



# MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**FROM:** Rich Olson, City Manager  
Bobbi White, Parks and Recreation Director

**DATE:** May 18, 2016

**REF:** Consideration – Authorization to Submit Grant Application to the US Tennis Association (USTA)

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***BACKGROUND:***

Tennis was once a thriving sport in Elizabeth City with several tennis tournaments conducted each summer and fall such as the Woody Wise, July 4<sup>th</sup> and the Elizabeth City Open. Youth/adult tennis lessons and tennis camps were offered all summer with waiting lists for participants. The Elizabeth City Open was hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department for over 20 years and was the premier tennis tournament in northeastern North Carolina. In the 1980's, this tournament would have 100 participants in the adult and senior categories (men, women, doubles and mixed doubles) with several age divisions. The tournament was so large that we played all day and into the night Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on the tennis courts located at Northeastern High School, Enfield, Harney/Elizabeth Street, and Elizabeth City State University. As the courts began to decay and other communities in northeastern North Carolina began to build nice courts, the Elizabeth City Open no longer held an attraction for tennis players. Staff would like to see tennis revived in our community and become a sports tourism location once again.

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) offers grant opportunities for improvements to existing facilities. The Public Facility Assistance Program is intended to have a major impact on the growth of tennis in a community and the clients served by that organization. The USTA Public Facility Assistance process begins with the online submission of a Tennis Facility Inquiry Form (TFIF). After a review of the TFIF and an initial follow-up conversation with a USTA representative, some applicants will qualify to submit a full Funding Application. The review by the USTA will include a thorough evaluation of the programmatic, administrative, financial and organizational accomplishments of the applicant.

***ANALYSIS:***

While the USTA Facility Assistance Program is extremely competitive, there are three grant categories: Category I provides funding up to \$4,000 with possible section or district match; Category II provides funding up to \$10,000 or 50% of the project total; and Category III provides funding up to \$20,000 or 50% the project total. USTA will determine the category for which each project will best qualify.

The tennis courts on Elizabeth and Harney Street are decaying with the surface crumbling. There are large cracks through the asphalt that are two inches wide and are a trip/fall hazard. These courts are used by College of the Albemarle for their tennis classes as well as by the Parks and Recreation Department for our tennis leagues, camps and lessons. This year Albemarle Senior Games requested the use of the courts for their Senior Games in April. Due to the condition of the tennis courts, the Senior Games were played at Northeastern Park for fear of injuries to participants. Staff estimates it will cost \$60,000 to properly repair the surface of these courts. Staff has included this \$60,000 in the Parks and Recreation Department FY 2016-17 budget.

***FINANCIAL:***

The Finance Committee reviewed and discussed this matter during their meeting of May 18, 2016, with the following action being taken:

**Motion was made by Mayor Peel, seconded by Councilman Donnelly, to recommend to the City Council to authorize submission of a grant application to the USTA Facility Assistance Program to repair the Sheep Harney Courts. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Hummer, Donnelly, King and Peel. Against: None. Motion carried.**

***STAFF RECOMMENDATION:***

By motion, authorize submission of a grant application to the United States Tennis Association Facility Assistance Program to repair the Elizabeth/Harney Street Tennis Courts.

RCO/vdw