



RLTC Presidents Message October 16, 2020

Dear RLTC Members:

We hope this message finds you and your family well after an incredibly unusual year. As the 2020 tennis season draws to a close, we acknowledge the difficulties and uncertainties of this year, thankfully also recognizing that challenge can be a great force for positive change. This year has helped us see our valued tennis club with fresh eyes and renewed perspective.

The return-to-play policies amid COVID-19 restrictions created significant challenges for this year's Board of Directors and staff members. With hard work and a great deal of patience, we are proud that the RLTC was able to reinstitute many of our programs and events with appropriate modifications. As a club, we should celebrate our success this season. The club ensured that clinics, round robins, camps, and after-school programs all resumed with new ratio restrictions and safety protocols in place. We switched to a comprehensive on-line platform for bookings and registrations in order to meet COVID-preparedness expectations. Our pro shop opened for essential purchases despite closure of the club house itself. And although we were not able to hold our usual social events, our Club tournaments were wildly popular this year with record-breaking entries in multiple categories. Each of these efforts has demonstrated the resilience of our club and each achievement has been hard won. We are exceptionally proud that our club has had, despite all original indications to the contrary, a wonderful summer of tennis.

We wish to truly thank our hard-working Club staff members lead by General Manager Chris Hannant. Always with a ready smile and willingness to assist, Chris has navigated the many challenges of this season with grace and kindness. Thank you to Chris and the staff for their efforts in keeping our club running smoothly. Thank you to our wonderful tennis professionals this year. Coach Zhenya led a strong junior program offering dynamic tennis learning opportunities in several formats. We saw great participation in junior clinics and we are thrilled to have him part of our tennis community. Coach Miguel led a strong summer of adult programming with round robins, clinics, and lessons. This year, we say goodbye to Coach Miguel who has been with the RLTC for three years and is moving on to other adventures. Miguel has always been a consummate professional and is a kind, talented coach on the court. We thank him for his time with us and wish him well in his future endeavours. In September, Dan Vila joined our team, which was a welcome sight for many players who have experience with this

talented coaching professional. Our Junior and Associate instructors had a great season. Many thanks for the talent, patience and hard work of Ronan Boyd and Hector Cameron who assisted all the junior programming throughout the season.

Overall, the unusual return-to-play offered our club an opportunity to renew and reengage its membership and reaffirm this Board's commitment to making our club the very best it can be. Thank you to the many volunteers who contribute to our club in a variety of ways: landscape and grounds clean up, club house exterior upkeep, tournament programming, development of round robins, assistance with social media, and a multitude of critical tasks. We feel the club is looking and feeling better than ever and we could not do that without our volunteers. Please consider volunteering in some capacity for the next season.

As the season draws to a close this Thanksgiving weekend, we now look forward to future endeavours and the development of a strong 2021 season. Foremost on our agenda is resolving the conversation about our proposed lighting project. As the membership was made aware in May, the Club took a pause in continuing the project while we evaluated the impact of COVID and neighbourhood disputes.

At last year's AGM, the Board established a mandate to move forward with lighting courts 2 and 3 until 10:00 pm with the existing lighting permit that was issued by the Heritage department of the City of Ottawa. This project was a priority of several previous Boards, spanning 13 years of discussion. The lighting project was born from a desire to continually improve the quality of our tennis club to its best possible standards. The lights were considered an opportunity to encourage program growth, increase membership, and accommodate those members who cannot always play during the day, such as working professionals or parents of young children, offering an added value to both existing and prospective membership. Indeed, our record-breaking fall singles tournaments highlighted the reality that in September, the courts become unplayable by 7:00 pm leaving very little time for members to make full use of our facilities.

At last year's AGM, a motion was passed to purchase and install lights using our capital expense reserve fund and the addition of a \$100 per adult levy. The total cost of the project was \$80,000. The application of a capital improvement levy at our club has historical context as previous capital projects had incurred a similar toll on its membership.

As COVID-19 entered our reality, we were not able to begin construction under the existing permit and the project was halted accordingly. Due to the negative feedback from surrounding neighbours, the City's Heritage department informed the club that we would need to seek a new heritage permit. As such, the Board of Directors wishes to re-examine the wishes of the membership regarding lights.

The RLTC is sending a comprehensive survey to our entire membership which includes information on many aspects of our tennis club life. This survey will also include questions regarding whether or not we continue to move forward on our lighting project. If we have a clear expression of support from our membership, we would seek a platform to engage neighbours in

a constructive dialogue, since we believe that our proposal is poorly understood and will in fact have minimal impact on our neighbours. After consultation we may continue with the heritage permit processing if so desired. We urge you to please take the time to respond to this survey so that the Board can move forward with confidence in planning our 2021 season.

We also invite you to please attend this year's AGM, which will be held via video conferencing on Sunday December 6th. Further details and access information will follow in November. We would like to encourage greater participation in our AGM to ensure every member feels they have a voice in our club's future and the ability to weigh in on our club's governance.

On a final note, we wish to thank the membership for their continued engagement and encouragement this summer. It has been a challenging year, and we hope our club could offer the solace, fitness, and friendship of tennis in a time of great uncertainty. The RLTC is undoubtedly a special place. It is a gem within our neighbourhood and should continue to be cherished for many generations to come. We look forward to seeing you virtually at the AGM and again on the courts next season. Stay safe.

With deepest thanks and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Malhotra', written in a cursive style.

Louise Malhotra
President, RLTC