Off-Leash Dog Park/Area Project Proposal

Presentation to: Policy Committee, City of Greater Sudbury

Dogs Off-Leash in Greater Sudbury
Minnow Lake Community Action Network

Wednesday, June 16, 2010
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1. Acknowledgement

Minnow Lake C.A.N

John Lindsay, President
Robert (Bob) King, Treasurer
Executive Members

Leisure Services, City of Greater Sudbury

Chris Gore, Manager
Jaime Thurston, Community Development Coordinator
Jacinda McLean, Support Staff
Ted Durbacz, Recreation Coordinator

City Councillor
Janet Gasparini, Ward 11 City Councillor
2. D.O.G.S. Committee

Executive:

Pierre Perreault, Chairperson,
Lesley-Anne Bardeggia, Communication
Carmen Birtwistle, Recorder
Danielle Charest, Fundraising
Julie Vaillancourt, Research
Julie Sykora, Communication/Recorder Supports

Membership:

13 Members - Jan. 27, 2010 (First Meeting)
187 Members – May 21, 2010
2. **D.O.G.S. Committee (cont.)**

**Issues Addressed:**

- Since our first meeting on Jan. 27, 2010 we have had 2 meetings per month and the public was always invited to attend;

- Research consisted of: Current By-laws, Legislation, Municipal Dog Parks, Survey Design and Delivery, Community Consultation, etc.; Conducted an Online/Paper Based Survey open to all Households in the Minnow Lake Area (Ward 11);

- Conducted a Community Engagement Meeting to present the project and obtain feedback to all residents of Ward 11 interested in this initiative;

- Compiled Survey Data and drafted a report to present to the Policy Committee of the City of Greater Sudbury.
3. Objective

- We are appearing before the Policy Committee of the City of Greater Sudbury to request that the Committee consider and support the creation of an Off-Leash Dog Park/Area.

- Furthermore that the parcel of land located at the corner of Donna Drive and Second Avenue North in Ward 11, be considered the location for the proposed Off-Leash Dog Park/Area.

- In support of the proposal of an Off-Leash Dog Park, we have done our homework. With the support of key City Staff we have prepared a report based on various sources of information provided in part by City Staff, from other jurisdictions throughout Ontario and North America and input from the Minnow Lake Community (Ward 11).
4. Background & Myths

- Off-leash areas have been successfully implemented and maintained throughout North America. Often people oppose these areas due to the common myths and misconceptions about off-leash areas.

- In reality, these areas provide great benefits not only to dogs, but also to the community at large.

- In Ontario, dog owners have successfully lobbied municipal governments for the establishment of off-leash facilities since the 1990’s.

- A dog park or ‘off-leash’ dog park is a facility set aside for dogs to exercise and play off-leash in a legal, safe and controlled environment under the supervision of their owners.

- Parks vary in accoutrements, although a typical dog park offers a 4’ to 6’ fence; separate, double-gated entry and exit points; benches for owners; shade for hot days; tools to pick up and dispose of animal waste in covered trash cans; regular maintenance and cleaning of the grounds.
5. Benefits

- It contributes to the overall physical fitness by encouraging them to exercise with their dogs.

- It provides mental health benefits in the reduction of anxiety and depression and help redevelop a sense of purpose with their community;

- The elderly and disabled citizens need easy access within their community to exercise their companion and working dogs;

- A dog park promotes responsible dog ownership through mandatory registration and regular shots;

- Enclosed play areas prevent off-leash dogs from infringing on the rights of other community residents and park users such as joggers, small children, and those who may be fearful of dogs;
5. Benefits (cont.)

- It helps neighbours to get to know each other and to build a sense of community;
- Also dogs who get enough exercise are less likely to create a nuisance, bark excessively, destroy property or jump up.
- It's an increase in revenue from the sale of dog licenses from responsible dog owners willing to use the dog park;
- It would develop a community partnership with residents of Minnow Lake to assist the City in the building and on-going maintenance of the dog park like it does with other community organizations.
- The City would have a community partner to assist in promoting and the importance of responsible dog ownership.
- It would improve and make an aesthetically pleasing use of a current eye sore for the community.
Advantages:

• No environmental concerns
• Not suitable for residential or commercial usage
• Current land doesn’t back onto residential lots
• Would enhance local tourism
• It has clearly delineated barriers (by nature & man-made)
• Reduce the presence of dogs in other local parks
6. Municipal Benchmarking

- Dog Owners are looking to be treated fairly, equitably and respected as users of city parklands.

- Throughout Ontario and North America, Off-Leash facilities have generally taken on two forms – Parks or Areas.

