



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Fahey and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Richard Gill, Director of Parks and Recreation
Idris J. Al-Oboudi, Recreation Services Manager

DATE: May 17, 2005

SUBJECT: Three Month Progress Report for Live Oak Park Dog Run

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council receive and file the three month status progress report for the Live Oak Park Dog Run.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

1. Landscaping and fencing of off leash dog area - \$7,000. This includes preparation of area, fencing, gates, people and dog water fountain, mutt mitt dispensers, wood chips and trash cans
2. Signage, windscreens, drop box, display case - \$4,000
3. It will cost approximately \$50/month for all on-going maintenance

BACKGROUND:

During the November 16, 2004 City Council meeting, the Council approved the installation of an off-leash dog play area just beyond the center field fence at Dorsey Field for a six month trial basis. The City Council directed staff to monitor the area for the concerns that were raised at the November 16 meeting and provide Council with a progress report at the end of three months. The concerns that were raised at the Council meeting were:

1. Noise/excessive barking
2. dog feces/urine smell
3. overcrowding/becoming a destination point/traffic
4. safety issues, i.e. dog bites and aggressive dogs

DISCUSSION:

The dog run was completed in mid-February, much to the delight of the many dog owners in the vicinity of the Dog Run. Since the area opened, over 2,500 dogs have visited and the feedback has been very positive.

Staff used two methods to collect data on the operation of the dog run: 1) Parks and Recreation tennis monitors completing an hourly narrative and check list form (attachment A) and 2) User survey forms that are provided on site (attachment B).

The City made a significant effort to mitigate some of the neighbors' concerns mentioned earlier through 1) Design of area, 2) Placement of amenities, 3) Municipal codes and etiquette rules posted, 4) neighbors included in planning meetings and 5) monthly reviews/data collection.

During the past three months, staff collected 234 dog run participant surveys and 294 staff monitoring logs with hourly statistics. The staff logs and user surveys both addressed the concerns raised at the November 16 Council meeting.

1. Noise concern/excessive barking

Short burst of barking	12%
Continuous barking for more than 1 minute	1%
Little or no barking	87%

Comments: The general user comments regarding this issue was that a lot more noise was coming from the ball fields, street and playground

2. Dog feces/urine smell

Waste observed picked up	95%
Users picking up for another dog	3%
Mutt Mitts available	99%
Smell	0%

Comments: What little waste and urine that is left behind is removed by a sprinkler system that soaks and washes the area.

3. Overcrowding/traffic/destination spot

Average number of dogs present at most times	3-4
Most dogs seen in run (maximum allowed 10)	8
Dog owners walking to site	73%
Dog owners driving to site	27% *

*Of the 27% driving, 88% drove less than 2 miles

Comments: No problems have been witnessed by staff or participants regarding parking/traffic/or over use.

4. Safety issues/liability/dog bites/aggressive dogs

Dog bites	0
Instances of aggressive dog behavior	Less than 5%

Comments: One request that has been raised is the request to separate larger (60 lb.+) and smaller dogs (up to 60 lb.). The committee and staff are continuing to monitor and try to find solutions for this issue. The dog run is too small to separate into two areas and it may be inefficient to assign certain days for each group. Currently the owners have worked together to mitigate any aggressive behavior.

Neighbor Concerns

Staff did not survey the surrounding neighborhoods for non-dog owner concerns for this three month update. Six neighbors living near the dog run voluntarily filled out surveys, stating they had no concerns with the dog run operation so far.

User Suggestions

Other comments and feedback received from the users on the surveys:

1. Install a bench – staff completed
2. Separate large and small dogs – being looked into by committee
3. Light area for evenings
4. More hours – hours of operation were set by Council and follow construction codes because of the noise concerns

Other User Comments

Of the 234 user surveys returned, 97% contained positive feedback for the dog run. The other 3% were only negative in that they wanted more areas and more hours of operation. Some of the positive comments received were “Thank you;” “My dog is happy;” “Great job;” “Love it, please keep it;” “Great addition to Manhattan Beach;” “This is wonderful.”

CONCLUSION:

The initial three month progress report for the dog run operation is very positive.

The concerns expressed during the November 16 City Council meeting have not established themselves. Over 95% of the users are picking up their dog’s waste and what little is left behind is washed away by the sprinkler system. Over 87% of the time, staff and the users heard no barking. Only 1% of time was it reported that dogs barked continuously for more than a minute.

The issue of overcrowding or the area becoming a destination point has not materialized, as over 73% of the users stated they walked to the site and of the 27% who drove, 88% drove less than two miles.

Staff will continue to monitor and gather information through user surveys and staff logs and report back to the City Council at the end of the six-month trial period in August.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Narrative and Check List Form
- B. User Survey Form