

Minutes – Public Information Update

Park: Dufferin Grove Dogs Off-Leash Area
Date: November 15, 2017
Time: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Location: St. Mary's Catholic Academy, 66 Dufferin Park Ave.

Staff Attendees:

- Nancy Aranha, Facilitator, Parks Standards and Innovation (PSI), Parks Branch
- Sue Wenzl, Manager, Parks Standards and Innovation, Parks Branch
- Tara Coley, Landscape Architect, Parks Standards and Innovation, Parks Branch
- Connie Tong, Administrative Assistant, Parks Standards and Innovation, Parks Branch
- Nadia Blackburn, General Supervisor, Parks Branch
- Lisa Carson, Assistant Planner, Urban Forestry Branch
- Keith Storey, Community Recreation Programmer, Community Recreation Branch
- Sofia Olivera, Community Recreation Programmer, Community Recreation Branch
- Peter Didiano, Senior Planner, Parks Development and Capital Projects
- Katy Aminian, Senior Planner, Parks Development and Capital Projects
- Liliana Custudio, Constituency Assistant, Councillor Bailão's Office, Ward 18 – Davenport
- Deputy Mayor and Councillor Ana Bailão, Ward 18 – Davenport

Public Attendees: 29

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| 1. | <p>Introductions and Welcome – Nancy Aranha (PSI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Aranha opened the meeting • Welcomed everyone in attendance and introduced Liliana Custudio from Councillor Bailão's office, including Parks, Forestry, Recreation Division staff in attendance • Advised that staff will explain and discuss in detail the proposed location for the dogs off-leash area (DOLA) and its suitability • Explained that if the proposed location is approved a second meeting will be held by Capital staff to consult the community on the design in 2018. |
| 2. | <p>Review Assessment and Discuss any Changes for Conditions of Use</p> <p>A. Background information and Internal Review of the Request</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council-approved People, Dogs and Parks – Off-Leash Policy guides the process for how requests are made, reviewed and assessed to determine suitability • Increase in dog ownership has prompted the need for more DOLAs within a community, while trying to balance the needs of various uses that can occur in one park • The policy was first introduced in 2007 and revised in 2010 to include more location specific criteria. The revised policy takes into consideration; the local community, its placement, and its suitability • A preliminary review is done by PSI staff to determine the possible suitability of a proposed location • A preliminary assessment will determine if a technical site assessment is then conducted, |

which includes staff from various other branches, other divisions and outside agencies:

- Parks Operations
- Urban Forestry
- Community Recreation
- Toronto Water, and
- TRCA

B. Internal Assessment of the Application

- Technical assessment is conducted by PSI, Parks Operations and Urban Forestry staff
- Dog Owners' Association (DOA)/Applicants and Councillor are informed of the outcome and if a location is deemed suitable, staff will work with the Councillor's office on the next step i.e. funding source and community meeting.

C. Public Information Process

- If a location is deemed suitable, a community consultation will be led by PSI with the support of the Ward Councillor to advise the community that the site meets the off-leash area location criteria outlined in the policy
- Discussion and feedback from the community includes:
 - Overall project and scope
 - Location and hours of operation
 - Design standards and guidelines i.e. fencing, gates, irrigation etc.
 - Signage
 - Tree protection, and
 - Other amenities
- All feedback from the community consultation meeting is taken into consideration and all possible options are considered
- A follow-up meeting with the community is only scheduled if necessary.

3. Criteria for Off-Leash Areas in Parks

The following criteria will be used in staff's review of the suitability:

- neighbourhood characteristics
- compatibility with the park's design, established uses, features and components
- potential impacts on the park's functionality, condition and natural environment
- proportion of park to be taken up by the proposed off-leash area, and
- proximity to residences and off-leash area exclusions

Off-leash areas shall not be established within the following areas:

- playgrounds, splash pads, wading pools, horticultural display areas or ornamental gardens
- skateboard bowls, tennis courts and other sports pads
- sportsfields and stadiums
- artificial or natural ice rinks, toboggan hills
- animal display areas
- campgrounds
- designated heritage, memorial, commemorative and ceremonial areas
- burial grounds
- areas posted prohibiting dogs (i.e.: playgrounds & beaches)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

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| 4. | <p>Site Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing off-leash areas have a posted Code of Conduct outlining Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 608 Parks and 349 Animals bylaws, which are enforceable by Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) division, Municipal Standard's Officers (MSO) Officer's Monitoring is conducted through site visits to ensure compliance in collaboration with Parks Operations staff, MSO's, DOA's and other community members. |
| 5. | <p>Summary of Assessment Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The south west corner of the park, in the lower bowl area was deemed a suitable location for a DOLA (on the south side of the northern pathway) At this time, there is no plan by Toronto Water for a storm water management plan Parks staff conducted a review of the entire park and there is no other location within the park that met all of the location criteria outlined in the policy Proposed area meets policy criteria The park is heavily used by the community for: passive use, recreational activities and special events The park also has several existing amenities, such as, a playground, wading pool, sports fields, bake oven, etc. A DOLA will assist with addressing the need of a dedicated space for the dogs in Ward 18 and will remove the pressure off other areas of the park, assisting in the safety of patrons Some of the site details include: post and paddle fencing with wire mesh, concrete double gated entry, standard signs, benches, shade opportunities and waste receptacles. |
| 6. | <p>Signage: Conditions of Use & Code of Conduct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with all signs and boundaries Dog(s) must be on leash at all times except when in the designated off-leash area All dog(s) must have a visible municipal license affixed to the dog(s) Dog(s) must remain in off-leash areas so as not to trample or endanger plant material and other park resources Dog(s) excluded from use at off-leash areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pit bulls or other dangerous animal Female dogs in heat Any dog(s) that has been issued a muzzle order by the Medical Officer of Health. Dogs shall not chase wildlife Pick up after your dog(s) and place waste in receptacles or take home for disposal Keep dogs in sight and under control at all times Do not leave dog(s) unattended while in off-leash area Repair holes dug by the dog(s) under your control. |
| 7. | <p>Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership</p> <p>Responsible pet ownership is a key component to a successful off-leash area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> License your dog Pick up after your dog Educate yourself and train your dog Follow the City bylaws and Park bylaws Respect other people, property and animals Keep your dog on-leash when not in a designated off-leash area. |

