

WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Public Parks and Recreation Committee
Town Hall Council Chambers
December 3, 2018, Monday

Present: Jane Hackett, Chairman
Michael Molisse, Vice Chairman
Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor
Arthur Mathews, Councilor

Also Present: Mayor Joseph Sullivan

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Hackett called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Mayor Hedlund submitted a proposal. The chair opened the floor to Mayor Sullivan to make a presentation, then to Weymouth administration. A public hearing is scheduled on December 17, 2018.

18 127-Establishment of Recreational Dog Park

Mayor Sullivan was invited to the table. He reported he appreciated the opportunity and introduced Andrew Marron, the Liaison in his office. The Braintree administration was approached a year ago and he is not sure how he became its official spokesman, but he supports the idea. He provided much of the correspondence he received to Weymouth. The measure received unanimous support of the Braintree Town Council. A potential location has been suggested but not pinned down. He reported that he respects and appreciates the beauty of the park, which has been under regional oversight shared by the two towns and governed by the Braintree Weymouth Regional Recreation District Commission. This plan is mutually beneficial to both towns. It will be two fenced in areas which allows the dogs room to socialize and segregated to large and small dogs. This is a new venue for the park.

He reported on Braintree's funding source; the grant can secure upwards of \$25,000, additionally CPA funds and \$50,000 from the state delegation to pay for design and construction. They are not asking for Weymouth to approve a specific location but to endorse the idea. Braintree officials have looked at half a dozen locations and each has challenges. The ultimate goal is to create another attraction within an already attractive location. They don't plan to knock down many trees; some of the information put on social media is not accurate. There will have to be some tree reduction, but they hope to create a canopy over the area and they won't know until they have a specific location. The group will also have a MOU for maintenance and to upgrade the security (camera surveillance) and for purchasing dog waste bags. Less responsible owners toss along the paths, and they will commit to the maintenance. This will be positive for Braintree, Weymouth and the South Shore. Both Animal Control officers believe it will be a benefit.

He noted that Braintree and Weymouth have put together a mutual shelter for animals

and will continue to work collectively. The area is 90% in Braintree and is 320 plus acres. The private organization will assume liability.

Councilor Molisse asked the annual maintenance estimate. Mayor Sullivan responded that it will be structured in the private entity's MOU; no public dollars will be used and he is unsure of the cost. Councilor Molisse asked if they have different location options- the suggested one is near a camp program. Mayor Sullivan responded that the commission provided some direction for a suitable site. Braintree held a public meeting. He is open to discussion, but he is anxious for resolution.

Councilor DiFazio asked if the three locations considered are in wooded areas. They reviewed A, B and C: B is an open area near the pavilion, C would require the most trimming, and C would be off the Weymouth entrance.

Chair Hackett asked about liability and whether the commissioners carry their own insurance. She asked about the commissions operating budget. by statute, they are self-insured. She does like the idea of an MOU including maintenance and additional insurance between Weymouth, Braintree and the commission if something happens. She reported that Braintree held a public meeting on the 6th. The measure is a result of a private citizen movement, and it was not expected to be one of contention. Mayor Sullivan and the group believe it can work. She suggested continuing the meeting and offer the commission and Braintree Dog Park Association members a chance to speak.

Jim Lockhead, Clerk of the Weymouth/Braintree Regional Recreation Conservation District, spoke in opposition of the plan. He provided the history of the park. It was originally designed as a watershed and the management was delegated to the towns equally. Pond Meadow Park is enjoyed by residents of both towns. He listened to two presentations and provided the committee with the minutes from both meetings. There are questions that were posed to the organization that have not been answered. The prime site is hilly and will need to be bulldozed. They committed not to bulldoze, and replicate what is removed. He suggested that this plan is akin to a private special interest group proposing a venue on the Emery Estate. Everyone likes dogs, but dog parks have inherent problems. At Bare Cove Park, a leash component was tried for years. They have 12 pages of rules and regulations that are not enforced. Stoddard's Neck park is a free-for-all. So this will be a great asset? He is skeptical. In October, two leashed dogs got into a battle and a woman was injured. This plan prioritizes a special interest group and is contrary to the district and how it has run for the last 40 years.

Councilor DiFazio asked if the position is Weymouth should have no liability? Is there any possibility that a site would be selected before taking a vote? Mayor Sullivan responded that the original intent was to obtain approval from both towns and allowing the group to find the most appropriate site.

Chair Hackett asked for a copy of the insurance policy and grant application. Mayor Sullivan responded that the grant funding hasn't been applied for yet.

Chair Hackett suggested they continue the meeting to December 17th to obtain more information from the Braintree Dog Park Association and have them come and participate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:48 PM, there being no further business, a Motion was made by Vice Chair Molisse to Adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Councilor DiFazio. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker, Recording Secretary.

Approved by Jane Hackett as Chair of the Public Parks and Recreation Committee
Voted unanimously on 17 December 2018