

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
November 15, 2014
9:00 a.m.**

Mayor Jeffrey E. Graham Presiding

Present: Council Member Roxanne M. Burns
Council Member Joseph M. Butler, Jr.
Council Member Stephen A. Jennings
Council Member Teresa R. Macaluso
Mayor Graham

Also Present: Sharon Addison, City Manager

City staff present: Michael Lumbis, Erin Gardner

DISCUSSION

Council toured the six proposed sites for a dog park reviewing the layout of each as well as discussing the advantages and disadvantages for all of the sites. The tour was lead by Michael Lumbis, City Planner, who performed the preliminary research for this project included in the report to Council at the November 3rd meeting (on file in the City Clerk's Office). At each site, he offered a detailed visual guide using landmarks and the map that was suggested for each park. He gave the size of the large and small dog areas as well as explained the parking situation for each. The tour began at the two options in the Thompson Park then followed to Waterworks Park, Marble Street Park, Sewall's Island and Factory Square Park. The tour was attended by a group of interested citizens.

West Entrance Drive - Thompson Park

This site is located along the entrance drive to Thompson Park just off of Gotham Street.

Mr. Lumbis referenced two stakes marked with pink ribbons to visualize the layout of the entrance to the park but noted there are several potential locations along this road and the design could be adjusted to relocate the proposed dog park if desired. He mentioned an area closer to the lookout and the golf course as well as the area directly across the street.

Council Member Macaluso questioned the amount of trees needing to be removed.

Mr. Lumbis replied that this site requires a lot of brush removal but most of the large trees would be saved. He also recommended leaving some of the brush along the road for more shade. He stressed that the biggest issue with this site would be the clearing of the area and the heavy equipment that would be needed. He advised that a waterline is close by.

Council Member Macaluso mentioned that she was concerned that cars would park along the road which would disrupt traffic.

Mr. Lumbis indicated that the parking lot would have 10 spaces and that the lookout parking lot could be used for overflow.

Questions were raised from the crowd regarding the effect on the hiking trails because the trails are heavily used by many people.

Mr. Lumbis responded that three trails would be impacted.

Additional concerns over the ease of accessibility by walkers were raised because Gotham Street does not have sidewalks.

Council Member Burns commented that she does not want to interrupt the trail system.

North Entrance Drive - Thompson Park

This site is located along the North Entrance Drive (the road that comes from the Park Circle) in Thompson Park. It is located north of the zoo at the site of an old park quarry that has been recently filled in.

Mr. Lumbis pointed out the entrance would be farther down North Entrance Drive with a parking lot for 10 spaces and the fence line would follow the maintenance road along the zoo.

Council Member Burns noted that this site has the opposite problem than the other site in that there are no trees.

Mr. Lumbis explained that there would be late day shade from the taller trees along the road but larger trees would need to be planted. He advised that the disadvantage with this site is water access because it is farther away so a waterline would need to come from the zoo. He said that this site does not affect any of the hiking trails. He did point out that the main road is closed during the winter months due to the sledding hill so the barriers would have to be moved to an area beyond the entrance of the dog park.

Waterworks Park

This site is located in an existing riverfront park on Huntington Street just west of the water treatment plant. The dog park would be situated inside of an existing large looped trail system.

Mr. Lumbis noted that the parking lot is already in place and allows for 30 spots. He advised that improvements would be needed for the sidewalk leading from the parking lot and that the existing trail surrounding the proposed dog park would remain but would need some paving. He indicated this site is a good size and due to the existing kayak launch trail, it allows for the separation between the small dog and large dog areas. He remarked that the site would require clearing of the brush but many large trees would remain for shade. Removing the brush, he said, would open up a view of the river. In regard to the waterline, he said that it would be farther but is easily accessible from Huntington Street. One disadvantage, he noted, is that under the soil base is rock so the fence posts would need to be drilled. He also noted that if funding is a concern, then the fence line could be set back farther from the surrounding trail making the park smaller.

Marble Park

This site is located on Marble Street near the City's Hydroelectric Facility.

Mr. Lumbis explained that the parking lot would be smaller with only six spots and the area available for the dog park at this location is limited. He stated that the advantages of this site are that the water availability is close and there is no brush to clear. He pointed out that Michael Sligar, Water Superintendent, expressed concern over its proximity to the Hydroelectric Plant.

Council Member Burns stated that the park's closeness to the baseball fields could cause a problem.

Sewall's Island

This site is located on the southern side of Sewall's Island. The site is a Brownfield and there are certain restrictions on future uses but a dog park would be an allowed use if the site was capped with one foot of soil.

Mr. Lumbis stated that the existing access road would be used but that it would need to be widened and paved. He explained that the City currently has a grant application pending with the NYS DEC that would pay for most of the work involved in capping the soil but if the application is not successful, the costs for developing this site will increase. He explained that the timeline for the grant approval and its implementation is unknown so it may not line up with the development of this project. Noting that the land drops down to the riverbed, he clarified the necessary setbacks.

Mayor Graham suggested this site is nice if the river path is expanded but otherwise is isolated.

Regarding concerns from the residents over the site's pollution, Council Member Macaluso commented that the DEC would not approve the site if it was not safe.

Factory Square Park

This site is located in an existing riverfront park near the intersection of Factory Street and High Street.

Mr. Lumbis indicated the existing parking lot would be used but would need paving. He also stated the existing pathway would be paved and it is currently a dead end but the hope is to expand it to Factory Street. He noted the size of the park could be adjusted by shifting the fence line and that the availability of water is close.

Council Member Macaluso confirmed that the large dog area was 0.7 acres.

Council Member Burns remarked that there could be a cost savings if it is combined with the Factory Street Reconstruction project.

Mayor Graham asked if the current park is used much.

Mr. Lumbis said that he does not have usage numbers but he has been here on occasion and there have been visitors to the current park.

Mayor Graham thanked staff for the information and thanked the citizens that attended the tour. He noted the dog park will be a City facility so the decision that is made will be one that takes into account the best interest of the City and its residents. He said he hopes Council will have a decision in the near future.

Work session ended at 10:45 a.m.

Ann M. Saunders, City Clerk