



**PARKS 4**

**POOCHES**

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a dog's place to play, exercise, and socialize

P A R K S 4  
POOCHES  
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## **Introduction**

Over the past few years the Manchester Parks and Recreation Department has received many requests for the development and or designation of fenced open space for off-leash dog exercise areas or dog parks. During the summer of 2007 Scott Sprague had a number of phone conversations with resident dog owners. Frank Salerno and Shirley Gronholm were most consistent concerning their request/ proposals for a dog park in Manchester and, as a result, were invited to attend the September 2007 meeting of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission. At the meeting, Mr. Salerno and Ms. Gronholm presented their ideas and requested that the Commission support the development of a dog park. After discussing the issue, the Commission passed the following motion:

*Recreation Department Staff should work with a volunteer group to develop a proposal for a dog park in Manchester and return to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission with a proposal.*

A public forum was held at the Community Y in November of 2007 with over 70 residents in attendance, all of which were in support of the development of a dog park or dog exercise area in the Town of Manchester. During that meeting Recreation staff discussed the importance of developing a resident based committee, which would work with department staff to prepare a comprehensive proposal for submission to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission.

As a result, approximately 30 resident dog owners agreed to serve on the planning committee. The initial committee meeting, facilitated by Recreation Staff covered proposal content, development of sub-committees and associated responsibilities, proposal time line, and the committees overall goal and objectives.

A total of six sub-committees were developed: Justification, Design, Funding and Budget, Site Selection, Risk Management, and Park Management and Maintenance. Each sub-committee was given the task to investigate and collect information pertinent to the development of a comprehensive proposal for the development of a dog park.

The overall goal of the Committee, now known as the Parks for Pooches Committee, is to create a cost effective, safe, manageable and accessible environment for dogs and their owners to exercise and socialize that is considerate of resident neighbors.

The proposed objectives associated with the overall goal are as follows:

1. To justify a need for a dog park in Manchester, CT.
2. To develop a risk management plan for the dog park.
3. To select a suitable site for the dog park.
4. To create a design that works with the selected site for the dog park.
5. To develop a management and maintenance plan for the dog park.
6. To assess and explore ways to fund the construction, management and Maintenance of the dog park.
7. To construct a dog park on a selected site.

## **What is a Dog Exercise Area?**

The types of facilities that have amenities particularly conducive for use by dogs and their owners are known by several names: “dog park”, “bark park”, “dog exercise area” etc. The National Recreation and Parks Association define the facility as “a contained public area where dog owners may allow their dogs to run off-leash.”

## **Why a Dog Park is Needed**

- Dogs are social animals. Families and single people own them because they provide affection and companionship, and teach children responsibility and care giving.
- Dogs need exercise. They need to run and play with their owners to work off energy and satisfy their need for challenge and stimulation. It is a reality that in our society many dogs must be left alone for long hours while their owners go to work. Dogs that are deprived of exercise, stimulation, and socialization may become problems for their owners, their neighbors, and for other dogs because they are bored. Good behavior is learned through interaction with people and other animals. In order to learn good behavior, dogs need to be brought out of isolation into social situations. They are by nature pack animals and should not be isolated from other dogs.
- Dog owners are regular users of Manchester’s open space and parks. Even though owners are supposed to clean up after their pets, dog feces is a problem in park areas at athletic fields and on school grounds. A dog park will provide an attractive option for dog owners, reducing the damage caused by digging and by dog waste. Manchester has created many parks for its citizens, most of which contain a variety of athletic fields and other active recreation facilities serving thousands of residents. According to the Town Clerk’s Office, there are 3,714 licensed dogs in Manchester and it is estimated that there are more unlicensed dogs in Manchester than there are licensed dogs. Many dog owners are now coming forward to request that the town provide a facility to meet their recreational needs.
- Owning a dog encourages people to exercise and enjoy their Town’s open spaces. Dog exercise areas have been places where neighbors and other local residents regularly meet and greet, often forming the beginning of longer lasting community ties.
- A dog park that allows licensed dogs encourages residents to get their dogs licensed creating revenue for the town.

