



July 6th, 2009

Dear Mayor Fitzgerald,

The *Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee* is committed to ensuring a safe return of outdoor public basketball hoops to Lakewood. Through our studies of the past problems associated with basketball, we feel our safety-oriented approach will be beneficial to all of Lakewood's residents. A few of our key reasons to bring public basketball hoops back to Lakewood include:

- It's Healthy. It's no question that we need to encourage our youth to participate in more physical activities. Hoops will provide an exhausting aerobic exercise to people of all physical conditions.
- Local History. Basketball is an old fashioned all-American sport. Being a suburb to the home of the Cleveland Cavaliers, there is no denying the fact that basketball is simply a part of our local identity. The stardom of LeBron James has sparked interest in the minds of our youth who are now asking for an opportunity to play a game they love. The popular attraction to basketball is unmatched by any other sport in the area.
- It will boost our High School sports programs. Once a consistent contender in the LEL, Lakewood's competitive basketball teams' performances have declined since the hoops have been removed from the city. Without hoops, just a fraction of our students are obtaining a significant amount of exposure to the sport. To breed top of the line athletes, our youth must have easy access to hoops. Public hoops will attract and hone the skills of talented players that (at no fault of their own) might not have had access to the pay-to-play indoor recreational programs. Hoops will increase the quality and quantity of Lakewood's experienced basketball players and also provide the physical tools to participate in other high school sports.
- Lakewood's Kids Deserve More. There will always be a need for organized sports programs, but they cannot exist alone. Once hoops have been established, all one will need to play a game of basketball is a ball. The flexibility of basketball is unlike baseball, football, soccer, and tennis: a game can consist of 1-10 players, games have a quick turnaround allowing others to frequently jump into a string of games, and a wide range of skill levels can all participate together without degrading the experience. Unlike checkbook sports, outdoor public hoops will bring about a social spontaneity that will be able to occupy our youth's most unpredictable patterns of boredom while giving them a great platform to make new friends.

While the aforementioned points are the positives of the sport, we understand Lakewood's resident's past concerns about having public hoops. By reading the enclosed document (LOBC Plans, Purpose, and Progress Notes), you will understand how we plan to address the following major problems:

- Controlling the amount of non-residents playing at our courts.
- Minimizing the amount of nonproductive loitering.
- Eliminating the ability to continue games past nightfall.

In a less direct manor, our group has also done some studies of neighboring cities' parks that have successfully sustained basketball courts. We found that this can be attributed to the location of a court within a public park. The basketball courts are typically centralized near the tennis courts and the playground areas, which exposes them to heavy foot traffic. Impett Park, in Cleveland, is a prime example of minimizing disturbances by locating the courts near other frequently occupied areas within the public park.

Through it all, we feel that our cause will help boost our sports programs, strengthen the foundation of recreation in Lakewood, and help to alleviate the past issues the city has encountered with outdoor basketball courts. We would greatly appreciate it if we could schedule a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss our proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact any one of us with questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

The Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee:

Nadhal Eadeh nadhal@lobc.org	Art Gold art@lobc.org	Jordan Tadic jordan@lobc.org	Stephanie Toole stephanie@lobc.org	Phil Argento Varsity Basketball Coach	Bob Thayer LHS Athletic Director
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Enclosure: LOBC Plans, Purpose, and Progress Notes

CC: The Members of City Council