



Notes submitted by John Williams

A small group of us met with Melinda Pearson, Omaha Director of Parks, Recreation, and Public Property, on Friday, September 24th. Melinda brought 4 additional employees from the Parks and Recreation department who have experience working with the creation and maintenance of the Hefflinger Dog Park.

We began by discussing a few of the criteria the Parks and Recreation would look for in order to have a successful dog park:

Minimum space required of 100' x 100' for a single dog park

Minimum space required of 100' x 200' for a split dog park

Off-street parking required near dog park

Due to runoff issues, dog park cannot be close to bodies of water

Dog park should not be directly adjacent to a neighborhood

Air-lock entrance into park

Fencing around existing trees so they are not destroyed by urine

A 100' x 100' space is roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ acre. This is a relatively small space compared to the Hefflinger Park dimensions. The all dog area is about 5 acres and the small dog area is 2.5 acres. The 100' x 100' foot area was used as a point of reference on a map the Parks and Recreation Department provided for the meeting. The space helped us gain perspective of space within Hanscom Park and fencing costs. Our intention is to make the park larger than 100' x 100' and to have a separate small dog area.

Melinda described some of the roles and responsibilities that are shared between the City of Omaha and Omaha Dog Park Advocates at Hefflinger Park.

City of Omaha

Fence Maintenance (once established)

Trash Collection

Mulch / Rock entrance area into dog park

Water lines (once established)

Mowing

Omaha Dog Park Advocates

All signage at entrance and within park

Plastic bags for dog waste clean up

Jugs to hold plastic bags

Cost to run water lines and water fountain

Cost to fence perimeter of park



After reviewing the criteria and roles/responsibilities, it was discussed that north-central section of Hanscom Park may be the best space for a dog park. Based on the original locations review by the Midtown Dog Park Group, this would be location #4 on the map Brian created. The Parks and Recreations Department staff indicated potential funding could be available in the budget to increase off-street parking by adding additional 90 degree parking along the road directly east of the greenhouse. The parking lots directly north and south of the greenhouse could also act as appropriate off-street parking to accommodate dog park visitors. The funding may be available as early as Spring 2011. Additionally, an abandoned asphalt path runs through the area. As part of a potential long-term plan, the old path could be improved and appropriated for use by dog park visitors who are walking to/from the street into the park. The space was large with established trees. The space is far enough inside the park and sits below street level to not distract neighboring homes.

The greatest cost associated with the creation of a dog park is fencing. The Parks and Recreation Department staff stated we should expect a 6' fence for a 100' x 100' area with an air-lock entrance would cost between \$6k - \$8k. One of the advantages the Hefflinger Dog Park had was the existing fencing from the ball fields.

Our meeting concluded with a discussion regarding a few sources for funding. With multiple neighborhood associations represented by the Midtown Dog Park group, we recognized that each neighborhood may be able to apply for similar grants. A few suggestions for grant applications included:

- Mayor's grant
- Mutual of Omaha
- Kiewit
- Keller Williams
- Parks Foundation

Overall, our meeting was very informative and productive. The Parks and Recreation Department were enthusiastic about the potential dog park location in Hanscom Park. We have a better understanding of some of the challenges that were overcome during the creation of the Hefflinger Dog Park. We also have a better understanding of the roles / responsibilities of The City and The Community.

Our next step will be to meet with leadership from Omaha Dog Park Advocates to determine if we join their group to build and maintain our dog park or if we need to create our own group through our neighborhood associations. Once we have made that decision, we can begin planning the design of the dog park with the Parks and Recreation Department, start grant writing, and initiate fundraising.

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