



TOWN OF HUDSON
PARK COMMISSION
Division of Recreation
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HUDSON DOG PARK – PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

Updated: 02/28/25

Why a Dog Park and what is it?

Think of a dog park as a safe and secure park that will serve residents and their dogs with the opportunity to play, learn and explore while off-leash. Dog parks provide benefits of both physical exercise and behavior training. They provide a chance for dogs to socialize with other dogs and humans; and help them become comfortable around other dogs and people in a way that is different than on-leash situations. Dog parks equally benefit the owners, as they become hubs for social interaction, provide opportunities to learn from others on how to train your dog, and provide a sense of neighborhood community.

When it began?

Residents have requested the town build a dog park for close to 10 years...

2018 - Town hires consultant to perform Community Outreach Survey and Public Input Sessions/Forums geared at assessing the community's wants/needs specific to Recreation. Final report identifies that developing an off-leash Dog Park in Hudson is a top priority for residents.

2019 – Recreation Town-Wide Master Plan is performed. One of the planning goals directly tied to this effort was to establish viable locations for a dog park.

February 2020 – Park Commission commit to prioritizing the dog park project based on planning efforts performed in both 2018 and 2019.

March 2020 – Covid strikes. All projects put on hold with the exception of the Centennial Beach Renovation Project.

Spring 2022 – Recreation Department connects with leaders from other municipalities who have designed and constructed dog parks while at the Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association Annual conference. This opens the door for Hudson Recreation to connect directly with the Stanton Foundation, who offers grant programs for municipalities in MA who seek to design and build dog parks.

September 2022 – Hudson Recreation meet with 3 community members, linked to Hud Dog (“a citizen group in Hudson, MA formed to build, support, and maintain a dog park in town”). Hudson Recreation informs group that they are ready to move the project forward and asks for their support in researching what other communities have developed for rules/policies that govern dog parks.

October 2022 – Hud Dog shares, with Hudson Recreation, a Dog Park Proposal document that had been created in the spring of 2016. [CLICK HERE TO: VIEW Hud Dog - Dog Park Proposal](#)

Progress Made to Date:

November 2, 2022

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

F. Update on Dog Park planning

Recreation staff held an introductory meeting with three residents who had previously expressed a high level of interest in assisting. The residents stated they would be willing to assist with the project and they were confident others would be interested in helping out as well.

Mr. Santos stated that he had already been in communication with the Stanton Foundation regarding grant funding, where grants are available for 100% design costs, up to \$25,000.0 and 90% hard construction costs, up to \$250,000.00. Mr. Santos stated that he felt confident in the Town's ability to secure both types of grants to support this project. Mr. Santos stated that while the Master Plan called out the Dog Park being built at Sauta Fields, there may be other locations that should be explored such as Farina Field or Apsley Park. Mr. Santos concluded by stating that in order to proceed with a grant application, a final location must be identified by the Town and asked the Commission how they wish to proceed in identifying that location.

Mr. Bowen stated that the Sauta site may be an easier build, as parking infrastructure and access to water is already in place at this location.

Mr. Chaves stated that access in and out of Farina may have its own set of challenges and also that he preferred not to take any action until Mr. Roan was present and could weigh in.

Mr. Bowen suggested that Mr. Santos start exploring firms who have recently designed Dog Parks for future consideration.

November 30, 2022

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

B. Dog Park Planning Update

Mr. Santos shared with the Commission that process the Town of Northborough had recently undertaken to develop an off-leash dog park. Mr. Santos referenced the contract and scope of work that had been provided from the Town of Northborough, stating that initial design costs for their project was \$35,500 and an additional \$31,000 was slated to be allocated to complete the final designs and cover some construction administration project costs.

Mr. Chaves stated that he was not surprised by the design fees paid by Northborough to date as they seemed appropriate for the scope of work performed.

Mr. Santos asked the Commission for guidance on further engaging with the residents in the community, asking specifically if the Commission wanted to handle the public engagement and outreach phase of the overall design process in-house or if they'd prefer an outside design firm handle this phase of the project. Both Mr. Chaves and Mr. Bowen stated that the design firm is selected to work with the Town to design the dog park should also be responsible for the public engagement and outreach phase or the project.

Mr. Santos stated that he supported this approach and would begin survey other communities together base-line information on their projects as well as compile a list of design firms that have been involved in design and construction of dog parks using Stanton Foundation funding.

December 3, 2023:

Downtown Holiday Stroll

Director of Recreation runs into and has conversation with individuals involved with Hud Dog at the Downtown Holiday Stroll. Director of Recreation informs them that the Park Commission voted to hire a design firm to assist with public engagement and input process, in addition to typical design related services; and that Recreation Department would be organizing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be sent out after the holidays soliciting such services.