## **Why Dog Owners Should Be Considered**

With 3,714 licensed dogs and an estimate of the same amount of unlicensed dogs in Manchester, 7,428 dogs represent roughly 28 % residences in Manchester. This represents a significant portion of the taxpayer base.

Pet ownership is a positive aspect of our society. Many studies have shown the benefits of pet ownership to the mental and physical health of people of all ages. Taking a dog into a social situation provides a means for social interaction between people that otherwise may not be possible. It is easy to start up conversations when a pet is present and many friendships begin in this way. For many elderly people, an outing with their dog may provide the only contact with other people in their day. For people with mobility problems, a dedicated dog-friendly area allows exercising of their dog without walking any distance. For most dog owners, the opportunity to meet other dog lovers is a happy and rewarding experience, just as it is for their dogs to meet other dogs.

## **What Dog Exercise Areas Are Like on the National Level**

Whether they are extravagant or just a fenced in plot of land, dog exercise areas are increasingly seen not as luxuries, but as facilities that should be provided by public parks and recreation agencies. A recent Gallup poll stated that 42 percent of households in the United States have dogs. And according to the Web site [www.thedogpark.com](http://www.thedogpark.com), there are more than 700 dog parks nationwide with more being constructed on an almost daily basis. The majorities of the dog exercise areas are owned and operated by local park agencies while a small amount are still assisted and monitored by sponsoring resident groups. Existing dog exercise areas range from 10,000 square feet to 70+ acres in size and are located in a variety of areas from small neighborhood parks to portions of large regional parks to natural wilderness areas, trails and portions of beaches, lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water.

Most of the recently developed areas are fenced, but otherwise are no more isolated from their surroundings than other open space uses. Grass is the most popular surface and various methods are used to maintain and repair turf. Dog exercise areas usually have a few amenities: trash cans and water fountains seem to be important, but bulletin boards, small open shelters, benches, bag dispensers for dog-wastes, and balls for dog play are also provided in a number of them. Most of the fenced areas have double gates and posted rules. Some of the areas were initiated by sponsoring groups, who helped plan and fund amenities, and play a key role in maintaining and overseeing these areas. Sponsoring groups frequently supervise daily activities at the site, ensuring that users obey rules, pick up after and properly supervise their dogs, and report serious behavioral or other safety problems to the local authorities.

Some localities, such as Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Virginia Beach, Virginia and many mid-western and western localities charge entrance fees for their parks and dog exercise areas, or require purchase of an annual park pass, or a pass usable at all local exercise areas. Minneapolis, Minnesota and some other localities require the purchase of a key to enter the locked gates to the exercise areas. Poway, California has three separately fenced areas in its local dog park. These fenced areas include a standard and reserve fenced play area, as well as a fenced area that is rented for private events such as dog shows, training events, and birthday parties. The city of San Diego has also adopted regulation standards for its dog parks. At total of 15 dog parks exist in the 331-square mile city. Each site has its own informal group of people that patrol the park. These are self-governing groups who make sure that everyone who uses the park follows the rules. A few localities charge stiff fees for violations at the exercise areas, (such as unlicensed dogs), and then apply these funds to the dog exercise area.

Overall, these dog exercise areas have provided an enjoyable means for dogs and their handlers to exercise and socialize. It is no longer about making areas available for dogs to run free. These days, the trend is creating “destination” places for dogs and their owners.

## **What Dog Exercise Areas Are Like on the Local Level**

### **Town of Hamden-Hamden Dog Park at Bassett [www.hamdendog.org](http://www.hamdendog.org)**

Opened in October 2003 - "We have a dog park that is a 1.1 acre fenced-in leash-free area. We have a small area separated by fencing that is for small dogs only. We (RDOG) have fundraisers to provide the poop bags for the area (about \$1000 per year), trash receptacles (5) that are picked up twice per week by the town, 4 benches and 5 picnic tables. We spoke to the town attorney who felt we were covered by the town's insurance, as we were just 'another park'. There have been instances where dogs were bitten. We have signs stating that you are responsible for your dog; just like if they were on the street. We have phone numbers to call the police, etc. We have signs stating that if your dog becomes aggressive, leave the park immediately. Other dog owners know this and tell the owner to leave now. We have not been sued. When we started this, this was the town's concern. One enlightened council member from the town investigated this and found no instances where dog owners sued the town parks." Dawn Tiedemann. The town carries no additional liability insurance for the dog park.

