

DOG PARK SUBCOMMITTEE

Minutes of 8-24-2016 meeting

The Dog Park Subcommittee of the Parks & Recreation Committee conducted a meeting on Wednesday, August 24, 2016 in Room 213 of Stratford Town Hall, 2725 Main Street, Stratford CT, pursuant to notice duly posted.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Rich, Bob Jaekle, Paula Lockshier, Danielle Stella, Sean Haubert, Pat Patusky and Rachel Solveira

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Lisa Hernandez

I. CALL TO ORDER

Presiding Chairman John Rich called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

- ❖ John Rich: Parks & Recreation Committee, Dog Park Subcommittee Co-chair
- ❖ Bob Jaekle: Parks & Recreation Committee, Dog Park Subcommittee Co-chair
- ❖ Rachel Solveira: Stratford Animal Control Officer for the past 10 years
- ❖ Danielle Stella: Stratford Animal Rescue Society (STARS)
- ❖ Paula Lockshier: Stratford Dog Park Action Committee
- ❖ Sean Haubert: Stratford Dog Park Action Committee
- ❖ Pat Patusky: Superintendent of Recreation for the past 37 years

III. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A. PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE – PAT PATUSKY

- 4/9/2007 – Dog Park Ordinance accepted
- 9/24/2008 – Mayor had Informational Session; Suggested combining Dog Park & Dog Pound
- 5/27/2009 – Parks & Rec Committee had informational meeting to discuss Spyder Park as possible location
- 6/24/2009 – Parks & Rec Committee had informational meeting to discuss the area adjacent to Sterling House and cemetery (behind Erin's Gym) as a possible location
- 2/24/2010 – Parks & Rec Committee received a suggestion for a parcel on Honeyspot Road Extension as a possible location
- 10/26/2011 – The minutes of the Parks & Rec Committee reflected that the Town Council will re-visit the dog park matter on 11/14/2011
- 8/22/2012 – Roosevelt Forest Commission discussed the possibility of a dog park there
- 9/26/2012 – The Parks & Rec Committee discussed an area at Ryder's Landing (owned by the State) as a possible location
- 3/26/2014 – Resident Paula Lockshier looking for dog park space because the U.S. Department of Transportation denied the land conveyance of the area at Ryder's Landing

- 4/24/2014 – Land next to the dog pound allocated for Dog Park. Ms. Lockshier forwarded all information to Town Attorney Tim Bishop. The Parks & Rec Committee discussed established dog parks in surrounding towns, noting it was a subdivision of the Parks & Rec Committee in those locations. The Petco Grant was extended for four additional years. Councilman Budnick noted there should be a subcommittee which reported to the Parks & Rec Committee.
- 5/28/2014 – As noted in the minutes for the Parks & Rec Committee minutes, Paul Hoydick distributed rules put together by the Town Attorney. The committee agreed to change #13 to disallow smoking, alcohol, food or drink. The committee discussed the need for water and shade at the park. Ms. Lockshier reported there should be a 5-foot fence and 3 gates. The amended rules were sent to the Town Council with a favorable recommendation.
- 6/25/2014 – Members of STARS distributed information regarding reasons why Stratford should not have a dog park. Per Councilman Poisson, the Town Council tabled the matter.
- 4/22/2015 – The Dog Park was stricken from the agenda due to an impasse.
- 2/24/2016 – Mr. Rich contacted the Stratford dog Park Action Committee, who would bring forth a proposal in April 2016, and asked to be put on the agenda.
- 4/27/2016 – Ms. Lockshier distributed and reviewed her group's proposal for a Dog Park. She noted that dog owner's would be responsible for their pets' actions, and added that volunteers would be responsible for keeping the location clean. Committee members were in agreement that the best possible site is the Beacon Point Road/Hunter Haven/Greenway Entry. Ms. Patusky distributed and reviewed proposed dog site plan. The Committee passed a motion to request input from the Mayor, STARS and other Town agencies. They also passed a motion to request Parks Superintendent Chad Esposito develop a budget to vet out site.
- 5/25/2016 – Mr. Rich presented a proposal for the Short Beach Mini Golf area as a possible site for the dog park. A representative from STARS questioned why the dog park should not be located at the Greenway, adding that in other towns dog parks are side by side with the animal control facilities. The committee passed a motion to send to the Roosevelt Forest with a favorable recommendation that the dog park be installed in the area of the old caretaker's house at Roosevelt Forest.
- 6/22/2016 – The Parks & Rec Committee passed a motion to send to the Town Council with a favorable recommendation the dog park be located in the area adjacent to the Animal Control facility. They also passed a motion to send to the Town Council with a favorable recommendation \$25K – or whatever funds are necessary) be set aside from the 2017 CIP for the dog park.
- 7/27/2016 – The Parks & Rec Committee passed a motion to form a Dog Park subcommittee consisting of two Parks & Rec Committee members, Dog Park Action Committee member, Animal Control Officer Solveira, Ms. Patusky and Mr. Esposito, and report back to the Park & Rec Committee in October. Mr. Rich and Mr. Jaekle agreed to join the Dog Park Subcommittee.