December 21, 2022

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

A. Update on Dog Park Planning Progress

Mr. Santos informed the Park Commission that he felt strongly there was no need to have an outside firm assist the Town in identifying possible locations for a dog park. Mr. Santos referred to the Community Innovation Sessions held many years back, that clearly identified the desire to have a dog park in Hudson. This subsequently led into the completion of the Recreation Master Plan where one of the primary goals and objectives of the stud was to identify up to three locations for a dog park. Continuing on Mr. Santos stated that while the Recreation Master Plan only resulted in identifying one location for a dog park, he felt that Farina field should also be explored as it was an underutilized property and many residents had expressed interest in having a dog park built at this location. In closing Mr. Santos stated that he did not envision a dog park being built at any other locations, given the current and near future programming needs. Discussion followed. All commissioners expressed their support to move forward with exploring both Sauta Fields and Farina field as possible locations for a dog park.

Mr. Chaves motioned to move forward with securing an outside firm to evaluate both Sauta and Farina fields for a dog park to built upon. Seconded by Mr. Bowen and carried...

Vote: 3 – 0, in favor

February 1, 2023

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

B. Update on Dog Park Planning

Mr. Santos stated that the RFP to secure a designer/consultant would soon be sent out to prospective firms.

February 14, 2023

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) SOLICITATION

The Town of Hudson, Park Commission – Division of Recreation is seeking a qualified consultant to assist with Initial Planning, Site Selection, Design Development and Preparation of bid-ready Construction Documents for a Dog park located in Hudson, MA. The Town intends to seek both Design and Construction Grant Funds through the Stanton Foundation Canine Welfare Grant Programs. Solicitation/RFP sent out via email to 24 individual firms.

[CLICK HERE TO: VIEW HUDSON DOG PARK RFP](#)

March 6, 2023

Request for Proposal (RFP) - Submission Deadline

Hudson Recreation received proposals from four (4) Design Firms. Hudson Recreation reviews proposals and conducts firm interviews as needed.

March 22, 2023

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

A. Progress Update on Dog Park Project and Designer Firm Selection Process

Mr. Santos provided an update on the RFP process, the proposals they had received and associated pricing. Mr. Santos requested that the Park Commission consider recommending Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture Inc (KZLA) to the Select Board, as the Designer Firm/Consultant to execute this project.

Mr. Bowen stated that everything looked to be in order and that he supported this recommendation. Mr. Roan stated that he had no issues.

Mr. Chaves stated the proposal from KZLA looked good and that he supported the recommendation.

Mr. Bowen motioned to recommend recommending Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture Inc (KZLA) to the Select Board, as the Designer Firm/Consultant for the Hudson Dog Park project.

April 26, 2023

KZLA met with Recreation Department Staff to perform initial site visits of both Farina Field and Sauta

Field Complex. Information gathered was utilized to develop the framework for the Public Input Session.

May 16, 2023 – PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Meeting was held in person at the Quinn Middle School. Meeting notifications (custom post cards) were mailed to 2,246 individuals with registered dogs located in located Hudson. Additionally, notification of the meeting was sent to 125 abutters, located within 100 feet of both Farina Field and the Sauta Field Complex.

[CLICK HERE TO: VIEW Public Input Session Notification](#)

[CLICK HERE TO: VIEW Public Input Session Presentation](#)

[CLICK HERE TO: VIEW Public Input Session Comment Boards](#)

[CLICK HERE TO: VIEW Questions & Comments from Public Input Session](#)

May 24, 2023

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

A. Update on Dog Park project and review of Community Input Session held on May 16, 2023

Mr. Santos informed the Commission that 29 residents attended the meeting and further that the meeting served as a great informational session, as well as gave those in attendance an opportunity to express their concerns and/or support for the project and the locations being considered. Mr. Santos continued on saying that he and Mr. Hannon had been recently seeking out any other possible locations, to ensure that all potential properties had been considered for the dog park, but have not had much success in finding any other viable locations.

Mr. Bowen stated that both sites have their challenges, that he wants to see KZLA move forward with their scope of work to provide insight and preliminary cost estimates on both locations, so that the Commission could then choose one site and move this project forward.

Mr. Hannon stated that he agreed with Mr. Bowen.

Mr. Chaves asked if CPC funds could be used on any town property. Discussion followed.

Mr. Santos stated that he would be following up with KZLA soon and that they would soon be releasing a survey to gather additional community input.

