

## DOG PARK SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: January 3, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. Location: Birch Room, City Hall

Members Present: Tom Neal (c), David Nutting, Jamie Polley, Lauren Henkelman, Jamie Rice-Heckendorf

Excused: Ed Giallombardo, Michelle Dins, Eric Heuser

Others Present: Mayor Mielke, Pat Peckham, Shannon Thomas, News Media

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. It was noted that there was a quorum present and the meeting was called to order by Chairman Neal at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Nutting, second by Rice-Heckendorf to approve the Dog Park Special Committee December 3, 2018 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Election of Vice-Chair – tabled

Review of Previous Dog Park Research – Polley said areas that had been looked at included Riverside Park, Bovine Lane, Brockmeyer Park and the Bocaner site on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Riverside Park had been discussed but there were concerns with multi-use aspects and parking. Neal thought Bovine Lane had issues with topography and accessibility. Neal suggested if they start with the 4<sup>th</sup> Street site the City could always add another dog park on the west side. Regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> Street site there is possibility of acquiring land directly to the north of the Bocaner site. Committee would need more information on the costs of the site and also costs to remediate it. Polley thought the owners currently want \$50,000 for the site.

The survey that WAUSdog had previously done was discussed. Rice-Heckendorf said results showed a wide range on size of parks, a split on whether they were privately or city maintained and also a split on if they had fees or not. Rice-Heckendorf said the Park Department had brought up rotating areas inside the dog park but she had not seen that done before.

Polley discussed the area where Menards used to be which is right underneath the highway interchange. It is about ten acres and is owned by the WI D.O.T. It is already fenced, has a trail around it, and is a dry basin. It would need an entrance gate and parking area. Polley still needs some information from the D.O.T. on whether they would allow use in that area for anything. Rice-Heckendorf thought it was fairly close to the Rib Mountain dog park and had a concern about salt being pushed from snowplows on the highway. Mayor Mielke mentioned the old business incubator site. Peckham thought there had been a desire to have a centrally located dog park. Nutting liked the idea of a centrally located dog park and thought in the future another one could be developed on the northeast or northwest side of the City. He wondered if 3M Park or the area west of the horse arena in Marathon Park could work as a dog park. Members had concerns about other uses at 3M Park including ball diamonds, pickleball court, sledding hill, and that it's close to houses. Neal asked about the Eau Claire River Conservancy. Polley said it is heavily wooded and extremely wet and that the majority of it is wetland. Neal felt that all of the discussion and research seems to keep leading to the 4<sup>th</sup> Street site as the most viable site for the first dog park. There already has been discussion with potential funding sources on behalf of committee members regarding this site so there is some momentum behind it.

Neal discussed the phases of construction that Heuser had put together and thought Phase I could be funded totally by the private sector. Henkelman questioned if an irrigation system was necessary. Polley said if they want the turf that was listed in the initial cost estimate then that would need irrigation to get it established. It is the highest blend possible to combat the animal urine so the grass wouldn't discolor. If it wasn't irrigated, the cost for seeding would go down because they would switch to more of a salt tolerant winter mix. It wouldn't need the water, but it wouldn't necessarily stay as green. Neal thought they could use broadcast sprinklers the first year before an underground irrigation system was put in. Rice-Heckendorf is going to check on what turf the Kronenwetter dog

park is using as she thought that seemed to stay green. Polley said there is a whole gamut of seed mix and it depends on what the expectations are of the group and how much they want to pay for it. If they don't irrigate, it may take longer to figure out how to keep it looking good depending on the usage. They won't know that until they get people on it. Peckham thought if private donations got the park up and running that the City should be able to find the money to fund the irrigation system. Neal said Phase I in 2019 could include seeding the site, installing a fence and other possible infrastructure so that it could open in 2020.

Neal mentioned that the east town neighborhood group is looking for a project and liked the idea of having a dog walk event that would benefit the dog park. Discussion followed on logistics and details of the walk. Members liked the idea of having it on the Rivers Edge Trail. Polley will look into putting up a temporary sign at the dog park that displays the concept plan. Naming rights will be a future topic of discussion. Peckham questioned if the Parks and Recreation Committee or Council should ratify the decision that this will be the site. Polley will include that on their next agenda. Henkelman questioned if they still wanted to discuss the other sites like the Menards Plaza or 3M Park further. Members gave some reasons why those might not work. Polley said she still would get the information regarding the Menards site. Henkelman said she heard from some people who did not like the 4<sup>th</sup> Street site because it was small and unsightly. The Mayor said he felt the same way at first but he can see some merits in this one and feels most people will be glad that the City has a dog park. Neal said it is an urban neighborhood dog park and is the first one of possibly more. Polley said people do want variety and dog parks are destination type parks, people will drive to them.

Next meeting Date – to be determined.

Adjourn - **Motion** by Nutting, second by Rice-Heckendorf to adjourn at 5:10 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.