

DOG PARK SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

9-28-2016

The Dog Park Subcommittee of the Parks & Recreation Committee conducted a meeting on Wednesday, September 28, 2016 in Room 213 of Stratford Town Hall, 2725 Main Street, Stratford CT, pursuant to notice duly posted.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chad Esposito, Parks Superintendent; Bob Jaekle, Co-Chair; Paula Lockshier, Stratford Dog Park Action Committee; Pat Patusky, Superintendent of Recreation; John Rich, Co-Chair; Rachel Solviera, Animal Control Officer; and Danielle Stella, Stratford Animal Rescue Society (STARS)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Dave Capozza, 34 Elk Terrace; Claudine Cody, 111 Colony Street; Scott Farrington-Posner, 76 Homestead Avenue; Lisa Hernandez, 175 Cutspring Road; and Joe Pedoto, 478 Prospect Drive.

I CALL TO ORDER

Presiding Chairman Bob Jaekle called the meeting to order at 7:33pm.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Jaekle accepted a motion by Mr. Rich, seconded by Ms. Patusky, to hear comments from the public present at the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

- Mr. Pedoto objects to having a dog park in the area near the Animal Control facility.
- Mr. Farrington-Posner objects to having a dog park near the Animal Control facility. He recommends Short Beach (which is not as frequently used in the non-Summer months) or Roosevelt Forest (though people would bring their dogs later than its current closing time at dusk, and often it is closed even earlier.)
- Ms. Cody objects to having a dog park in the area near the Animal Control facility.
- Mr. Capozza recommends Longbrook Park for a dog park.
- Ms. Hernandez is opposed to having a dog park near the Animal Control facility.

Mr. Jaekle accepted a motion from Mr. Rich, seconded by Ms. Lockshier, to end the Public Forum at 6:45pm. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Esposito stated that the Police Department uses the shooting range at Roosevelt Forest approximately ten times per month, and that is why Roosevelt Forest is often closed earlier than dusk. He noted signs are posted there indicating such, and it is also posted on the Town website. Mr. Esposito added he does not think Short Beach is a good option for several reasons (e.g. dogs not allowed on the beach and entrance fees).

II APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Jaekle accepted a motion from Mr. Rich to accept the minutes from the 8-24-2016 meeting with the changes noted on the agenda for this meeting. Ms. Lockshier seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

III BACKGROUND VETTING REPORT

Ms. Patusky suggested every site go through the vetting process, including Roosevelt Forest, Short Beach and the area near the Animal Control facility, and be considered as carefully and thoughtfully as every other site. Mr. Jaekle concurred, adding there should be a very clear understanding of concerns at each possible site. Mr. Rich stated that in an effort of transparency, every site will be looked into and reasons why it may not be a viable option be noted. Ms. Patusky added that when a recommendation is eventually given to the Town Council, it should list every site which was considered, so the Council can see the depth and expanse of the Committee's work to reach that recommendation. Ms. Lockshier then distributed and discussed the Vetting Report in two formats (attached).

Mr. Jaekle noted Boothe Park D, in the bottom far corner by Pavilion 1, is included in a Boothe Park Pav. #1 rental and stated this should be noted on the vetting sheet. Ms. Patusky noted Elliott Street by the Police Department is deed restricted to remain open space. Mr. Jaekle will try to obtain a copy of the deed from Town Hall. He also recommended subcommittee members walk the actual suggested locations to determine if the area would or would not be a good site for a dog park. Mr. Jaekle then accepted a motion by Ms. Patusky to add the following areas to the vetting process list: the area by the WPCA, Birdseye Tide Harbor, the area near the Animal Control facility, and Boothe Park D. Ms. Solviera seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Jaekle distributed and discussed maps of some of the sites (attached). He would like to add Boothe B to the list (area to the left of the toll booth, yet away from the Hall for those who rent it.) Mr. Jaekle further noted that many people currently bring their dogs to Boothe Park. Ms. Patusky stated the Boothe brothers' will controls what happens at Boothe Park. Any effort to create a dog park there would have to go through the Boothe Park Commission.

In reviewing a map of Short Beach Park, Mr. Jaekle questioned the logistics of opening the park to dogs, yet keeping them away from the beach. Mr. Esposito and Ms. Patusky both noted the ongoing problem with people bringing dogs illegally to Short Beach, and the difficulty policing the area.

Mr. Jaekle noted Longbrook Park A is in the corner near the path to Wilcoxson School, and B is the area by the tennis courts. He added that some neighbors have expressed concerns with Area B, and suggested Area A. Ms. Solveira will determine if B would be large enough, as she recommends a minimum one acre for a dog park to be successful. By way of comparison, Mr. Esposito noted an acre is roughly the size of a full soccer field. Ms. Lockshier stated Mr. Jay Habansky, Planning & Zoning Administrator, recommends 1) Longbrook B, 2) Longbrook A, and 3) Short Beach. Mr. Esposito said that while Longbrook is probably the most centrally located park in Town, a skating rink might be going in there. Ms. Patusky added that a dog park at Longbrook should not encroach on areas used by Pop Warner. Mr. Rich added that both Longbrook locations are rectangular rather than square in shape, so neither should affect the Pop Warner

fields. Ms. Patusky noted that since tennis is a quiet game, sudden noises/barking from dogs may bother the players.

Ms. Solveira questioned the problem of parking at Wooster by Quail Street, especially during school hours. Mr. Esposito mentioned the possibility of creating a parking lot there, even an unpaved (gravel) one, although it would be an expensive proposition.

Ms. Patusky noted the vetting sheet indicates there is restroom available at Roosevelt Forest, but this is not true. Per Mr. Jaekle, this will be changed to include “Not for Public Use”.

Ms. Lockshier will add the following sites: Boothe Park A, Boothe Park B, Pecks Mill, Birdseye Dock, WPCA and the Greenway.

IV ACO REVIEW -- None

V CORRESPONDENCE – None

VI NEW BUSINESS

Per Mr. Rich, there will be no Dog Park Subcommittee meeting in October. Rather, the matter will be on the agendas for other commissions’ meetings.

- Oct. 3, 2016 – Short Beach Commission, 6:30pm in Town Hall Room 213
- Oct. 19, 2016 – Boothe Park Commission, 7pm in Town Hall Employee Lounge
- Oct. 26, 2016 – Roosevelt Forest Commission, 7pm in Town Hall Council Chambers

Mr. Rich added members will meet with the Longbrook Park Commission after the November election so the 2nd District Town Council member can be present at the meeting.

Since the November meeting of the Dog Park Subcommittee is scheduled for the day before Thanksgiving, Mr. Jaekle accepted a motion by Ms. Solveira to move the meeting back one week to November 30th. Ms. Lockshier seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VIII ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jaekle accepted a motion by Ms. Lockshier, seconded by Ms. Patusky, to adjourn at 8:33pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Aileen Marsh

Recording Secretary