### **Town of Ridgefield-Bark Park <http://www.roar-ridgefield.org/park.html>**

Opened in 2002 and has been a great success serving hundreds of dogs and their owners. ROAR fundraisers and donations from the private sector financed the Bark Park totally. The Bark Park is a 1.5-acre enclosure and is divided into "Small Dog" and "All Dog" areas. Dogs are permitted to run free and play off-leash under their owners' watchful eyes. The rules of the park are posted prominently. Doggy waste bags are available within the park. Ridgefield Parks and Recreation continues to maintain the park as it does all the town parks and playing fields. A ROAR volunteer directs beautification and improvements to the park. Thanks to a major donation from Aquarian Water Company, in 2003 ROAR brought cool, fresh water to the park entrance so all pets and people could relieve their thirst. It attracts hundreds of visitors every week. At least four nearby communities are currently cooperating with ROAR officers in an effort to build similar facilities in their towns. "People were laughing at us saying, "What? Are you doing a Kitty Park next?" "The park has been spectacular! I never would have believed it! People love it! Hundreds and hundreds of dogs come and we've had zero attacks." The town carries no additional liability insurance for the dog park. Paul Roche, Parks Director

### **Westport-Compo Beach and Winslow Park**

Compo Beach has a movable demarcation and Winslow Park is 2 acres and has a split rail demarcation. Requirements in off-leash areas: 1) Owners or handlers must accompany their dogs at all times within the off-leash area, 2) Owners and handlers must have a leash in hand at all times within the off-leash area and 3) Owners and handlers must pick up their dog's waste and properly dispose of it. There have been no reported incidents and carries no additional liability insurance. Gail Kelly, Town Attorney

### **Norwalk-Taylor Farm and Cranbury Park**

Taylor Farm is fenced and Cranbury is not. Both areas are multi-purpose parks. Regulation is that the dog must be under the owner's control at all times. Norwalk does not carry any additional liability insurance. Mike, Director of Parks and Recreation

### **Milford-Eisenhower Park**

Milford has a ¾ acre park and offers bags, trash cans and benches. It has been around for the past 12 years. Two incidents were noted. Community group supervises and supports the park. No additional liability insurance is carried by the city. William McCarthy, Parks and Recreation Director

### **New Haven-Edgewood Park**

Has been around for 8 years and is ¼ acre fenced. Amenities include bags, trash cans and benches. “Friends of Edgewood Park” group run dog events as well. No reported incidents and the city carries no additional liability insurance. Robert Levine, Parks and Recreation Director

### **Norwich-Pawsitive Park**

Has both an off-leash area and a dedicated dog park with fencing. Amenities include; year round running water, bags, trash cans, benches, umbrellas, picnic tables and toys. It is 1.25 acres in size and has 200 dogs per week (roughly) visiting. The town does not carry any additional liability insurance and there have been no reported incidents. Melinda Angevine, Pawsitive Director

### **Greenwich**

Opened December 2005 - It is a .75-acre park with water, bags, trash cans and benches. The town is carrying no additional liability insurance. Joseph Siciliano, Director of Parks and Recreation

### **Granby Dog Park, [www.granbydogpark.org](http://www.granbydogpark.org)**

The Granby dog park opened in April, 2006 in Granby's Salmon Brook Park. This dog park is managed and maintained by D.O.G.G.S., a volunteer group of dog owners

### **Wethersfield-Wethersfield Dog Park, [www.wethersfieldsdogpark.org](http://www.wethersfieldsdogpark.org)**

Opened in October of 2006 - It is a one-acre park with barrier fencing. There are separate areas for both small and large dogs. The surface is pine bark mulch. Trees provide a natural shade element to the park. The park was funded through donations and fundraising efforts. There are park benches and picnic tables. The park is a self-governed park by users and the dog warden. Police monitor the park as well and volunteers assist with checking dog licenses on a random basis. The Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with community volunteers help to maintain the park picking up trash and dog waste, and changing dog bag dispensers etc. No additional liability insurance is carried for the park. There are signs and message boards containing rules and regulations and educational materials. Volunteers have built some play apparatus for dogs to play on such as ramps, show tables. There is a water source on site.

