

PAK President's Report February 2022

NEWS

-President's Report

-February 2022

Aaannd, it's February! PAK has had a busy start to the year, and we are checking off our objectives one by one. Our objectives were set down months ago by our hard-working board and stated in simple headings ending in -ion. The purpose of having Objectives is to help us chart our course towards fulfilling our Mission. Here they are, without the sub-headings that detail the tasks needed for each:

- I. ORGANIZATION
- II. COMMUNICATION
- III. REPRESENTATION
- IV. IDENTIFICATION
- V. MONETIZATION
- VI. OPERATION
- VII. REPETITION

In 2021, we attained our 501c3 status, hammered out our By-laws, created a Board of Directors, registered with the State, and started our membership campaign. We launched our website simultaneously with our membership campaign and it serves as our primary source of communication with existing and prospective members, players and visitors, and other stakeholders. We are linked to Facebook and Instagram and have established on-going dialogue with the County about pickleball.

In 2022, we are focused on identifying a suitable site for our "alpha courts". After inquiries to almost all entities who control existing tennis courts, it has become clear that refurbishment and renovation to pickleball courts is not something that will happen within our timeline of the end of 2023. Of course, if any opportunities arise, we will pursue them, but we have changed course and are now pursuing a suitable site for new construction of courts. Three years ago,

when we first thought about organizing, we thought that if we raised \$50,000, we would be able to have 4 dedicated courts somewhere on the island. Our new reality is that our project will cost about \$500,000 and that we need at least 8 courts to handle the ever-growing number of players. Recently, we entered negotiations to secure a suitable site and we are hopeful that this is fruitful. What is a “suitable site”? We have defined this as one that has adequate parking, restrooms, access to water, and electricity, is in a safe, secure area, and is not excessively windy or rainy. It should not be near residential areas that are sensitive to increased traffic or noise. The possible site we are exploring checks all the boxes for us, and we are hopeful that we can enhance the objectives of the site owner as well.

In 2022, I reached out to all Pickleball Ambassadors in Hawaii and alerted them about what we are doing on Kauai. Recently, Ambassadors from the Big Island, Maui, Oahu and Kauai participated in a Zoom meeting to discuss the possibility of consolidating island efforts into a Statewide effort to further pickleball. I learned so much from the other participants, and we plan to continue the conversation, as we all share the same obstacles and opportunities. We all agree that the single greatest challenge with pickleball across the state is “Too many players, not enough courts.” We all agree that our respective Counties are aware of the problem but move too slowly to fill the immediate and emerging needs. The Big Island reports that most of the pickleball courts are privately owned, and charge fees for play. Fees range from \$5/day to \$50 for 90 minutes! Maui reports that there is no organization there, but they have 16 dedicated pickleball courts at two different sites. Play is heavy, with an average of 50-60 players per day and upwards of 80 players (creating long wait times). Just because they are dedicated, they point out that the courts are not necessarily good, as the surfaces have not been refurbished, and have “canyons, not cracks”, parking is 500 yards away, and there are no restrooms, water, seating, or shade at the courts. There is a private party that has announced plans to build a 10 court pickleball/health and fitness facility in Kihei. Projected cost of land, buildings and courts are estimated at \$10 million. It will be interesting to see what it costs to play there. Oahu has several pickleball organizations that have non-profit status. They have created a registry of the estimated 150 tennis courts with some that are lined for pickleball and temporary nets. There is a great need for more courts there, and their long-

term goal is for a pickleball complex on Oahu, but for now, they are hoping that the City and County will develop it. We all agreed that it would be in the best interests of pickleball that we come together somehow to have a united voice. Stay tuned for how this plays out!

Speaking of united voices, I would love to say that PAK has the support of every pickleball player on Kauai, but it does not. This is not surprising when one sees how our country has become divided, and the “United States of America” no longer reflects the realities of the sentiments of many. Although many have joined our cause, many others have not, and may not ever join us. We will continue to accept all who wish to join and will continue to work on behalf of our sport and its players, regardless of membership. There is no doubt in my mind that our courts will be built, and we would like to celebrate the opening event with those who supported this crazy idea that pickleball players should have crack-free courts with white lines and permanent nets. Regarding the problem of “too many players, not enough courts”, ***if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.***

Aloha,

Nolan Ahn, President

Pickleball Association Kauai