

# All sports deserve a fair place in our city

Guest columnists Clair Leahy and Steve Terry share their thoughts on the planned Bonnerworth Park pickleball redevelopment.

Updated April 8, 2024 at 12:16 p.m. | April 8, 2024 [🔖](#) [🔗](#)



Clair Leahy (left) and Steve Terry, seen here in 2015, speak out about the planned pickleball development and loss of ball diamonds at Bonnerworth Park in Peterborough.

Clifford Skarstedt Metroland file photo

By Clair Leahy and Steve Terry

*Peterborough and District Sports Hall of Fame members Clair Leahy, one of the city's finest softball pitchers and a builder of the sport, and Steve Terry, a longtime coach and builder of the sport of baseball, are concerned about the proposed development at Bonnerworth Park's impact on local ball if the two diamonds are lost. The following is their plea to the city to consider the fate of these diamonds.*

Keeping active is a great thing for people of all ages and we applaud the local pickleball community for their increased numbers and the consequential need for more space, being proposed as part of a reimagined Bonnerworth Park.

The new bike pump track will meet a need for youthful athletes. The avid tennis players will simply transfer from Bonnerworth to the Knights of Columbus Park. So far, so good.

What is disconcerting, not only to us, but also to the baseball community at large, is that there does not appear to be any plan to relocate the two ball diamonds.

According to Clayton Wade, president of Peterborough Baseball Association, given that we have recently lost three diamonds at Morrow Park, one at Northcrest, and possibly the diamond at Knights of Columbus, two more at Bonnerworth would make a staggering seven.

Where will the games that were played at Bonnerworth last year, be played this year, or will they be played at all? This heavy loss of ball facilities has already resulted in zero practice time for house league baseball teams, and many rep baseball teams have to practise at out-of-town facilities.

Let us keep in mind that in Peterborough, there is baseball, slo-pitch and fast-pitch, as well as Jays' Care Foundation Challenger Baseball and a host of youth leagues, both house league and rep.

Yes, fast-pitch is still very much alive in Peterborough. Under the tutelage of Craig Whitnell, there is an adult ladies' league, an 11-team Thunder house league and six Thunder rep teams, two of which may have to travel to Douro for practices if there isn't enough local diamond space available.

We do not begrudge the pickleball courts or the accompanying parking lot being proposed, but we'd hate to see the loss of yet another ball diamond, as well as a place to just play scrub or touch football on some actual green space. It seems we are robbing Peter to pay Paul at a time when Peter, himself, may soon be homeless.

Conventional wisdom would suggest at least one of the diamonds on the chopping block should be relocated, analogous to the tennis courts.

Therefore, as our council valiantly tries to accommodate all sports, a formidable task indeed, it seems the squeaky wheel gets the grease, so we are speaking on behalf of Peterborough's ball community. We hope these issues will be addressed with the proper input from all those affected by the decisions being made.

*Clair Leahy and Steve Terry are builders of the sports of softball and baseball in Peterborough.*