B. STRATFORD DOG PARK ACTION COMMITTEE – PAULA LOCKSHIER

This was established in 2011 since there was no subcommittee working on the matter, to develop funding for the project. The group would eventually monitor the park once it is established. The group originally received conflicting information regarding with whom to work on the project in Town, so they worked with the Mayor's and CAO's offices. This group worked to receive the Petco Grant. The SDPAC rallied the Town Council to move forward with the dog park, since many in Town want one developed. The Committee felt the SAEP location would be too costly to clean up. Short Beach was suggested as a viable option, but that site was later rejected. Other possible locations suggested are: Longbrook Park, Roosevelt Forest and the Birdseye Dock. Ms. Lockshier also noted that on 7/11/2016, the Town Council denied to motion to create a dog park located near the Animal Control facility.

IV. VETTING PROCESS

Mr. Rich suggested the following items:

- ✓ Dog Park Vetting Process (spreadsheet)
- ✓ Background Vetting Checklist
- ✓ ACO Report (suggesting pros and cons of each suggested site)
- ✓ Joint Committee Meetings (e.g. Roosevelt Forest Commission or Longbrook Park Commission) when their locations are considered
- ✓ Open Forum – Once the site is determined, have an Open Forum to allow Public to speak
- ✓ Final Report – to be sent to the Parks & Rec Committee with a favorable recommendation

Mr. Jaekle suggested keeping the rejected locations on the list, along with an explanation regarding why they were not chosen. Mr. Jaekle made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lockshier, to approve the above noted Vetting Process. The motion passed unanimously.

V. BACKGROUND VETTING CHECKLIST

- ✓ Property ownership status
- ✓ Property deed restrictions (if any)
- ✓ Site size and condition (clear or needs clearing, suitability for a park)
- ✓ Handicap Accessibility
- ✓ Soil contamination and /or digging issue at site
- ✓ Public Works Dept. impact
- ✓ ~~Zoning~~ Commission approval needed (if site is not currently in a park or open space area)

Mr. Jaekle made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lockshier, to change the “Zoning Commission” to the “Planning Commission”. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Patusky noted the Planning Commission would have to go through an 824 review. Thus noted, Ms. Lockshier made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jaekle, to approve the above-noted checklist. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. BACKGROUND VETTING REPORT

Ms. Patusky made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jaekle, that the Background Vetting Report will contain the above noted items. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Rich will discuss this with Parks Superintendent Chad Esposito and get his input. Ms. Lockshier will provide a report, as will Ms. Patusky from the Planning Commission standpoint.

VII. ACO REVIEW

Ms. Solveira noted the site size should be a minimum of one acre. For this reason, she recommends removing from consideration the area behind Sterling House/Erin's Gym due to the size. Mr. Jaekle then suggested removing Elliott Street off the list due to size. Longbrook A needs to be removed as well, since deed restrictions state it must be retained as open space.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Rich noted the following contact information for the Dog Park Subcommittee:

✚ Address: c/o ACO Rachel Solveira, 225 Beacon Point Road, Stratford CT 06615

✚ Phone: 203-923-7313

✚ Email: StratfordDogParkFeedback@gmail.com

✚ Facebook: Stratford Dog Park Subcommittee

Mr. Rich also stated "Correspondence" will be added as an additional item on the agenda for the next meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Rich accepted a motion from Mr. Jaekle made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lockshier, to adjourn at 7:15pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Aileen Marsh

Recording Secretary