### **South Windsor-Bark Park, [www.southwindsorbarpark.org](http://www.southwindsorbarpark.org)**

Opened in November of 2007 - It is a one-acre park with barrier fencing. There are separate areas for both small and large dogs. There are some trees for shade. The park was funded by donations and fundraising efforts by Friends of South Windsor Dog Park. There are benches and picnic tables. Volunteers and police monitor the park. The town does not carry additional liability insurance for the park. They are in the process of building two gazebos. There is dog agility equipment and a water source on site.

## **What is the Town's Liability as a Result of Having a Dog Exercise or Off-Leash Area?**

Connecticut General Statutes: "Strict Liability Law of One Who Keeps a Dog."

Anyone who owns or keeps a dog is held strictly liable under our law for any damage caused by the dog, irrespective of whether the owner or keeper was negligent in controlling the dog. The statute is Sec. 22-357, and the relevant portions of the statute state: "If any dog does any damage to either the body or property of any person, the owner or keeper...shall be liable for such damage, except when such damage has been occasioned to the body or property of a person who, at the time such damage was sustained, was committing a trespass or other tort, or was teasing, tormenting or abusing such dog."

The following information is the results of a 2006 survey conducted by the Trumbull, Connecticut Dog Owners Association. They performed extensive research regarding liability and suits or threat of suit against a town for having a dog exercise or off-leash area. When asked about the town's/city's additional liability and/or legal action as a result of having an area dedicated to dog friendly space, the responses were as follows:

1. "You did not find cases because there are very few. Most cities see liability issues, but once they get going they seem to be very positive for local communities. Have the right set of ground rules, posted, is the key.... good luck" Professor David Favre, Editor-in Chief, Animal Legal and Historical Web Center, Michigan State University College of Law
2. "We also do not have any-we have had no incidents and it is clearly stated use at your own risk, not responsible for accidents on the rules board at the entrance." Tiffany with the Houston Dog Park Organization
3. "The liability of an off-leash area is typically no greater than that of a children's playground, swimming area, or hunting area. Like all other park users, dog owners are responsible for making sure their activities do not impinge on others activities or threaten anyone's safety. Off-leash areas for dogs have been established in a great many U.S. communities with no legal challenges. In accordance with the city ordinance (City Code Article III, section C) any injury or property damage done by an off-leash dog will be as with other park users, i.e., strictly the responsibility of the dog owner." Tomkins County Dog Owners Group, Ithaca, NY
4. "Since dogs are pack animals, they usually get along well together on neutral territory. Occasionally a dog shows aggressive behavior, but park rules prohibit aggressive dogs and such a dog must be removed immediately. Liability for damage cause by a dog rests with the owner, whether on a street, in a home, or on municipal property. Very few problems have been noted in established parks." Cincinnati Parks and Recreation, Cincinnati, Ohio
5. "Most problems in official dog exercise areas have involved complaints from neighbors, or conflicts among various types of park users vying for park space. More serious complaints, although relatively uncommon, usually involve dog aggressiveness to other dogs. Injuries resulting from dog aggression towards humans are rare. In fact, localities monitoring injuries and problems in park property report that human injuries in off-leash dog exercise areas are very unusual and less than in other park areas. In almost all cases, dog owners are liable for any injuries or damage caused by their dog. No localities nationwide contacted by staff report any formal legal suits involving injuries in dog exercise areas." Parks and Recreation, Montgomery County, Maryland

6. “Note: many people who are working to create dog parks in their own towns have asked us about liability. Our town insurance company has no exclusion for dog parks and so this recreation facility is covered by the town’s policy, just as other facilities such as playgrounds, tennis courts, etc., are covered. In Connecticut, a dog owner is liable for any damage done by his or her dog, regardless of on whose property the damage occurs.” Town of Hamden, Hamden Dog Park at Bassett

7. Local insurance companies were contacted and asked their experience and recommendations regarding a municipality including a dog park under their general policy. The responses were as follows.

- Minuteman Insurance, Fairfield, Rich Parker: “Can’t imagine any significant problems. I don’t see any exposure. They allow horses on the beach in Fairfield. There’s more liability with a child being kicked in the head by a horse. I don’t know what they’re so afraid of. I’ve never heard of anything like it.”

