

**Parks and Recreation Commission Special Meeting - September 20, 2022, 7:00 PM**

**VILLAGE HALL AT THE REGATTA 123 MAMARONECK AVENUE, MAMARONECK, NY 10543**

Attendees: Tina Maresca, Brittany Ross, Tim O'Connor, Carlo Reca, Karrie Sergio, Kristen Vetter, Cindy Fasolino

Absent: Heather Castellani Milboer, Manny Rawlings

Present: Jason Pinto, Jeff Ahne, Nora Lucas

**Opening:**

Tina asked for a motion to open the meeting

**Dog Park Discussion:**

The Dog Park Ad Hoc Subcommittee met on 9/14 at HIP to revisit the site on the BPR next to the Waste Water Treatment Plant and the grassy area on Rushmore Ave on the West Basin side. They went over all the pros and cons of each again and ultimately the majority agreed that the Rushmore location is the better location for a dog park but the hesitancy is that they are unsure if it would be approved there due to resident opposition, parking concerns, and the protected marsh, however, they felt it is worth giving it a chance as the space is open, underutilized, and people already bring their dogs there now.

The PRC discussed it at length and went over all the locations that were ever looked at; Stanley Ave Park, Ward Ave Park, Taylor's Lane, Greenhaven Rd, HIP flagpole/county pier, HIP Rushmore Ave West Basin, and HIP BPR by the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Resident opposition is a big hurdle wherever the dog park is proposed.

The concerns that came up about the Waste Water Treatment Plant location is by adding a dog park to that site it brings further congestion to an extraordinarily busy part of HIP that is highly used by residents primarily engaging in soccer and baseball. Noises from referee whistles, screaming kids, the crack of a baseball bat, and flying soccer/baseballs that could accidentally end up in the dog park, could be dangerous for the dogs and dog owners if the dog park is in this location. There are hundreds of kids at this location daily between soccer and baseball and there may be children who are fearful of dogs being in such close proximity. The loud noises from the traffic on BPR are not conducive to the kind of atmosphere that a dog park should have and could also be a danger to dogs if there was a runaway dog incident. This location also takes away any possible expansion of much needed space for playing fields in that area. There is some field work to be done over the next several years which will cause soccer to lose some playing fields, so they may desperately need that space as well. Any special events that take place in the Harbor such as concerts, festivals, carnivals, fireworks, etc. will not come along well with a dog park in that area either.

The PRC strongly feels the Rushmore Avenue site around the West Basin is the better location for many reasons. This area allows the dog park to be larger than the minimum 1 acre that is needed for a dog park. It is quieter as there is no soccer or baseball in this location and there are no other events that take

place in this area of the park. While there is a playground, there are far fewer children playing in this location and we would be able to keep a safe distance from the playground. Port Chester dog park is also next to a playground. Residents are already bringing their dogs to this location now, many of whom walk there, and while there is no parking directly next to the site there is parking at the Harbor which would be just a short walk around the sea wall, or there is parking on Boston Post Road, or on public side streets that do not have parking restrictions. If required, we could look into carving out just a couple of handicap parking spots where the access curb is already in place with a simple gravel parking pad. We would keep in mind sight lines and not put the dog park too close to the protected marsh or the neighboring resident's property.

Dogs would have to be licensed and a permit required to use the dog park. If the dog park has to be open to the public we can charge a different price for non-residents.

Nora said with the current site, the HCZMC is still waiting on an engineering plan that the Village hasn't provided, we need clarification on what the HCZMC is looking for and who is responsible for doing it. One concern the HCZMC has is dog poop near the water and this new location will be a heavier environmental lift so changing the location looks like it would delay the dog park. Fencing is delayed anyway but we can't order fencing until the site is found consistent by the HCZMC with the LWRP and the BOT authorizes it. In response to the issue of dog poop close to the water the argument was made that there are dogs pooping there now and there is no enforcement so the dog park would actually help mitigate that by fencing the area and providing poop bags for collection. The HCZMC wants to see a schematic, the BPR is a protected viewscape so they need to know the fence isn't going to block the view there, she doesn't think the viewscape comes from Rushmore so that's less of an issue, but with either site there needs to be a plan. The question was raised by a resident about alienation of the area. Parkland alienation occurs when a municipality wishes to sell, lease or discontinue the use of municipal parkland, that is not the case here as the dog park would be a recreational space.

Tina wanted to know if the committee thinks the old location is still a viable location if Rushmore doesn't go through. While the committee no longer feels the location on BPR is the best spot they don't want to take it off the table just yet. Greenhaven Rd could still be an option but it would need parking and would be more expensive.

A revised recommendation will have to go the BOT and then back to the HCZMC to ensure this would not have a negative environmental impact. The PRC voted and unanimously agreed to change our recommendation to the Rushmore Ave location. Tina will send an email to the BOT on behalf of the PRC.

Meeting adjourned.