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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **The City of Port St. Lucie Responds to Demand for Pickleball with 8 New Courts**

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (Aug. 9, 2016) – Pickleball players will soon have eight new, permanent courts in Port St. Lucie – the result of City officials working with local players to meet the increasing demand for places to play this popular sport.

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the country, and can be played and enjoyed by people of all ages. It combines many elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong, and is played on a badminton-sized court and a slightly modified tennis net.

Through a successful collaboration between the City of Port St. Lucie and our tennis and pickleball communities, Parks & Recreation was able to temporarily offer four pickleball courts at the Whispering Pines Tennis Center at 800 S.W. Darwin Blvd.

However, the temporary usage of existing tennis courts at the Tennis Center expires August 14, 2016, when schools reconvene and will utilize the tennis courts.

Knowing that the Port St. Lucie pickleball community wants permanent facilities, through innovative and forward thinking, the City Council approved on August 8, 2016, a lighting project at the Tennis Center, which will result in:

- ◆ Add lighting to the last three tennis courts at the Tennis Center, which will mean all 14 tennis courts at the park will be lighted for evening play;
- ◆ Courts #13 and #14 will be converted into multi-use play for either pickleball or tennis. As a result, eight pickleball courts will be available for daylight and evening play.

Operational savings in the Parks Division's FY 2015-2016 budget will pay for this project.

“With the completion of the additional lighted tennis courts at the Whispering Pines Tennis Center, that complex of 14 lighted tennis courts will be one of the largest public bank of tennis courts on the Treasure Coast, resulting in a win-win project for the pickleball enthusiasts, the tennis community and the Parks & Recreation Department,” said Sherman Conrad, director of the City’s Parks & Recreation Department.

Dorrie Hulsey, Port St. Lucie pickleball ambassador for the U.S.A. Pickleball Association, said players are ecstatic to hear about this project. She has an email list of 150 local players, along with an additional 100 seasonal players. Also, there are about 300 to 400 players in communities such as the Cascades, Vitalia, and Kings Isle within the City of Port St. Lucie, she said.

“The local pickleball players are very excited to finally have some permanent pickleball courts to play on. For the last couple of years, they have had no place to play in the summer, which meant they went to adjoining communities and cities,” Hulsey said. “Having eight permanent courts with lights will provide the space needed for pickleball to grow within the community.”

This project is anticipated to start on or about September 2016. During that time, the temporary pickleball courts at Whispering Pines Tennis Center will be unavailable for outdoor play but the Port St. Lucie Civic Center will resume to normally scheduled pickleball availability three days per week.

After the project is completed, free outdoor usage of the eight permanent pickleball courts at the Whispering Pines Tennis Center will be available to the public.

[Click here to read more about Whispering Pines Park.](#)

[Watch a short video on this project here.](#)

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