May – June 2023 – ONLINE SURVEY

Online Dog park Survey completed. 129 respondents.

[CLICK HERE TO: VIEW Hudson Dog Park Online Survey Summary](#)

June – August 2023: EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS

Location: Forestvale Road (small abandoned parking lot and wooded area behind Stop & Shop, directly adjacent to Forestvale Cemetery, at intersection of Forestvale and Technology)

Determination: not suitable. Privately owned.

Location: 911 Municipal Drive (wooded area directly in front of Police Station, along Cox Street)

Determination: not suitable. KZLA reported that wetland/protected environmental resource areas were located in a large portion of this suggested area.

Location: Assabet River Rail Trail, Main Street (the sloped open grass area adjacent to the ARRT parking lot, directly across from the Main Street Cemetery)

Determination: not suitable. KZLA reported, “the narrowness of this site is really limiting...for good dog use and for the social aspect of the dog park for people.”

Location: 90 Technology Drive (2 separate areas of woodland and open field, adjacent to Intel Field), property under the jurisdiction of the Cemetery Commission.

Determination: either may be suitable, however one area was found to be more favorable than the other. Use of the property for a dog park, land ownership and subsequent impact on potential grant

funding to be explored further. See the [CLICK HERE TO: VIEW 90 Technology Drive Summary Report](#) Additionally, various other locations were suggested to the Recreation Department as potential sites for a dog park by residents. Some were privately owned and therefore not eligible for the grant funds, the project is seeking and others would involve displacing an existing program/facility user group in order to accommodate the project. Due to these circumstances, the other suggested sites were not explored further.

August 23, 2023

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

B. Park Commission to receive update on Dog Park project and discuss next steps

Mr. Santos stated that he had not progressed as far as he had hoped on the dog park project. However, since the last Park Commission meeting KZLA had met with recreation staff at the Intel Field property, off of Technology Drive, in July to assess two separate locations surrounding the field that could potentially serve as sites of the new dog park; and that Mr. Santos had met with resident to explore a potential location just off the rail trail as well. As a result, KZLA had responded with input on all three locations stating that the rail trail location was not conducive to constructing a dog park and that only one of the locations visited at the Intel Field was suitable for a dog park, while the other would be too far away from any parking spaces.

Mr. Santos informed the Park Commission that he had reached out the Cemetery Commission requesting to discuss the potential use of Intel field property for a dog park, as the property was under their jurisdiction and was still awaiting a response.

September 27, 2023

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

B. Park Commission to receive update on Dog Park project, specific to potential use of property currently under the jurisdiction of the Cemetery Commission

Mr. Santos stated that he had met with the cemetery commission on September 15, 2023 to discuss use of a portion of cemetery land for the development of a dog park, adjacent to the existing Intel Field. As a result, and while no formal vote was taken by the cemetery commission, each member stated that they would be open to exploring the possible use, however each commissioner specifically stated that they would most likely not support the transfer of land ownership to the Park Commission for such purposes.

Mr. Santos continued on saying that if the cemetery commission was not willing to transfer land to the Park Commission, then use of CPC funds to cover project costs at this location would not be possible.

Mr. Bowen stated that he understood the position of the cemetery commission members and that selecting the final location should be driven by the ability to maximize grants funds, while keeping costs as low as possible for residents.

Mr. Chaves stated that he too understands feedback provided by the cemetery commissioners. He continued on saying that, access to and approval for use of CPC funds for this specific project may be challenged less at Town Meeting in comparison to requesting funding via a stand-alone capital plan item at Town Meeting. Mr. Chaves requested that Mr. Santos and Mr. Hannon share their opinions on the matter.

Mr. Hannon stated that a small dog park at Sauta Fields may be the best solution based on the information currently available.

Mr. Santos stated that he is unsure of how much public support this project has currently. Additionally, that he did not see the use of cemetery land as viable option based on his meeting with the cemetery commission; and felt the costs to develop a dog park at Farina and its proximity to the homes of abutters would pose far greater challenges in comparison to developing a small dog park at Sauta Fields. No Further discussion was had.

Mr. Santos and Mr. Hannon will follow up with KZLA to inform them of what was discussed, the

outcome of the meeting with the cemetery commission and to determine the next steps in site selection and planning.

