

Dog Park Feasibility Study Committee Minutes
June 7, 2018
Harvey Wheeler Building

Attendees:

Anne Umphrey, Chair
Tom McKean, Select Board Liason
Deb Richardson
Bob Shulman
Jeff Young
Guest: Kyle Coulter

The meeting was called to order at 7:10. The minutes of the May 10 meeting were approved as were the finely crafted notes from the public hearing on May 22.

We then addressed thoughts on the public hearing:

- Ned Perry of Bedford Street sent a positive follow-up on the Brunswick Dog Park. Deb has plans to visit it when visiting friends later in June.
- The articles written by Rob Carter (Editor of the Concord Journal) appearing in the Journal and the local Patch summed up the meeting in a balanced way.
- We all agreed there was a good discussion of both sides of the issue and it seemed many in the audience were there to listen as well.
- The majority seemed to be saying that Concord, with its extensive trail system, does not need a dog park, but that a small one in town would be good. Emerson field was favored, but with better fencing since it would be a shared facility.
- There was strong sentiment for improved education of dog owners about dog etiquette, whether there is a dog park or not.

Although Kate Stout could not be in attendance, she had emailed us information about the Hyannis/Barnstable dog park. The funding was through the Stanton Foundation, Friends of Barnstable Dog Parks, and the Town of Barnstable. Their "Guiding Principles: Park Design" is worth referencing should we get to that point. Once again, the importance of self-regulation was stressed.

Anne questioned what kind of authority we would want to give to any type of Standing Committee for a dog park.

It was suggested that someone write a follow-up Letter to the Editor in the Journal thanking the attendees of the hearing and including an email address for further comment from the public. Bob volunteered to set up the email.

At our July 10 meeting we will set up a timeline for regular meetings so we can deliver our final report in early December. We will outline all we have done so far and why it was done. We will discuss what still needs to be done, including the possibility of field trips.

Perhaps we should try a regional approach in our planning by inviting someone from the Carlisle and Acton dog park committees to attend one of our meetings. It was also noted that we need to plan out how to work with the NRC restrictions, encouraging a positive approach.

Our guest, Kyle Coulter, is the campaign manager for Benjamin Blumenthal who is running for state representative Cory Atkins' seat. He attended our meeting because his candidate is aware that dog parks are becoming hot button issues in the area. He encouraged the idea of a regional study, noting that his candidate is a dog owner! He relayed how Ben is trying "to encourage best practices of human and canine behavior".

The meeting adjourned at 8:25.

Our next meeting is July 10 at 5:30 in the Select Board Room at the Town House.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Richardson
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