- Ferguson & McGuire Insurance, Shelton, Mr. Martin: “Dog parks would be covered under the basic policy under recreation. We had a skate pond, unsupervised by the town, and that had no more liability. It fell under recreation.”

- State of Connecticut, Insurance Department, Commercial Lines, Municipalities, Hartford, Tom Haggart: Provided ISO pages for governmental subdivisions; CS-G-9 and CS-G-10 Commercial lines Manual Classification Table. Provides General Liability Codes for municipalities based on populations. “These classifications embrace all premises and operations exposures of the insured except that the following exposures shall be separately classified and rated: (a) Amusement parks, (b) Exhibition or convention buildings (including arenas and auditoriums), (c) Dams, levees or dikes, (d) Golf courses, (e) Housing projects, (f) Lakes or reservoirs, (g) Medical care facilities and services, (h) Penal institutions, (i) Schools or colleges, (j) Ski facilities, (k) Stadiums, bleachers or grandstands, (l) Streets, roads, highways or bridges, (m) Street, highway, road or bridge construction, (n) Transportation systems, facilities and services including airports, bus systems, or other mass transit facilities such as subway and aircraft, (o) Utilities, (p) Wharves, piers, docks, marinas and watercraft, (q) Zoos.” (Exhibit A) Dog Parks or Off Leash Areas are not a separate classification and therefore, do not require additional liability insurance.

8. A search through the Lexis-Nexus legal search engine has produced “No Results” for legal action regarding dog parks.

In summary, no locality in Connecticut, or Nationwide contacted and/or researched by the Trumbull Dog Owners Association carries additional liability insurance as a result of having a dog exercise or off-leash area. Liability for the dog park or off leash area is included under the town’s basic policy that includes parks and recreation: it is not a separate classification.

## **What Manchester's Dog Park Will Be Like**

- **Size:** It is recommended that Manchester's proposed dog park be a minimum of 1 acre in size.
- **Fencing:** The entire park would be fenced in with a minimum 5 ft. vinyl coated chain link fence with a vestibule style entrance to allow for a holding area and separate entrance and exit gates within the system.
- **Surface:** Our research showed a few popular surfaces. One of the most recommended surfaces was compacted Decomposed Granite (DG). A weathered granite material, DG is non-water absorbing, more sterile than soil, and does not hold the odor of dog urine. However, DG is costly and requires regular maintenance (raking/grooming) during use times as well as watering during dry to control dust, much like a baseball infield. Grass surface is popular in other parts of the country but turf damages easily and is high maintenance. Subsequently, the committee recommends that the surface be bark mulch similar to the surface at the popular Wethersfield Dog Park. Bark mulch, used in many dog parks nationally, is attractive, easily maintained, and cost effective.
- **Play and Run Areas:** It is recommended that there is an area for small dogs and an area for all dogs. The accommodation for older and geriatric dogs would be in the small dog area. The design of the entrance/exit vestibule or holding area should allow for separate entrance and exit into both areas.
- **Viewing and Shaded Areas:** It is recommended that shaded areas be included in the design for both owner viewing and dog activity. Ideally, shade provided by trees will provide a more aesthetic or natural appeal to the park. In the absence of mature trees, artificial shade elements such as a pavilion or shade canopy can be added to the design. Viewing and or shaded areas should have benches and or picnic tables.
- **Water Source:** If possible, it is recommended that a water source for drinking for both dogs and owners be available.
- **Play Elements:** In addition to the need for open space within the park for running, it is recommended that some play elements/apparatus be incorporated into the design such as ramps, hurdles, tires, tipped logs, boulders etc., to add challenge and interest.
- **Parking and Accessibility:** It is recommended that the park be built at a site that already has parking and provides a handicapped accessible pathway to and from the dog park.
- **Surrounding Amenities:** It is recommended that the park be built in an existing Manchester Public Park that provides additional amenities for both the dog and the dog owner. Such amenities may include water areas (small lakes or ponds), and trails or pathways for on-lease walking and or hiking.
- **Disposal Areas:** The park must include several areas with installed poop bag dispensers for clean up and trash cans for both disposal of dog waste and trash.
- **Signage:** Clear and visible signage will be posted at the entrance of the park indicating park rules, regulations, information encouraging responsible pet ownership, use of public facilities, and contact information to report dog incidents/emergencies.
- **Residential Areas:** It is recommended that the dog park not be located in close proximity to residential housing.

