

Downtown Dog Park Public Meeting  
Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-7:00  
Emporium Building, 100 S. Gay Street

The City is considering developing a dog park at the southeast corner of Summit Hill and Central. The public meeting was intended to gauge support for this project. Attendees were asked to provide input about the features and amenities they would like to see in a downtown dog park as well as ideas about policies and procedures that could be adopted to make the dog park a success. Comments from attendees were based on experiences and lessons-learned at other dog parks, including Dogwood Park in Victor Ashe Park. There was unanimous support for the development of the downtown dog park among the 30+ public attendees.

### Public Comments, Questions and Discussion

Shade is important for people and dogs. Benches should be located under trees, or if no trees than canopies.

Too much dirt and dust can be a problem at Victor Ashe. It's important to have grass. Discussion: it's difficult to maintain grass in a dog park.

Fencing will likely be chain linked and double gated. Suggestion: Fence should be minimum of 6 ft – big dogs can leap over smaller fences.

A water source needs to be available for both dogs and people. The park at Victor Ashe has a nice fountain.

There should be a separate area for puppies and small dogs.

Question: Will there be a supervisory person assigned to the dog park? Answer: No, the dog park will have to be self-monitored. Dog owners will have to pick up after their dogs and make sure they behave.

At the PetSafe dog park, there is no supervisor. Users are asked to check-in, but sometimes they don't. Dog owners are supposed to self-police waste clean-up, dog behavior.

Benches and space can be strategically arranged to increase the opportunity for peer pressure enforcement of waste clean-up. Don't put benches off to the side of the park where people can pretend they don't see their dog pooping.

Installing a sprinkler system could help encourage grass and dilute urine. Discussion: may create additional maintenance challenges. As long as there is sufficient sunlight, grass will grow.

Put woodchips in high-trafficked areas and under benches (or concrete under benches).

Big dogs can jump over a fence <6ft tall.

Distributing pick-up bags and garbage cans throughout the space, rather than one location, makes it easier for people to pick up dog waste.

Runoff is a concern in this location because of First Creek. Keeping the park as waste-free as possible is very important. Isaac Walton League got involved in pet waste clean-up because of water quality concerns. Discussion of methods: ensuring compliance with Knoxville's pet waste ordinance, steady supply of donated pick-up bags, educational signage Waste = Disease.

Park naming contest, Mardi Gras dog costume parade raised as fun ideas to generate support for the park, funds.

Permanent, large water bowls for dogs recommended.

Water supply in winter important for dogs. Discussion: fountains in winter are difficult because pipes freeze and burst.

Install shower for dogs so that owners can clean them off on the way from the park. Discussion: concern that people would use the shower.

Radio Systems, Inc. / PetSafe has committed to donating funds for this park and four others around Knox County. Headquartered here in Knoxville, goal to make community pet-friendly.

Timing? If TDOT approval, design/budget/construction process goes smoothly, could be ready as early as this summer.

Dog licenses are required for all dogs in Knoxville.

Sometimes dog parks have problems with aggressive dogs, particularly un-neutered males – could bar these from the park? Discussion: not all un-neutered males are aggressive, don't know how this could be enforced.

Policy needs to be clearly stated that owners are personally responsible for actions of their dog/s.

Directional signage to dog park needed for downtown visitors. Discussion: Overall wayfinding/signage project slated for downtown, dog park could be included as a destination.

Audience member referred to Mayor's statement about desire to make Knoxville one of the most pet-friendly communities in the country. Note: this statement was attributed to Mayor Haslam, but it was actually said by Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale at the Legacy Parks Foundation in reference to Radio System's commitment to donate up to

\$500,000 toward the creation of five new dog parks. From October 27<sup>th</sup> News Sentinel article (Hickman): “Ragsdale said the donation only furthers Radio Systems President Randy Boyd's goal of ‘making our community the most pet-friendly community in the country.’”

Make park available to trainers and groomers for special classes.

A dog owner’s association ([www.knoxdog.com](http://www.knoxdog.com)) was formed prior to the development of the dog park in Victor Ashe park. Contact Jennie Huettel ([knoxdog@comcast.net](mailto:knoxdog@comcast.net)) to join.

Strong KPD support for this project - a dog park in this location will help improve safety by putting eyes on the street, creating a legitimate use in a location that is currently used for non-legitimate purposes. Dawn-dusk hours are recommended for security purposes. May be a role for volunteer courtesy officers.

Steps to construction:

- Gain Mayor’s support – done
- Hold public meeting to assess public support – done
- Lease property from TDOT
- Design (suggestion to involve ETCDC in conducting a design charrette)
- Finalize budget
- Site clearance
- Engineering work
- Construction & installation – *possibly summer ‘08*

Locate Christmas tree recycling drop-off in park – reuse for woodchips.

Existing dog waste ordinance needs better enforcement. People don’t know about it or it is ignored with no consequences.

Site PBA security camera at dog park entrance.

Locate dog waste pick-up bags in paths to/from the park.

Questions or comments? Contact Madeleine Weil, Dep. Director of Policy & Communications, 215-2680, [mweil@cityofknoxville.org](mailto:mweil@cityofknoxville.org).

Notes will be posted on the Department of Policy & Communication’s website at: [www.cityofknoxville.org/policy/](http://www.cityofknoxville.org/policy/)