October 18, 2023

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

B. Dog Park Planning Progress Update

Mr. Santos informed the commission that he and Assistant Director Dan Hannon had met with KZLA to relay the feedback received from the cemetery commission, as well as share the details of what had recently been discussed with the park commissioners. Mr. Santos stated that he requested KZLA prepare basic design schematics and corresponding cost estimates for a future dog park at both Farina Field and the Sauta Field complex; to be presented to the Park Commission at their meeting to be held on November 8, 2023. Mr. Santos concluded by stating that the deadline for the Stanton Foundation Dog Park Design Grant was December 31, 2023 and therefore it was imperative that the Park Commission select a location on the evening of November 8, 2023 in order to allow enough time to prepare a successful grant application.

October 18, 2023

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

A. Park Commission to meet with KZLA to review proposed concept/schematic plans and corresponding cost estimates for a dog park at either Farina Field and Sauta Field Complex.

Mr. Roan announced to all in attendance that Kyle Zick Landscape Architects (KZLA) would be presenting to the Park Commission and that after the presentation he would open the meeting for public comments.

KZLA representatives (Kyle Zick and Rob Barella) presented the Park Commission with the feedback from the Community input Session and online Survey that had been completed during the late spring and early summer months. They continued on saying that throughout the summer they worked with the Recreation Staff to explore locations other than Farina and Sauta Fields but those alternate locations were not conducive to building a dog park. As a result, and as stated in their presentation, KZLA developed some initial concept plans for a dog park at both Farina Field and Sauta Fields. KZLA spoke to the pros and cons of each site, then reviewed the construction cost estimates based on the initial concept plans they had developed (Farina - \$413,915 / Sauta - \$282,571).

Mr. Roan opened the meeting for public comment:

David Ropes, 8 Palmeri Drive – Concerns with narrow access road off Cox Street and challenges with entering and exiting the site at that location. Concerns that pea stone surfacing may get too hot for dogs. Asked if maintenance costs had been determined yet at either site? Stated that he had polled the neighbors directly around Farina Field and many did not want the dog park built in that location. Concluded by stating that many residents are in very close proximity to Farina Field and then submitted a packet of supporting documentation that included a petition from some residents who did not support the use of Farina Field for a dog park.

Dawn Blunt, 44 Brook Street – Concerns that Farina is not being considered as the priority location since people are currently using the space with their dogs. Stated that Sauta already has too much activity going on.

Christine Connor, 61 Brook Street – Stated that people park all over the place at Sauta, including along Main Street. Concerns with the concession area being too close to the Dog Park site. Stated that site is already noisy and loud, this would create additional noise. Asked if the dog park would have lights?

Patrick Kiley, 63 Brook Street – Stated that having lights would be an issue.

Mr. Santos stated that the grant funds do not require lights within the dog park but rather they are a nice to have amenity.

Jackie Jackson – 31 Brook Street – Asked what the process was to move this forward, the next steps? Mr. Santos replied stating that there was much yet to be done but once the Park Commission

determined a location, the Town could then pursue a design grant via the Stanton Foundation, where additional public meetings would be held in order to develop final plans and create construction ready documents.

Mr. Chaves stated that the Park Commission has to determine a location for the dog park in order to move the project forward; “a project that has been in the works for a very long time”.

Sam Kiley, 63 Brook Street – Concerned for the safety of children who frequent the Sauta Fields, especially on weekends.

Mr. Roan asked if there were any other comments. There were none. Mr. Roan announced that he would close the public comment session.

B. Park Commission to determine location for Hudson Dog Park.

Mr. Chaves stated that he has concerns with Farina Field both the layout and the access road as proposed, stating further that EMS services may share similar concerns with the ability to access the site and maneuver large vehicles once on the property. Continuing on Mr. Chaves stated that he understands and carefully listened to the concerns, specific to the Sauta field property, of the residents in attendance and felt that vehicle parking and how people move through the parking lot at Sauta Fields need to be carefully examined during the next phase of design in order to keep everyone safe.

Mr. Bowen stated that he loved the idea of building the dog park in an area where the natural landscape and trees would be incorporated in to the design; and also, that he felt a dog park as proposed at either site may only require 6-8 parking spots.

No further discussion.

Mr. Bowen motioned to select Sauta Fields as the final location to finalize designs and ultimately construct a dog park. Seconded by Mr. Chaves and carried...

Vote: 3 – 0, in favor

November 2023

Hudson Recreation prepares grant application to be submitted to the Stanton Foundation requesting funding for Phase Two: Design Services, to provide the town with 100% Design Plans, Cost Estimates and Bid-Ready Construction Documents. Note: grant application request requires Select Board authorization.

December 4, 2023

SELECT BOARD MEETING - MINUTES

7. General: b) Select Board to consider authorizing Steven Santos, Recreation Director to apply for the Stanton Foundation – Dog Park Design Grant.