## **Where the Manchester Dog Park Will Be Located**

The site selection sub-committee of the Parks4Pooches Committee considered approximately 15 sites. The sub-committee determined that the top five locations were, Northwest Park, New State Road, Center Springs Park, Mt. Nebo (near the football field) and Hillstown Road. The sub-committee conducted site visits on January 13, 2008 (no snow cover). It was the original recommendation of the Site Selection Sub-Committee the dog park be developed at the Hillstown Road property, which is currently the site of a Veteran's Cemetery and the Veteran's Memorial Soccer Fields. The sub-committee recommended that the dog park be located in the undeveloped area to the east and north of the existing parking lot.

Currently, the Hillstown Road site is undeveloped and is full of high and low vegetation. The proposed location would require extensive clearing as well as some stump and tree removal. Many of the existing trees would be trimmed up and left as shade elements. A minimum 100 ft. buffer of trees and vegetation would be left separating the dog park from the cemetery and the town-owned house located east of the property. If the park infringes into the wetland buffer area located north to north west of the parking lot a permit will be required. This site was selected because of size, accessible parking, lack of residential housing, incorporation of trees as shade elements, and the possibility of future access to water (not yet determined potable) and electricity.

On March 3, 2008, Scott Sprague and sub-committee member Peter Lund met at the VFW with the Veteran's Council Group to present the proposal. After reviewing a map of the prospective park, there was an approximate 15-20 minute discussion. The Veteran's Group had no objections to the park as long as the following were complied with:

1. That there is a minimum 100 ft. buffer between the dog park and the cemetery.
2. The dog park users are respectful of cemetery visitors and services held at the cemetery. Mr. Lund and Mr. Sprague agreed that this concern would be included on dog park rules and regulation signs in dog park publicity.

At the end of the meeting it was noted by all that for ten years the cemetery and soccer fields have peacefully co-existed and that everyone expects the positive relationship between Veterans and the Town to continue once the dog park is built.

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, the Parks4Pooches Committee presented their dog park proposal to the Parks and Recreation Commission. After the presentation with questions and answers, the Commission stated that they needed time to review the proposal. They scheduled a Special Meeting for August 12, 2008 to discuss the proposal/project. At the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting Director of Public Works Mark Carlino and Field Services Superintendent Ken Longo were present to state their comments and discuss their concerns. The Commission requested that the Parks4Pooches Committee reconsider Center Springs Park and New State Rd. locations.

Parks4Pooches took their recommendations into consideration. The Site Selection Sub-committee stood by their previous decision regarding the recommended sites. However, on September 20<sup>th</sup> the Site Selection Sub-Committee, along with members of the Parks and Recreation Department, and two members of the Board of Directors visited a newly recommended location at the Globe Hollow pool property and re-visited Hillstown Road (the Directors did not visit Hillstown) to discuss the revised site plan. The Site Selection Sub-Committee scheduled a meeting for Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> to make a final decision on a new proposed dog park location. At the request of MDOG, prior to the meeting Scott

Sprague and Chris Silver toured the Globe Hollow site with Water Department staff to discuss possible water shed property issues. At that time, Water and Sewer Department Administrator Ed Soper and Water and Sewer Department Field Maintenance Supervisor Peter Connorton proposed a different location on Water Department land behind the water treatment plant abutting the Mt. Nebo parking lot on the first base side of Moriarty Field.

On September 24<sup>th</sup>, the Site Selection Sub-Committee met at the location at Mt. Nebo to view it before making a final decision, ultimately choosing the new Mt. Nebo location as the committee's first choice and Hillstown Rd. as the second choice.

Mt. Nebo is the first choice location because it has no watershed or wetlands issues, no large tree removal, it has access to potable water, hiking trails, and parking in the winter as well as additional lighting in the fall and early winter during football games. The parking lot is large enough to accommodate all activities that may occur in the park. There are no direct neighbors to disturb. The preparation and clearing of the site will add little to the cost of the project.

