



MEMORANDUM

To: City of Saint Anthony Village Parks & Environmental Commission
From: Jeremy Gumke, Public Works Director and Charlie Yunker, City Manager
Date: September 12, 2022 Parks & Environmental Commission Meeting
Request: Discussion on Dog Park Feasibility

BACKGROUND

At its annual Goal Setting session, the City Council identified an Action Step for staff in 2022, to explore the feasibility of adding a dog park in St. Anthony.

Staff researched the best practices in dog park design in order to identify possible location(s) for a dog park somewhere in the City. Attached to this memo is a report from the City of Ann Arbor, MI on 'Recommendations and Guidelines for Dog Park Site Selection, Design, Operations and Maintenance', which summarized optimal dog park design guidelines.

Staff is presenting the initial information gathered for the Commission's input and any ideas on alternatives the staff have not considered. The input will be conveyed to the City Council for their consideration.

This commission in 2014 reviewed the topic of a dog park, and the focus was the ice rink in Central Park for a dual-use. After hearing from an official from the Minneapolis Park Board at the time, it was determined that:

"The commission consensus after her presentation was that this project would be a real challenge for the following reasons:

- Area chosen not large enough for Dog Park.
- The need for a different type of surface other than grass (wood chips are the best surface).
- Fencing around the rink would need to be upgraded.
- Potential noise problems for nearby residents.
- It is necessary regardless of the size and layout, separation between large and small dog is absolutely necessary (reduces dog fights)."

FINDINGS

The attached report (and other sources reviewed by staff that were not included) summarized best practices for placement on Page 6-7. Staff focused on this section for evaluating potential sites for a dog park before considering other aspects such as design or management. Key components are listed below:

Size: The recommended minimum size for dog parks varies considerably among cities, but is generally between ½ acre and one acre.

Buffer from Residential: A few cities provide definitive distances from residences, varying from 50 feet to 200 feet. All strive to minimize conflicts and include guidelines such as: making sure that noise and activity levels are no more than other park uses, importance of screening or visual buffers, and having a minimal impact on residences.

Parking: Recommendations include that parking should be readily accessible, close to the site, sufficient/adequate size, and convenient. There were no standards for size; rather it is important to consider parking when locating a dog park.

Use Conflict Avoidance: Guidelines include avoiding play areas and other recreational amenities, high use areas, natural areas and water sources, wildlife, trails, community gardens, and historic sites.

Staff reviewed the City's parks layout and usage and other city-owned property, and was unable to identify an appropriate location that would meet all or most of the key criteria above. So in order to add a dog park current usage and/or amenities would need to be eliminated. As a result, staff's opinion is integrating a dog park into the park system is not feasible at this time.

NEAREST DOG PARKS

The City's website list a handful of dog parks within a reasonable distance; the closest being the St. Anthony Parkway Off-Leash Dog Park about 2.5 miles from the City, located at 700 St. Anthony Parkway Minneapolis, MN 55418. Also, Silverwood Park within St. Anthony includes a one-mile dog trail that is maintained year-round.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FOR COMMISSION FEEDBACK

Below are the specific items for discussion and feedback for staff:

- Does the Commission have any additional thoughts or observations?
- Other considerations for staff?

NEXT STEPS

- Input will be conveyed to the City Council for their consideration.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Ann Arbor Report