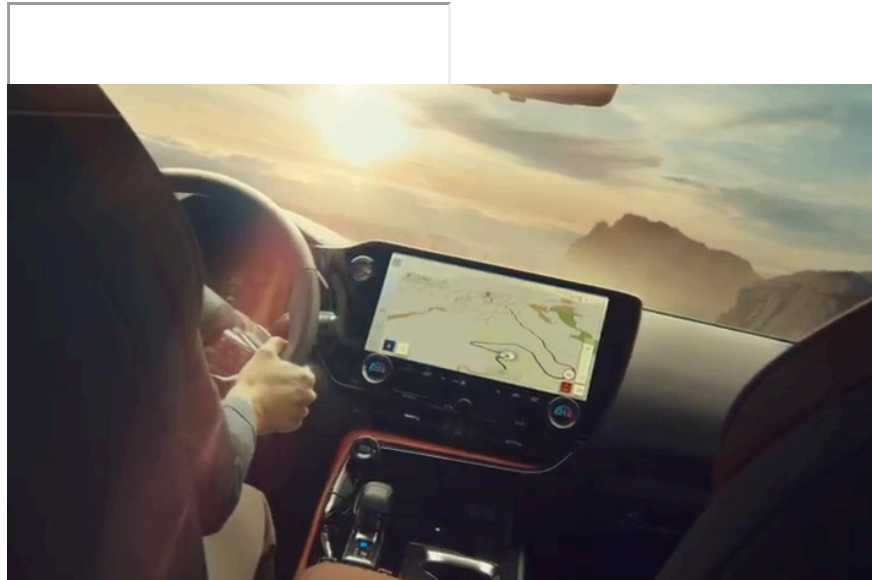
There has been ongoing concern from citizens since council voted on April 8 to build 16 new courts this fall at Bonnerworth Park, at McDonnell Street and Monaghan Road.

Although many pickleball players have cited high demand for courts, many residents living nearby say they're concerned about pickleball noise. Some have further said they're unhappy with the idea of the courts and parking lot replacing some of the park's green space.

As of this week, the neighbours say they have collected more than 6,500 signatures on a petition against the plan (there is an online petition on the website [change.org](https://www.change.org), plus hard-copy petitions have recently been available at both local farmers' markets).

The neighbours have a website called Save Bonnerworth Park, and this week they sent the update to more than 200 people who have signed up for their email list.

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The update asks people to come to the rally on Monday at 5:30 p.m. (ahead of a city council meeting that starts at 6 p.m.) “to show city hall that there are real people behind the names on the petition,” the neighbours state in the email.

There isn't expected to be any debate or vote, regarding the project, on the agenda for Monday's city council meeting. The final vote to redevelop the park — including the 16 pickleball courts — happened on April 8.

In a detailed statement posted to the city's website on May 31, the city says it plans to proceed with the \$4.4 million redevelopment of Bonnerworth Park that includes upgrades to the 20-year-old skateboard park, a new specialized bike track and the 16 pickleball courts.

The redevelopment project is expected to happen in 2024 and 2025, starting with the construction of the pickleball courts this fall.

Meanwhile, there have been previous rallies of concerned neighbours outside city hall as city council meetings are taking place, most recently on May 22.

Following that city council meeting, Coun. Gary Baldwin, the co-chairman for parks and recreation, came outside to speak to rally attendees in the parking lot.

Many neighbours have said they weren't consulted by the city on the park redevelopment plan, and neighbour Ellen Seddon called the impromptu parking lot meeting the best opportunity residents have had to speak with a city councillor about the project.

“That’s the best meeting we’ve had — and it had to be done in a parking lot, with councillors who had enough guts to stay here and talk to us.”



Joelle Kovach is the City Hall reporter for the Peterborough Examiner.

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