On a motion by Ms. Congdon, seconded by Mr. Burks, the Board voted 4-0 to authorize Steven Santos, Recreation Director to apply for the Stanton Foundation – Dog Park Design Grant.

December 13, 2023

Hudson Recreation receives notification that the Stanton Foundation has awarded the Town of Hudson with a Design Grant in the amount of \$25,000.

January 8, 2024

SELECT BOARD MEETING - MINUTES

General: e) Select Board to consider accepting a grant from the Stanton Foundation for the Dog Park Design in the amount of \$25,000.00. On a motion by Mr. Burks, seconded by Ms. Congdon, the Board voted 3-0 to accept a grant from the Stanton Foundation for the Dog Park Design in the amount of \$25,000.00.

January - February 2024

Phase Two: Design Services begin. Site survey(s) and wetland delineations are completed.

March - April 2024

Initial plans are developed using site survey and wetland delineation reports. Project team meets with Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development to review potential environmental impacts and better understand project design challenges with respect to protected areas and resources.

May 2, 2024

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

7. Old Business:

A. Dog Park Project Update

Mr. Santos reviewed the design development progress slides that KZLA had presented during a meeting held on April 11, 2024 with Mr. Santos, Mr. Hannon and Mr. Roan. The design concepts presented were broken into Option A and B. Option A having a less formal interior landscaped dog park and Option B providing a more formalized landscaped dog park, with designated walking paths, seating and other amenities. Mr. Santos expressed that during this meeting KZLA had informed those present that adding a separate parking area directly off of Main street in order to access the dog park site would pose several challenges. Specifically, KZLA stated that adding a new parking area would reduce the amount of usable space or square footage to be allocated to the dog park itself and that it may be difficult to design a safe entrance/exit to a new parking area directly from main street due to the grades, posted road speeds and curvature of the road.

Mr. Santos concluded by stating that those present at the meeting had determined the following:

- It would be best to utilize the existing parking lot at Sauta Fields, with the addition of some designated accessible parking spots immediately adjacent to the dog park and;

- Option B, designed to show a more formalized landscaped area with accessible pathways within the dog park, was the preferred approach.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Santos stated that both he and Mr. Hannon, along with Mr. Roan had suggested some modifications to be integrated into Option B that would improve pedestrian safety at the site, potentially relocate the accessible parking spots, define a location for the dumpster and add maintenance gates to the dog park area.

Mr. Santos informed the Commission that the current designs do not call for any lighting. Discussion followed.

The commissioners stated that while they were not opposed to exploring this amenity, it was not a top priority. Mr. Bowen stated that he would be in support of the Dog Park hours of use being limited to dawn to dusk, thus potentially eliminating the need for lighting. Discussion followed.

Mr. Santos asked if the Commission would prefer to host a final public meeting with the existing plans as presented to seek additional input or wait until Option B was further developed.

Both Mr. Chaves and Mr. Bowen stated that Option B should be further developed with any internal staff comments fully integrated into the plans, prior to soliciting public input once again.

June 2024

Dog Park project team continues to refine plans and begins preparing Notice of Intent to be filed with Hudson Conservation Commission and MA DEP.

June 12, 2024

PARK COMMISSION MEETING – MINUTES

5. Director's Report: A. Dog Park Project – Progress Update

Mr. Santos informed the Commission that KZLA was in the process of working through the NOI Filing submitted to the Hudson Conservation Commission as well as DEP. Mr. Santos stated that in the coming months he would also be arranging a meeting with DPW, Police and Fire to review the project. Mr. Santos concluded, stating that once all DEP, Hudson Conservation, DPW, Police and Fire project

requirements, comments and/or suggestions had been integrated into the plans, he would request that Commission host a public hearing to gather input from the general public one final time.

July 2024

Notice of Intent submitted to MA DEP and Hudson Conservation Commission on July 2, 2024. MA DEP requested additional documents and storm water reports on July 5, 2024. Discussions between Dog Park project team and DEP continue through July.

July 18, 2024

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Dog Park project team meets with the Hudson Conservation Commission to review the Notice of Intent filed for the Hudson Dog Park Project. Commissioners provide comments and recommendations; residents are also given an opportunity to provide feedback. Meeting was continued to August 1, 2024.

August 1, 2024

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Dog Park project team meets with the Hudson Conservation Commission for the second time to review the Notice of Intent filed for the Hudson Dog Park Project. Project team provides the Commission with updated plans based on comments and recommendations received at the previous ConComm meeting. At the time of the meeting, MA DEP had still not issued a DEP File Number. Meeting was continued to August 15, 2024.

