May 2010 Dogpark Task Force Events & Progress Summary

**4/27/10 MLK Park Public Information Meeting, hosted by Brad Bourn, MPRB Commissioner & John Irwin, MPRB President**

In attendance:

City Councilmember Elizabeth Glidden

Bob Fine, MPRB at large commissioner

Annie Young, MPRB at large commissioner

Paul Hokeness, MPRB Lakes District Manager and District staff: Alex Zachary, District planner, Brian Cornell, MLK Director, others

David Wheeler—bd of estimation and taxation

KF Dogpark Task Force

Over 80 community participants

*Commissioners and KF Dogpark Task Force members described the history of the initiative, outlined the current site proposal (small dog area behind tennis center, all dog area in SE corner along sound wall,) and the benefits of creating a dog park at MLK. Below are key points or questions from the discussion that followed.*

Hokeness:

-Last year the sound wall went up, fought a huge battle with MNDOT to get new path, specifically built for maintenance vehicles.

-Maintained turf grass, all irrigated (under all dog area.) Kiss grass goodbye. We haul in wood chips twice a year, fall and spring, then refresh throughout the year. We have to look into the irrigation system. Some sprinkler heads and drainage covers…will have to do some checking.

-Small dog area—some is MNDOT right of way. There will be a lot of red tape.

E Glidden: MNDOT district director is willing to work with park board on these issues.

Participant: very supportive, live nearby, dog owner. However, concern about area behind tennis bubbles because snow is piled up there by bobcat, it gets no sun and thus becomes a frozen over area in winter. Not sure it can work back there. Don’t think it should go up to tennis bubble.

Hokeness: Spending $2-3000/year for maintenance at Lake of Isles—have a dumpster there. No water there, don’t distribute bags anymore. Had deaths of small dogs, now have small dog area, also used by dogs with disabilities, older dogs.

Participant: in support of separate small dog area.

Charlie: this came up often at FM.

Brook L-T pledged support of neighbors and other partners for fundraising, maintenance and clean up going forward. Asking only for ‘the normal things’: wood chips, poop removal.

Staff: Have you discussed phasing?—economy is tight.

Ben: no we haven’t, but we’re willing. Plan is flexible.

*Q: Price of fencing?*

4 ft black coated fencing: $16.50/ft installed.

*Q: With parking restrictions coming in on 1st Ave, what consideration have you taken for local residents who already will have problems finding parking spaces?*

Targeted at users arriving on foot, not anticipating large increase in parking demand.

*Q: How many people here would use it and would walk to it?*

Lots of hands.

Participant: We’re talking about costs, but what about quality of life? I support it, want a neighborhood where I know my neighbors; dog park creates cultural capital, very important to me.

*Q: Anyone here who is not supportive, or has concerns?*

No.

*Q: What are Mpls./Park police going to do? Will there be community policing?*

5th Precinct liaison is on board.

Park police officer: in planning phases we will work with planners on crime prevention aspects, etc. Dog parks do bring more people, more eyes, all positive. I’d anticipate issues to go down rather than up.

**Brad Bourn: Next steps:** Lots of issues that haven’t been addressed. Board will be addressing; set up meetings with staff and designers. Will probably result in 1 or 2 more public hearings. We do cost estimates, then we come back to you for prioritization. Then get letters in support of specific plans. Then to committee, approval, then public hearing, approved, to full board.

*Q: Timeline? For estimates…*

Alex: we need to get details of proposal. Then typically do a mailing 3 block radius, run ad in Strib, 2 wks before official public meeting; then a public hearing, ad + notification of those at public meeting. 6-8 weeks to get to public hearing?

*Q: What works and what doesn’t in other parks, things to keep in mind?*

Annie Young: every one is different. Biggest problem often is about water. Other big issue is lighting, and we hear there will be big volunteer groups to maintain them, but after a while that fades.

Charlie: we are looking at best practices across the country.

Bob Fine: you’ve heard most of the issues tonight. Generally they’re working and people are happy with them.

**Late April/early May:** *Between the public information meeting and the MPRB presentation, MPRB staff contacted members of the Task Force to talk about an alternative all-dog area. They proposed looking at the NW corner of MLK Park. This area was one of the original sites explored early in the process, and staff asked the Task Force to look at it again as a more feasible alternative than the SE corner of the park. Task Force leaders agreed to consider this alternative, while moving forward with the SE corner as part of the official proposal to the MPRB.*

**May 5 MPRB Presentation**

The “ML King Dog Park” proposal was officially submitted to MPRB, and introduced at the Board meeting during ‘Open Time’ by Brook Lemm-Tabor, with other Task Force members present in support. It was referred to the Planning Committee for consideration.