## **Who Will Maintain and Manage the Dog Park?**

Specific maintenance and management responsibilities of the sponsoring group or groups (Manchester Dog Owners Group MDOG) and the Town of Manchester would be clearly defined in a memorandum of understanding between the sponsors and the Town of Manchester. Sponsors must perform their established duties to retain the dog exercise area. The Town of Manchester may undertake periodic reviews or surveys, or the sponsors may just be warned to resolve occurring problems.

Generally, however, the Town of Manchester may perform primary maintenance tasks such as mowing surrounding grounds, plowing a clear path from Mt. Nebo park entrance to parking spaces between the baseball field & proposed dog park location, supplying salt for the pathway to the park entrance, supplying and emptying 4 trash cans twice a week, fence repair, etc. The sponsoring group will frequently supervise daily activities at the site, ensuring that users obey rules, pick up after and properly supervise their dogs, and provide litter and dog-waste pick-up in and around park area. In addition the sponsoring group would be responsible for periodic top dressing of the bark mulch surface. The sponsoring group will also report serious behavioral or other safety problems to the local authorities, and notify the Town of Manchester of major maintenance needs. The sponsoring group, Manchester Dog Owners Group, MDOG would act as the initial negotiators for resolving disputes involving exercise areas. It is also recommended that MDOG consist of a dog expert, such as a veterinarian, a dog specialist, a member of the Park and Recreation staff and an Animal Control Officer. MDOG will also invite a member of the Board of Directors or Park and Recreation Advisory Board to serve on the MDOG Board of Directors in an advisory position.

## **What Rules Will Govern the Use of the Dog Park?**

Based on the committee's research of rules governing dog parks both locally and nationally, the following rules are recommended for Manchester's proposed dog park:

1. Dogs must display a valid license and up-to-date rabies vaccinations.
2. Dog owners are responsible for any injuries or damage caused by their dogs.
3. Dogs must be leashed when entering/exiting dog park social area.
4. Dog owners must carry a leash and have dog within view and voice control.
5. Dogs in heat, aggressive dogs, and puppies under (4) months are prohibited.
6. Dogs must be removed from the dog park at the first sign of aggression towards a person or dog.
7. No more than (3) dogs per person.
8. For the safety of all dogs, no choke, prong, pinch, or spike collars allowed in the dog park.
9. All holes dug must be filled immediately.
10. Dog owners must immediately clean up after their dog and dispose of waste in proper receptacles.

11. No smoking, alcohol, glass containers or food (people/animal) allowed in the dog park.
12. Professional trainers may not use the park for conduct of their business.
13. Owners will stay with their dog(s) at all times and not leave the park, constantly keeping a watchful eye.
14. To help prevent dogfights, owners are encouraged to inquire about any dogs already in the dog park, which are unfamiliar to them, prior to entering the dog park. Observing dogs' body language is also recommended.
15. Please respect the rights of other visitors. You are personally responsible for damage inflicted by your dog.
16. An adult must accompany anyone under 15 years of age. Children under 15 years must be closely supervised. Children, as well as adults must not at any time run with, or chase after dogs. No petting of other dogs unless permission is granted by the owners first. No strollers please.

Infractions of any of these rules can result in temporary or permanent loss of park privileges. All state statues and local town ordinances apply.

Please report any concerns or questions to Manchester Dog Owners Group MDOG or the Manchester Parks and Recreation Department at 647-3084; All emergencies should be directed to the Manchester Police Department at 645-5516 or the Manchester Animal Control at 645-5516.

## **Who Will Pay for the Dog Park and What Will it Cost to Build?**

The development of dog parks is becoming more common both locally and nationally. Local sponsoring groups and or committees are beginning to work hand in hand with local officials to share the financial support of dog park development.

It is the Parks4Pooches Committee's recommendation that the Town of Manchester develop a funding relationship and or agreement with the sponsoring group, MDOG, to share the cost of the park's development. It is recommended that the Town of Manchester match the fundraising efforts of MDOG up to at most 50% of the final cost for the dog parks development. Similar arrangements have been made in the past with youth sports groups for facility upgrades and elementary school PTA's for playground projects.

