

Dog Park GENERAL Meeting
Friday, September 17, 2010, 6pm
Held: at the Dog Park

MEETING MINUTES

1. **Attendance.** Approx. 25 members and Board Members Jack Cassidy, President, Anne Waginger, Vice President, Dan Blum, Treasurer and at-large Board Members Kelly Diffily, Walt Gilpin, Sharyn O'Mara, and Jonathan Sher were in attendance.
 - a. In addition, the Board flyered the block in and around the Dog Park to announce this meeting, and several neighbors (non Park members) were also in attendance.
2. **Park Update/Announcements** (Jack Cassidy, President)
 - a. Jack updated members on recent updates to the Park, including installing new fencing on the Orianna and Poplar street corner, and moving the water line slightly farther back in the Park, and more importantly, putting the pipe underground, so that we can have running water in colder weather (the previous above-ground pipe had to be shut off during the winter).
 - b. Jack also reminded members about the following upcoming events:
 - i. **Workday:** Saturday, October 2, 2010, 10am-1pm.
 - ii. **Hound-o-ween** Scheduled for Saturday, October 30, 2010, from 12:30-3:00 pm (Judging at 1:30)
 - c. **Gardeners/Compost.** There was a short discussion about the compost in the garden. It will be moved to away from the shared park fence.
3. **Presentation & Discussion Re: New Fence & Changes in the Internal Layout of the Park** (Sharyn O'Mara, at-large Board Member)
 - a. Sharyn explained the Board's current plans for installing new fencing at the entrance to the dog park, and in and around the inner "courtyard," presented a large proposed diagram showing the Plan, and sought feedback from Members. We also hung string in the inner courtyard so Members could visually see where the new fencing will be placed.
 - b. **Reasons for Proposed Re-design.** The Board sees the funding we received for the new fence from the PTSSD as an opportunity to evaluate the design of the park, and to see if there is anything we can do to improve the design for the members, dogs, and neighbors. Given the limited space of the park and an ever-growing population of new members, we undertook this study with a focus on efficient use of space, safety for dogs and members, and respecting the neighbors (noise, visuals).
 - c. **The Old Design.** We worked with architect Mike Blumenthal who generously donated his time, researching dog park design and surveying the current layout of the park. Some of the things we learned/found include:
 - i. The current "front space" is an important buffer between the park and the neighbors on Orianna.
 - ii. The current "front space" of the park is an inefficient use of a relatively large plot of land since it opens into the street and into the park, and cannot be used for any other purpose than as an entry /exit.
 - iii. A single entrance/exit increases the opportunity for conflict between dogs since some are leashed, others are not. Conflicts are both dangerous and noisy.
 - iv. This layout increases the chances of dogs escaping from the park; this is dangerous since the gate opens onto a well-traveled road.
 - v. The current "front space" is messy and unappealing from the street.

- d. **The New Design.** We came up with a design that we feel better serves the needs of members and dogs by increasing safety, reducing conflicts and noise, improving the visual appearance of the park, and making better use of our limited space:
- i. Create separate entrance and exit at opposite sides of the “front space”
 - ii. Move the watering station further back (closer to 3rd Street) to decrease congestion in that area, and reduce potential conflict with exiting dogs. When we have further funding, we would like to create a “trough” area that wraps the corner with varying heights for small to extra large dogs.
 - iii. Disperse the furniture throughout the park to create several different seating areas, reducing congestion around the entrance in order to reduce the chance of conflict. The dogs tend to congregate around their people, so spreading out the people will spread out the dogs.
 - iv. Move the inside fence that is parallel to Orianna 3 feet closer to Orianna Street. By doing this, we gain enough space to slightly widen the park at both entrance and exit (a concern because we cannot move the bulletin board, a permanent structure, or the large tree nearby) and to reduce the potential for conflict around the watering station, without negatively impacting the “buffer zone.”
 - v. Create a locked “Green Zone” between the entrance and exit. Remove unsightly concrete and pavers, plant grass, and build raised beds for plantings on Orianna.
- e. **Proposed Use of the “Green Zone”**
- i. The “Green Zone” is a green space that serves as an essential buffer between the park and neighbors. Accordingly, the Board envisions that it will generally be locked, never unsupervised, and not accessible to dog park members. Under this proposed use, the Board has decided that it cannot, for example, be used as a small dog area.
 - ii. While the space will generally be locked, the Board envisions occasional, short-term, supervised use – for example, possibly offering Obedience Classes to benefit members.

4. Feedback from Members/Neighbors

- a. Several neighbors in attendance reiterated that considerable noise is generated from the Park, and strongly urged that the “green zone” continue to be used as a buffer for that noise, and not be opened up for general use. Some neighbors expressed concern that even moving the inner fence 3 ft closer to Orianna would increase noise.
- b. One member proposed putting the entrance/exit “tunnels” next to one another, which would avoid having to move or remove some small trees on the South/Poplar side of the “green zone.” This was discussed, and most feedback was that this would bring entering/exiting dogs too close to one another (separated only by a fence in between), which would not accomplish the goal of reducing aggression while entering/exiting the Park.
- c. Other comments were generally supportive of the proposed Plan; no one expressed opposition to the proposed Plan.