**May 20 Meeting with Lakes district staff Paul Hokeness and Alex Zachary**

Dogpark Task Force leaders Ben, Brook & Jeff, Sarah G

Summary: As detailed in Jeff's email and drawings, over the course of the meeting details emerged of a layout and design that both Dogpark leaders and staff currently see as workable, and as a result the Dogpark leaders agreed to take the SE corner option off the table at least for the time being, siting the all-dog area in the NW corner. All involved see the NW corner as a crucial visual approach to MLK park, requiring decorative fencing, careful landscaping, and a plan that is viable and visually appealing over the long term.

Many design options and details were discussed, and Dogpark leaders left the meeting with cost estimates for some elements from staff (e.g. rough cost of new path installation), contact information for key people (e.g. park forester for discussion of landscaping options, park plumber) and other information relevant to getting cost estimates for fencing, landscape and other elements based on the attached designs and dimensions. Remaining questions were identified as noted below: lighting for small dog area, use of patio area attached to YouthLine building, specifics of water installation in NW corner, and exact placement of new path north of main building.

Alex also introduced the need for an 'adopt-a-park' agreement regarding ongoing stewardship to provide accountability in both directions and the ability to measure success. Sue McGrath/Michelle Kellogg were named as MPRB contacts for this.

The plan is to schedule a public meeting based on this preferred design as soon as possible, while all concurrently work on cost estimates and some of the remaining questions.

*Next steps agreed:*

-Dogpark task force will provide drawings and more exact dimensions to represent the current consensus proposal (done)

-Dogpark task force will work on getting bids/cost estimates based on the current design/dimensions (Jeff take lead)

-Dogpark task force will explore landscaping and water sourcing options for NW corner with identified park staff specialists

-Dogpark task force will connect with tennis center leadership (Paul supplying contact info)

-Dogpark task force will explore options for sustainable structure (e.g. becoming KFNA committee) for adopt a park agreement

-Paul H. will look into power source options and cost of installing lights for small dog area (w/Jim Holmquist)

-Paul H. will provide Dogpark task force with contact information for the tennis center (done)

-Alex will communicate with Dogpark task force regarding date for public meeting--as soon as possible given 20 day notice needed

-Alex will get the ball rolling with Tom Johnson for a mailing for a public meeting

**June 2 Dog Park Task Force Meeting**

Our message at this time: Park Board has asked that we consider the northwest corner of Martin Luther King Park as an all-dog area which we agreed to.

In addition to updates on above, other reports--

Lisa Goodman’s suggestions:

* Approach metro transit to move bus stop across 40th street to the car wash, to lessen bus sound and get away from park and the neighbors. Present the dog park as part of a package of improvements for neighbors.
* Build stronger relationship with John Erwin, better ally at this point.

Sarah LR conversation with Brad Bourn:

* Did walk through with Goodman and was embarrassed about the quality of Mpls parks—needs the NW corner especially to look really good. Needs this understood by his staff before he will support this.
* He was talking to Alex about the public meeting—and needs assurances of the appearance of NW corner before it moves forward.
* Asks that we consider not doing the small dog park., or doing as phase II.

Task Force members agree that phasing is possible, but are not willing to take small dog area out of the plan.

Next steps:

Task Force and staff will get pricing/estimates as possible for current plan as well as SE corner option, noting where there are unknowns

* Materials Costs-- Jeff
* Lighting, drainage and irrigation maps and contacts in park board—Sarah LR
* Send planting list and ask if these are ok…get list from urban landscaping project Sherry Brooks 612.369.7509 s.brooks@minneapolispark --Sarah LR

Jonathan has map of utilities, etc. underground, will share with Jeff & staff.

Before public meeting, once date is set, Task Force needs to have conversations with all areas of potential resistance, including

* Tennis Center
* Youthline
* Neighbors (doorknocking)

*Yappy Hour: June 19, 3-6 PM, Rau + Barber*

Food: olive pizza? SLR follow up. Chef shack? C and G’s bar.b.q? Cyclone fencing? Or other way to separate food from dogs if food in parking lot.

Drink: keg of beer and keg of root beer. Wine from Art Show. Other non-alcoholic. SLR can get beer at cost from Lyndale; Brook checking Vine park

Dog treats + Big bowls of h2o

Fair or vendors? Task Force says no vendors, yes let’s try for sponsorship of event….publicity $50 ….Sarah LR to follow up

Photography: John Barber? Sarah G check. Bob Schrank….SLR contact. Jonathan. Neighbor of Ben’s…

Volunteers: All hands on deck! We’ll do set up early in the day, like 9 am, then we can all show up ~2:15/2:30 and be ready to welcome guests by 3:00.

Outreach before Yappy Hour:

* Ben on facebook
* Ben call Jake Weyer
* Sarah LR call Fox 9 connection, Alex Kendall
* The Talent Show this weekend—tabling both days
* FM 2nd Sundays: June 13th
* Flyer: wait a week for sponsors, then distribute widely, task force and business sponsors.

Possible opportunities after 1st Yappy Hour

* Rose Fest, July 17?? Partner on table with CFPA
* Dog Parking at FM
* FM 2nd Sundays
* Additional Yappy Hours, with raffle or door prizes, and/or silent auction, donated by business sponsors