August 2024

The documents and storm water reporting requested by MA DEP were submitted on August 2, 2024.

On August 6, 2024 MA DEP issued a project File Number in conjunction with the requirements that additional civil engineering work be performed as part of the NOI to demonstrate compliance with 310 CMR 10.58(4), as well as demonstrate (via test pits) that the rain garden meets design criteria outlined for bioretention areas and rain gardens in Chapter 2 Volume 2 of the MA Stormwater Handbook have been met.

In late August 2024, Dog Park project team secures civil engineering firm to provide the services needed to fulfill the MA DEP NOI requirements, as an added project expense.

September 4, 2024

PARK COMMISSION MEETING

5. Director's Report:

C. Dog Park Project – Progress Update

Mr. Santos informed the Commission that the designs/plans were approximately 75% complete and that since early June the consultants had been working through the NOI Filing with both the Hudson Conservation Commission and MA DEP. Additionally, that DEP had issued conditions and recommendations requiring the project team to secure outside professional services, thus increasing project design costs. Mr. Santos stated that he anticipates the NOI Filing and permit to be completed by the end of September and also that he and the project team from KZLA would be meeting with Police, Fire and DPW to review the project and the plans in late September.

6. New Business:

A. Park Commission to select a date to host a public input session related to the Hudson Dog Park

Mr. Santos reminded the Commission that they had announced a final public input session would be held to provide the general public an opportunity to review developed plans and solicit additional public input. Discussion Followed. The Commission determined that they would review the Dog Park project progress and plans with the general public at their next scheduled meeting, to be held on September 25, 2024 at 7:00pm and further that the meeting would be held in person. The Commission requested that

Mr. Santos secure a location and once done, advertise the meeting to the community.

September 18, 2024

Dog Park project team to meet with DPW and Fire to review project on September 18, 2024. A meeting will be held with HPD and Hudson's ACO in the near future, as well.

September 19, 2024

The "Dog Days at Centennial" community outreach event was held at Centennial Beach to promote the project, share progress made and solicit public input from dog owners.

September 25, 2024

PARK COMMISSION MEETING

7. Old Business:

A. Park Commission to meet with KZLA to review Dog Park Project Design/Plans, then solicit public input on dog park design/plans prior to KZLA completing Phase 2 Design Services

Mr. Bowen read the statement below of which he provided to be included as part of the meeting minutes:

-The creation of a Dog Park was a top community priority as a result of the Community Outreach and Visioning Forums executed in 2018.

"-In early 2020 the Park Commission voted to prioritize the design and construction of a dog park in Hudson. However, the COVID pandemic puts the project on hold.

-In the Spring of 2022, Recreation staff got the project off the ground. Meetings were held with HUD-DOG, and the Town engaged in conversations with the Stanton Foundation.

-In the Winter of 2023, Town executed contract with KZLA to complete the design for the dog park.

-In the Spring/Summer 2023 1st Public Input session was held followed by an online community survey to solicit design ideas and preferred locations to construct a dog park in Hudson.

-From August to September 2023 various sites are explored and considered.

-In the Fall of 2023 the Park Commission selected Sauta Fields as the final location for a dog park to be constructed.

-The Park Commission has asked that both staff from KZLA and Mr. Santos provide us and those present with a progress report as well as review the plans developed to date. Once they are done with their presentation, the Park Commission will open the meeting to allow for public comments on the project. Anyone wishing to speak must first be recognized by myself (current Chairperson) and then should clearly state their name and address prior to providing any comments.

-The goal for tonight's meeting is to stay focused on the dog park design...what folks like, dislike, etc... This is critical as we need 100% designs in hand in order to continue to apply for construction funds from both the Stanton Foundation and Hudson's Community Preservation Commission, by mid-December 2024.

-It is also important to note the KZLA and the Recreation Staff have already reviewed this project with Hudson DPW and Hudson Fire. The project is currently under review with the Hudson Conservation Commission and a project review meeting is slated to take place with Hudson Police and the Town's Animal Control Officer in the near future

-In closing, there are still items that need to be reviewed and finalized such as but not limited to...

-dog park use policies

-on-going maintenance plan

-long-term budget needs

-creation of a "Friends of Hudson Dog Park" group

...all these items will need to be addressed in the coming months. However, if the designs are not finalized soon we will not be able to secure further grants funds as the Stanton Foundation Dog Park

funding program will cease to exist after December 2024.”

Mr. Bowen then introduced Kyle Zick of KZLA and asked that he begin his presentation.