In addition, the Town of Manchester would contribute 50% of annual costs for the purchase of surfacing materials and bags for Poop Bag Dispensers. It would be assumed that major needs for maintenance to fencing, trimming or removal of trees, trash and snow removal, and cost for utilities such electricity after the parks construction would be the responsibility of the Town of Manchester.

The Parks4Pooches Committee also recommends the Town dedicate an existing parking space to handicap parking for the dog park and pave a path from the parking lot to the park entrance for handicapped accessibility (approximately 90 sq yd) as well as supplying two-picnic tables from Parks & Recreation inventory for use within the park itself.

Future funding for additional amenities and park enhancements, etc. would be the responsibility of MDOG through fundraising efforts. This does not include the development of a new park in a different location, only enhancements to the existing park.

The following line item budget has been established for estimating basic costs of construction for a dog park on an approximate 1.5-acre parcel of land. Note that there is no cost associated with the preparation of the site to include final design, clearing of land, removal and or trimming of trees. It is recommended that this task of site preparation be an organized effort of volunteers under the direction and with assistance by town forces from Parks and Recreation, Engineering, and Public Works. Also, there will be an estimated minimum of \$1200 less difference in the expense of fencing. The Committee recommends using 5' fencing for the proposed park but only had immediate access to state bids for 4' & 6' fencing.

**Estimated Line Item Budget for Proposed Dog Park**

Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total
Double Shredded Hardwood Mulch 3” Thick	600	CY	22.00	13,200.00
Black Vinyl Chain Link Fence 6’ High (Actual fencing to be 5’ high*)	1200	LF	45.00	54,000.00
Black Vinyl Chain Link Fence Gate 4’ long x 6’ High (Actual fencing to be 5’ high*)	3	EA	360.00	1,080.00
Black Vinyl Chain Link Fence Gate 12’ long x 6’ High (Actual fencing to be 5’ high*)	2	EA	1,500.00	3,000.00
Benches	5	EA	300.00	1,500.00
Park Signs (safety and usage signs)	5	EA	100.00	500.00
Dog Waste Bag Dispensers	6	EA	80.00	480.00
Biodegradable Dispenser Bags	40,000	EA	.04	1,600.00
Rakes	3	EA	20.00	60.00
Shovels	3	EA	20.00	60.00
Showcase Style Message Board	1	EA	1,000.00	1,000.00
9 Qt. Water Buckets w/4” double sided clasps	4	EA	30.00	120.00
Sub-Total				76600.00
Contingency 10%				7660.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>84260.00</b>

*\* There will be an estimated minimum of \$1200 less difference in the expense of fencing. The Committee recommends using 5’ fencing for the proposed park but only had immediate access to state bids for 4’ & 6’ fencing.*

## Conclusion

The Parks4Pooches Committee feels the dog park is needed and will be a positive addition to the Town's Park System providing recreational opportunity for many residents and their dogs that do not regularly use other town recreation facilities.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Parks4Pooches Committee returned to the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission to review changes and ask for a recommendation to the Manchester Board of Directors. The members of the Commission unanimously approved the following motions:

*Motion 1 - After consideration of the amount of information presented by the Parks4Pooches Committee, and deliberation, the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission recommends the approval of a dog park and the site selected as the number one location, Mt. Nebo, behind the Town Water Treatment Plant and that the town provide the necessary land and approve the dog park.*

*Motion 2 - The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission takes no position on the funding regarding construction and ongoing costs associated with the dog park. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission feels this should be left between the Parks4Pooches Committee, the Manchester Dog Owners Group and the Town.*

The Parks4Pooches Committee requests approval from the Town of Manchester Board of Directors for the following:

1. The development and construction of a dog park at the number one selected location in Mt. Nebo Park behind the Town Water Department and for the town to provide the necessary land to do so.
2. Funding for the construction of a dog park at the Mt. Nebo location matching the joint fundraising efforts of the Parks4Pooches Committee and Manchester Dog Owners Group up to, at most, 50% of the final cost of the park's development.

The Parks4Pooches Committee is excited about the project and hopes the Town of Manchester Board of Directors will approve the development of a dog park in Manchester as well as the funding of the construction.