

Dog Park Proposal

Presented by Sue Pilotte

December 16, 2024 to Littleton Remich Park and Recreation Commissioners

Our Mission:

To provide a secure environment for our canine population that promotes a safe and healthy play area

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Our Vision:

To have a positive impact on our community needs without adding more taxation to our taxpayers

History:

In 2017 I was asked by the BOS to chair a committee in determine if there was a need for a Dog Park in Littleton, as well as to gather public opinion on creating a dog park. Chris Wilkins, who was the P&R Director at the time actively joined me in forming a committee to conduct numerous surveys through town wide events

We conducted several surveys, and received positive responses from every event we attended in 2018, and 2019.

Due to the overwhelming positive response for a dog park, it was decided to add 2 warrant articles in 2019 for our voters to consider; Article 9 asked voters if they wanted to add an additional \$1.00 fee to the dog licensing fee to be used for the creation of a dog park. This article passed by a vote of 754 to 386. This vote agreed with our surveys, the people of Littleton were in favor of having a dog park.

Article 16 asked voters if they wanted to expend \$44,000 for engineering, planning, fencing, and land purchase for a Dog park, with \$22,000 of that amount coming from donations, and fundraising. This article failed by a vote of 440 to 678, which was not surprising as 2019 was a year of economic decline with loss of jobs, and closing of businesses due to the pandemic.

With the vote approving the creation of a dog park, our committee, under the direction of then Town Manager Andrew Dorsett, continued to seek donations, and fundraise.

Andrew Dorsett encouraged us to continue to raise awareness of our efforts to build a dog park, and to do more fundraising to alleviate taxpayers when we create the park. We also continued to search for suitable sites for an in town dog park.

Overview:

During the last 7 years we've never given up on our quest because of the support of our community. It's a well known fact, just like humans, dogs need to socialize. Studies have shown socializing with other humans, and fellow canines improves their wellbeing and behavior.

Between 2017 and 2021, the TOL committee dwindled in size. Through change in Town Managers, the Dog Park was put on a back burner, some members left feeling discouraged.

Several of us continued to meet, and strategize on how to bring a dog park to Littleton **without taxation** from our taxpayers.

This was how our 501(c)(3) nonprofit was formed. Becoming a nonprofit brought about more possibilities for seeking funding for a dog park. Our board enlisted other dog park supporters and we continued to fundraise and increase awareness of the need for a dog park. We created a website and a facebook page with over 800 followers. We have raised a considerable amount of money through grassroots efforts, and are looking to raise more funds through sales of our marketing products.

Our website, and facebook has brought more attention to our efforts. We have received donations through our direct contribution link on our website, with direct deposit to our bank account.

With the support of the BOS chairman, Linda MacNeil, the dog park has been moved to the front burner. Linda's enthusiasm and desire to help create a dog park has been instrumental in this process.

While looking for land one of our board members, a former Park & Recreation board member mentioned the parcel at Remich Park in August.

This parcel although not as large as some parks, it's also not the smallest. It has many of the priority points we had been seeking for a dog park; ease of access, in town location, Town owned, and liability insurance coverage through the town's insurance.

Our board, through research, has determined our 501(c)(3) has the funds to create the dog park in this particular spot. Our goal of not asking our taxpayers for funds to build a dog park will be met with the creation of a dog park at Remich Park.

We have received support from Rilee Clark, Park Director, Friends of Remich Park, and now we are asking our Park and Recreation Commissioners to support having a dog park at Remich.

We have researched the materials needed, the best surface coverings for dog parks, the fencing, gates, signage, and dog park rules. Dawn to dusk hours. We are awaiting some quotes at this time for some of the materials but our research has given us estimates and the knowledge of what we need to do.

We do feel confident our funds along with the Dog Licensing funds will be adequate to build the dog park. **No request for taxpayers to fund it.**

We will seek volunteers as needed to help clear the debris, under the direction of the park's overseers.

There is also room to do a phase 2 at a later date, and create an obstacle course at the lower end of this parcel.

We will continue to fundraise and support the dog park as **"Friends of the Dog Park at Remich"**

Thank you
Sue Pilotte
Chairman
Littleton 501(c)(3) Dog Park Board
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