Kyle Zick, along with Mr. Santos, moved through the meeting presentation slides which highlighted the work completed since the fall of 2023, the current design plans and the next steps in moving the project forward. Additionally, Mr. Santos stated that as part of this design phase the project team explored creating a new entrance and separate parking lot into the site from main street specific to the dog park. However, creating a new entrance was not feasible.

Note: Presentation Slides available at the Recreation Office.

The presentation concluded with Mr. Santos reading a statement he had prepared and submitted to be included as part of the meeting minutes:

“I wanted to take couple minutes to address some of the comments I have recently come across on social media related to this project to provide some clarification. As always, if anyone has questions they should be reaching out to me through the Recreation Department. I am happy to share, and sometimes overshare information.

Q: perhaps the Town should wait to build a dog park or wait until another town property becomes available or could be used.

R: No other town properties are in play now or are expected to be in play in the near future. If the Town wants to take advantage of the Stanton Foundation Construction funds we need to have design completed in the next couple months. The foundation has been very clear about this, they are discontinuing their grant program after December 2024.

Q: Questions on project financials and bid results

R: If someone wants to know what we have spent to date or how we have secured professional services thus far, they can contact me directly. I am happy to share all that info. I will add that we have been extremely pleased with the work KZLA has completed to date on this project.

Q: who is the “project team”

R: the staff from KZLA, staff from LEC (who did the wetland/sensitive resource area work and supported the NOI filing), the full-time recreation department staff and Rob Bowen (the Park Commission project representative).

Q: how will the dog park be managed?

R: TBD. The Park Commission - Division of Recreation primarily. However, we are hoping to create a friends of group who will support the Town with site management and oversight. This approach has been successful in many other communities that have dog parks on town property.

Q: The minimum size for a small dog park is half an acre, but ideally it should be one acre or more.

R: Our park is on the smaller side. Ideally, we would have loved to build a dog park that was larger. However, this site does not allow for it. Our park will be .35 acres.

We have sought out info on dog park design, policies, budgets, maintenance from Boston, Peabody, Woburn, Burlington, Auburn, Ayer, Yarmouth, Groveland, Ware, New Bedford, Abington, Kingston, Natick, Framingham, Millbury, Northborough, Agawam, Ludlow, Gardner, South Hadley, Chelmsford, and Brewster.

Boston’s dog park is the smallest at .19 acres, Burlington is the closest to the size of ours at .37 acres.

With the exception of Boston:

5 parks are between .25-.5 acres (this is where Hudson’s park will fall)

4 parks are between .5-1 acre

6 parks are between 1-1.5 acres

5 parks are 1.5 acres or larger

Q: Current field use could create conflicts with dog park users and field users

R: Yes, the facility does get used often. However, the high impact/attended activities that can create parking lot problems, congestion and where site users tend to experience larger crowds only occurs on: ...10 Saturdays in the fall and 10 Saturdays in the Spring between the hours of 8am and 1pm ...up to 8 Sundays on the fall between 8am to 4pm ...currently the field only experiences these high use days between 28-40 days, out of 365, a year. Another important fact is that 43% of the dog park communities we polled have built their dog park next to athletic fields and playgrounds.

Also...

It is important to note that the Stanton Foundation had already reviewed some of the early design renderings and provided feedback that helped shape what was presented tonight. I have been in contact with the foundation and I feel confident that we will be able to present a successful grant application at the end of this year.

While the in-person meetings have generally brought out more folks who oppose the project than support it, it was clear last Thursday at our Dog Days at Centennial Beach Event that many of our community members are in fact in favor of and supportive of this project. We had over 100 individuals attend with their dogs (some of who were non-residents). It was a very successful event and brought together a segment of our population that are passionate about their dogs and who we see as potential users of this new dog park. We look forward to continuing this process and seeing this project through to meet the needs of perhaps, not all but, many of our community members.”

Following this Mr. Bowen opened the meeting up for public input:

David Sheehan, 20 Sauta Farm Way – Stated he was excited about the project and looking forward to seeing its completion. Asked about park hours and if lights were going to be installed?

Mr. Bowen stated that there are no plans to install lights at this time, but they may be added later. Hours will be discussed at future PC meetings

Jackie Jackson, 31 Brook Street – Asked if the paved walkways within the dog park were necessary? Kyle Zick responded stating that an analysis had been done of various walkway materials. However, long term maintenance as well as accessibility being a project priority items led to the Town’s decision of having the walkways paved.

