



# MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Mayor and City Councilors

**From:** Rich Olson, City Manager  
Bobbi White, Parks and Recreation Director

**Date:** April 25, 2013

**Re:** Information Requested on Dog Park

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***BACKGROUND:***

Due to the amount of interest from local dog owners, the Parks and Recreation Department staff placed \$23,200 in the 2012-13 budget to construct a Dog Park at the future site of the SPCA Shelter on Enterprise Drive. This item was removed from the 2012-13 budget; however, the interest in a Dog Park has not waned. Staff again placed \$23,200 into the 2013-14 departmental budget.

***ANALYSIS:***

Most medium to large cities in North Carolina now have dog parks. Many cities such as Raleigh have three or more Dog Parks located within their parks and recreation system. These parks are off-leash areas that may be called BarkParks, Off-Leash Parks or Dog Parks. Parks are typically from a half acre to acre in size; however, Greensboro has a Dog Park that is six (6) acres. It is divided into three separate, air-lock gated areas. Staff contacted six different cities located in North Carolina who have off-leash facilities for dogs. They were Washington, New Bern, Greenville, Cary, Raleigh, and Greensboro.

Each parks and recreation department seems to have their own set of rules and regulations that govern the parks. Several charge fees to help off-set the expenses of maintenance and operating costs and improvements to the facilities as well as the registration and purchase of Dog Park tags. Most Dog Parks are not supervised and have very little dog aggression issues. Rules and regulations are posted at the parks, as well as using five to six-foot high fences and electronic gate access or a double gate system with a foyer type area that requires dogs to be leashed before entering the Dog Park. Children ages 12 and under or shorter than 55 inches are not allowed in the Dog Parks.

After analyzing the rules and regulations of the six different park systems, staff believes we should build a Dog Park or Off-Leash Park. If Council does not want to construct it at the new SPCA facility, we have space available at Fun Junktion to build the park. Staff has spoken to the Recreation Advisory Board on several occasions in the past two years concerning the development of a Dog Park. The Board agrees that a Dog Park is needed in our community. They believe either site (SPCA or Fun Junktion) would be suitable.

Staff proposes the following rules and regulations be followed:

1. Park to be open from sunrise to sunset.
2. Park should have two areas for dogs: one for large dogs (25 lbs and up) and one for small/medium dogs (24 lbs and under).
3. Access to the park is granted to registered dogs and their owners only.
4. Members must register with the Parks and Recreation office and complete an application of use as well as a form to accept responsibility and risk and the release of liability.
5. Owners must provide proof of yearly vaccinations for the health and safety of humans and dogs.
6. Yearly registration will be required as well as the recommended payment of \$35.00 per dog for City/County residents. Each additional dog should be \$25.00. Fees for one day, weekly, weekend or monthly should also be considered. We can also have fees for out-of-county residents, but we should consider doubling the City/County registration fees.
7. Dogs showing aggression must be removed from the park immediately by the owner!
8. Rules and Regulations will be posted at the park concerning: conduct of dogs, responsibility of owners for clean-up, number of dogs allowed at park per owner, dogs must not be left unattended, dogs must be vaccinated and have no diseases and be parasite-free, dogs must wear a collar with identification and a Dog Park tag, owners must carry a leash, dogs in heat are not allowed inside the park, no spiked collars, owners must prevent dogs from digging and must immediately fill holes, wolves or wolf hybrids are not allowed inside the park, etc.

We will have forms in place for registration, tags, responsibility and risk and the release of liability before the facility is constructed. Staff believes that with strictly enforced rules and regulations in place, we can operate a safe park for dogs to run and play off-leash.