8. Comments/Questions/Feedback

Ground rules

- 3-5 minute for individual's to provide comments, questions, ideas and concerns
- Summarize feedback and determine consensus
- For more info visit: www.toronto.ca/parks/dogs and send inquiries to dola@toronto.ca

Questions/Comments from the meeting:

| Questions/Concerns | Resolution |
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| If approved, what is the timeline for this project? | Capital will design in 2018 and construction will take place in 2019. |
| What instigated the need for a DOLA? | The Councillor has received numerous requests for a DOLA in her ward. |
| How will this location affect activities such as, tobogganing and kid's activities on the hill? | The hill is not an official/designated tobogganing hill, although historically used as one. Once the DOLA has been installed Parks Operations will need to be mindful and install the appropriate signage. |
| Proposed location should be on the north side of the ice rink, where ice gets piled up and wrap around the recreation facility instead of being a rectangular box. | Staff conducted an entire scan of the park. That particular location does not meet the policy criteria and is too small. |
| Did staff consider things like sightline, noise and smell? | The proposed location is across from the Dufferin Mall and far enough from homes on the south and east side of the park. |
| Will the DOLA accommodate Commercial Dog Walkers (CDW)? | Hours, including CDW access will be discussed at the Capital design meeting in 2018. |
| What kind of surface material will be used? | This will be discussed at the Capital design meeting in 2018. |
| Will the fence be tall enough? | Yes, our standard fence height in our DOLAs is 5 ft. |
| Will it be sizable to accommodate dog users in the area? | Yes, the DOLA will be approximately 1,000 m ² . Although, this is half the size of our standard there were no other parks in ward 18 with this amount of space that met all the location criteria. |
| Did you consider putting the DOLA along Havelock St. where there is an existing fence and less traffic than the proposed location? | Yes, but it did not meet the location criteria outlined in the policy. The location is too small, immediately adjacent to the street, and within close proximity to homes. |
| Have staff considered planting trees along the fence to act as a buffer? | Parks and Urban Forestry can look into doing tree plantings through the Urban Forestry Renewal group. This will be discussed at the Capital design meeting in 2018. |
| What progress has been made to consider drainage? Including weather patterns that can cause snow to pile and pea gravel to freeze (drainage issues). Bill Johnston Park is a good example of design where dog owner's love the pavement and gravel on top which helps with | Since 2008, we have made progress by learning what works and what doesn't work in our DOLAs. We have made improvements to the design to address things such as, drainage issues. Irrigation in our parks is not operational during the winter months. |

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| | the drainage issues. | |
| | Any consideration of dog waste receptacles that would be different from what's currently being used in our parks? | Not at this time. Solid Waste is responsible for picking up waste in parks. |
| | Has parking been considered? | Additional parking is not available. Parking is available across the street at the Dufferin Mall and on side streets. |
| | Has there been any consideration to include a DOLA in the condo development that's happening at the corner of Bloor and Dufferin? | Deputy Mayor Bailao has been working with City Planning to develop a policy that would require developers to include green spaces and amenities for dogs in their plans. |
| | How about enforcing dog licensing to pay for dog park amenities? | All enforcement issues related to Municipal Code, Chapter 608 and Chapter 349 is managed by MLS. |
| | Is there better compliance of the bylaw when a DOLA has been installed? | Currently we have no data that would support this. |
| | Creating a DOLA takes away valuable greenspace and this undersized DOLA doesn't consider the increase in the dog population and future developments. | Providing a DOLA in this park will balance the needs of this community by providing a dedicated space for dogs and away from varying uses that occur within the park. |
| | Trinity Bellwoods is a mess. | Trinity Bellwoods is an example of an unfenced DOLA that was grand-parented prior to the policy being revised in 2010. |
| | The public must respect that parks should accommodate all users (dogs owners and non-dog owners). | All dogs are required to be on-leash, unless while in a designated off-leash area. This helps to ensure all parks users can enjoy our space. |
| | Today's meeting was not a fair representation of the people in the community. | The Deputy Mayor's office sent the flyer to residents that reside between College to Bloor and Dufferin to Ossington, also posting the meeting notice on social media several times. |
| 9. | Final Outcome of Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff asked the community by a show of hands, who supports this proposed location: • In favour: 25 people including 3 letters sent in to Deputy Mayor Bailão's office • Opposed: 1 • Sue Wenzl adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m. | |