Ms. Jackson expressed her concerns for the health of the trees immediately adjacent to the pathways, stating that the excavation of the pathways and the general site construction and equipment would compromise the soils by way of compaction. She asked what the expected excavation depth was? Kyle Zick responded stating that typically the excavation for pathways is between 6-8” however, adjustments to the pathways could potentially be made on site during construction and in some cases, and there may not be a need to excavate as much in some areas in order to maintain the ADA slopes through the entire pathway system.

Ms. Jackson stated that the health of the trees to remain should continue to be a priority through construction.

Greg Jackson, 31 Brook Street – Stated that he has concerns with the dog park potentially attracting more people and perhaps young adults or kids to hang out at the site, in which already experiences issues with people driving erratically through the parking lot. Mr. Jackson asked if there was a plan to increase police patrols at the site. Mr. Jackson also suggested that the dog park be designed to included a key card access system so that restrictions could be put in place, such as residents only.

Mr. Santos stated that he would look into his key card access suggestion but that having that level of security of restricting access may not be an option for the dog park as it may not align with the goals and requirements of the Stanton Foundation, the main project funder.

Mr. Jackson asked the height of the fencing. Kyle Zick replied 5 feet was the Stanton Foundation requirement.

Mr. Chaves suggested that perhaps the new dog park would bring more people into a site that is more rural for the Hudson community and in fact deter those folks who are currently causing concerns and issues among neighbors. Mr. Chaves encouraged the neighbors to continually contact HPD, should they see or experience any questionable behaviors or activities at the site.

Paul Dercangelis, 73 Brook Street- Stated that he had walked the property recently and noticed many trees within the dog park area marked out with "x's" and he was concerned that the area was going to be clear cut.

Both Kyle Zick and Mr. Santos stated that neither the Town or KZLA staff had marked out any trees with "x's" and the plan only calls for tree removal in the areas needed to install pathways and with those pathways, as well as selective removal to accommodate the exterior walkways, parking spaces and at the entrance to the site off main street as a means to improve site lines.

Mr. Santos stated for the record that he did receive an email from a neighbor but per the request of the neighbor he would not share it during the meeting as this resident's questions and concerns were not specific to the dog park design.

Mr. Santos stated that he would work with KZLA to try and mitigate any potential tree root damage and site compaction during construction, to the furthest extent possible.

Mr. Bowen asked for any additional comments. Hearing none Mr. Bowen closed the public input session at 7:52pm.

Mr. Bowen asked if Mr. Chaves had any comments. Mr. Chaves stated he had none at this time. Mr. Bowen stated he had no further comments and thanked KZLA for the work they had performed to date and the presentation.

October 25, 2024

PARK COMMISSION MEETING

5. Director's Report:

A. Update on current and upcoming projects

Mr. Santos shared the following details on each project:

Dog Park – Soil Test Pit work had been completed on October 21, 2024. Engineer to provide KZLA with Test Pit results and KZLA to use information to prepare final documentation for MA DEP and fold results in the project design, as needed.

November 2024

Test Pit analysis and all other DEP required reports were completed and submitted to the Recreation Department for distribution to Hudson Conservation Commission, as well as, DEP. Reports received were favorable and did not indicate the need for any substantial changes to the previously submitted plans.

December 2024

December 5, 2024 – Final meeting with Conservation Commission to review project and previously filed NOI. Conservation approved the project and set forth an Order of Conditions.

December 11, 2024 – The Community Preservation Committee reviewed our request to fund the dog park project in the amount of \$280,000. The committee voted favorably, although not unanimously, to

support the project and bring forth our funding request to the May Town Meeting for a final vote of approval (as required).

January- February 2025

-Park Commission discussed the approach to engage community members in order to gauge project interest and identify individuals who may want to participate in a "Friends of the Hudson Dog Park" group. Recreation Department distributed an online survey and received 272 responses, including 51 from individuals wanting to participate in the "Friends of the Hudson Dog Park".

-Project Site Plans (Construction Docs), Cost Estimate and Project Specification Manual finalized.

February 27, 2025

Town of Hudson, Park Commission-Division of Recreation submits grant application (Dog Park Construction Grant) in the amount of \$250,000 to the Stanton Foundation.

Next Steps...

If the Stanton Foundation awards the Town the Construction Grant (in the amount requested), the next step required to move the project forward is the approval of CPC funds, to be voted on at the May Town Meeting (Monday, May 5, 2025).

Following a favorable vote of CPC funds at the May Town Meeting the project construction would go immediately out to bid to secure a contractor to complete the project. Construction would begin in the late summer/fall of 2025 with 100% completion slated for the spring of 2026.

For additional questions/comments or concerns, please contact Hudson Recreation directly.