- An Off-Leash Park is an entirely dedicated park in which dogs may be exercised off-leash.

- An Off-Leash Area is one to two hectare fenced areas within an existing park with multiple users, where dogs may be exercised off-leash.
6. Municipal Benchmarking (cont.)

- Currently there are 125 Off-Leash dog facilities in existence in over 35 Ontario Municipalities.
- In Toronto they have 35 facilities of various sizes within existing parks or dedicated off-leash dog park.
- In Elliot Lake they have recently created their first fenced dog facility.
- In Hamilton they have 5 facilities located throughout their community that is fenced and dedicated exclusively for dogs.
7. Relationship to the Master Plan

- For the D.O.G.S. Committee it was important that the Off-Leash Dog Park/Area exist within some framework.

- Both the City of Greater Sudbury’s Master Plan and the Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan identify clearly the importance of the issue and the need to develop an off-leash dog play area within the urban areas of the City.

- Furthermore, we believe that an Off-Leash Dog Park contributes and promotes the Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan objective of promoting the well-being of citizens in a healthy, safe and stimulating community.

- What better way to promote a healthy, safe and stimulating community then by creating the city’s first Off-Leash Dog park where by citizens can get outdoors, enjoy each others company, develop a sense of community while being in a safe environment of an fenced off-leash dog park.
8. Current By-Law & Legislation

- At the present time, dogs and their owners are affected by the City of Greater Sudbury’s By-law to *Regulate the Keeping of Animals and the Registration of Dogs and Cats* and the *Dog Owners’ Liability Act*.

- If the Policy Committee supports the proposed initiative, it will need to review and amend its current by-law, so to permit the creation of off-leash parks/area with rules/regulations for users.

- Our Committee would welcome and opportunity to work with City Council and City Staff in the implementation of such policies.
9. Community Support

- **June 2007** – 138 (89%) Sudbury members of Facebook signed an on-line petition for the creation of a dog park.

- **February 2010** – 645 (71%) listeners of a Sudbury morning Radio show called in their support for the creation of a dog park (908 calls)

- **May 2010** – 79.5% of Minnow Lake survey respondents strongly agreed that the City of Greater Sudbury needs dog parks.
10. Minnow Lake Residents

- 70% of Minnow Lake Residents say that a dog park at the proposed location would improve the area and benefit the City.
- 67.9% of residents reported that building a dog park and maintaining (66.7%) a dog park were appropriate uses of municipal funds.
- 60.3% of dog owners that indicated that their dogs were not licensed, identified that there was ‘No Service in Return’.
- 71.1% of respondents indicated very/somewhat likely to license their dogs if required to use the off-leash dog area.
- 90.5% of respondents indicated that waste bags and trash cans were the most important feature at a dog park.
11. Conclusion

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Example Double Gated Entrances & Exits:
Example of different type of fencing:

**Material for Fencing:**
Galvanized chain link, Chicken wire, Polypropylene mesh, Deer mesh, Wooden

Above: Galvanized
Left: Deer mesh with wooden posts
Example of Agility Structures:
Example of Rules & Disposal Containers:

- **Rules Board:**
  - Rightside:
    - The future of this area depends on all owners behaving responsibly.
    - Bank Park owners must be on owners and registration tags must be worn by all dogs.
    - Dogs must have current rabies shots and other vaccines as required by law, including distemper, parvo, and kennel cough. Tags must be worn at all times.
    - Dogs must be under the owner's voice control at all times, and the owner is responsible for the actions and behavior of their dog(s).
    - No more than 2 dogs per person at any time. Owners must carry a leash for each dog at all times. No paper or plastic bags are permitted.
    - Aggressive dogs or female dogs in heat are not allowed.
    - Puppies under 4 months of age are not permitted.
    - Children under 12 years of age are not allowed in the leash-free area.
    - Food, glass containers, cigarettes, and alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the leash-free area. These items present unhealthy and hazardous conditions for pets using this area.
    - Be respectful to others sharing the park. Do not allow your pet to be a nuisance to other people, pets, or wildlife.
    - Please clean up after your dog. Waste bags dispensers are located around the park. Use waste bags before departing in the waste container.
    - Dogs must be leashed at all times outside the fenced areas.
    - You may register your dog at the town's licensing location.

- **Disposal Container:**
  - The future of this area depends on all owners behaving responsibly.
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Examples of other possible structures:

- Park Bench and Shade Structure
- Water Fountain
- Picnic Tables
Examples of other possible structures:

Donor bricks and water fountain (Fundraising)

Dog Bag Dispenser

Dog Park Bulletin Board