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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Neighborhood News** **Basketball Courts** | | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Dear St. Charles residents,  The following is an update on the status of the St. Charles basketball courts.  For years, the vandalism and facilities damage at the St. Charles basketball courts has been escalating. The City of Little Rock has closed many of its public basketball courts, creating a citywide deficit for this amenity and increasing the attractiveness of any existing basketball courts in Little Rock. Prior to the COVID closing of the basketball courts, the majority of users of the basketball courts were non-residents.  **Some of the vandalism at the courts includes:**   * Fence damaged on multiple occasions * Entrance gate broken multiple times * Vandalism to the basketball courts, rims/nets, and painted graffiti in courts * Drug deals, drug paraphernalia, alcohol bottles and trash at the parking lot * Damaged and stolen benches and trash cans * Surveillance cameras stolen * Stolen and vandalized signage * Vandalism to the parking lot gate * Copper wiring stripped from the perimeter lighting of the courts * Increased problem activities at the park, pond and gazebo   ***The basketball court has attracted criminal activity to the St. Charles community. This vandalism and facilities damage has resulted in increased cost to St Charles residents.***  **Over multiple years, in efforts to deter the damage and misuse of the courts, the following steps were taken. It is important to note that none of these interventions proved successful in deterring the continued problems.**   * Rebar was installed along the base of the fence to deter continued fence damage/access * Improved lights were installed * Security guards hired * Magnetic keypad code gate locking system installed was installed * Security cameras and security surveillance signage were installed * Locking cables were added to the benches * Stronger rims and metal (chain) nets installed * Parking lot was kept locked in the pool off season (fall – spring) * LRPD was engaged to evict trespassers/vandals   During the initial phases of COVID-19, the basketball courts were closed for health reasons. Multiple episodes of vandalism took place as people damaged the facility to gain access to play basketball. The Association made repairs and the LRPD advised the removal of the rims to deter continued vandalism.  No vandalism has occurred at the basketball courts since May 2020 (removal of the rims).  ***Because of the continued vandalism to the basketball courts and associated expense and safety risk to the community, it has been determined that the basketball courts will remain closed and a plan for repurposing the space into a usable, safe resource will be developed.***  The Board of Directors, resident volunteers for our community, have made this decision based on the evidence and history of the vandalism and the associated safety and financial implications for the community. Questions or comments can be directed to [stcharleslr@hotmail.com](https://stcharleslr.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e8c15d0a9f5ba63fcc3eef1f8&id=afd6f052b4&e=443b4e22b5)  Sincerely,  St. Charles Community Association Board of Directors | | |