

Farmington, CT Off Leash Dog Park Proposal



Prepared by: Farmington Dog Park Coalition

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This is a working document subject to change at the discretion of the Farmington Dog Park Coalition.

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Section 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Parks and green spaces in and around Farmington offer citizens and visitors, of all ages, a wide range of recreational opportunities throughout the year. Each recreational activity offers significant and obvious benefits to participants. But one group of Farmington residents is currently lacking a specific area where they can enjoy one of their favorite forms of recreation: exercising their dogs off leash.

Since the Town has a municipal leash law, dogs can not legally go for a run anywhere in the Town - unless their owner has a fenced yard or happens to enjoy jogging with a dog in tow. Dog experts will tell you, dogs are engineered to run. They need hardy, regular exercise even more than people do. In fact, it's the dog that's full of energy with no way to burn it off that typically develops behavioral problems ranging from excessive barking and inappropriate chewing to life-shortening obesity and aggression. Every dog owner knows a well-exercised dog is a "good" dog.

How many people (and dogs) are affected by the Town's leash law? Just counting the 1,671 dogs that have been registered in the Town of Farmington this year suggests that we have one dog for every fourteen residents in our Town — certainly a significant segment of the community!

This situation is hardly unique to Farmington and, indeed, is what has led to the idea of special areas for dog owners to exercise their dogs — "dog parks" — and the development of these recreational areas across the country and throughout Connecticut.

WHAT IS A DOG PARK?

In our research we discovered there are more than 700 dog parks in the U. S. and more are being established every day. The topography, layout, rules, and regulations of each may vary. But the purpose is the same – to provide an off leash recreation area. The very term "dog park" is a bit of a misnomer, because a dog park is as much a park for dog owners as it is a park for dogs. Our working definition of the term "dog park" is a securely fenced area in which dog owners can safely exercise and socialize their pets.

LEARNING ABOUT DOG PARKS

Early in 2011, at the invitation of John Scarritt, a group of Farmington dog owners gathered to discuss the idea of establishing a dedicated off-leash recreation area in the Town for dogs and their owners. The initial group included the following persons:

John & Jen Scarritt, Gerald Hancock, Edith McClure, Anita Schwager, Lori Angelbeck, Ann Sheldon, Chalise Ross, Marie Anne Schadler, Donald & Carol Ketcham, Carol Deegan, Wendy Shaw, Anne Gerard and Karen Freilick among others.

In our initial discussions, we discovered that most participants had been expressing interest in a dog park with friends, neighbors, and fellow dog owners for years. Several have used dog parks in other communities. The general consensus was that an off leash area was not only needed in the Town, but that it would enhance the recreational opportunities for a significant segment of the community and have a beneficial economic impact on the area.

The group determined to gauge interest levels within the wider community in a variety of ways. Coalition members solicited input from attendees at two public events that were held in the Farmington area during the summer of 2011. The first event was a "Doozey of a Dog Show" on July 12 at Pinney Park in Unionville. More than 15 of the attendants signed a list expressing interest in a Farmington dog park and their willingness to assist with establishing the park, fundraising, construction, and/or maintenance tasks. The second event was the "Dog Days of Summer" sponsored by the Farmington Girl Scouts on August 13 at Best Friends Pet Care in Avon, CT. This event attracted more than two dozen additional signatures.

Encouraged, the original group continued to research dog parks, issues and concerns associated with them, criteria for establishing a successful off-leash recreational area, and costs related to construction and ongoing maintenance. The group concluded the three most critical questions regarding the establishment of such an area in Farmington are:

1. Where would a dog park be located in this community?
2. What would be the immediate and/or ongoing costs of a dog park to local taxpayers?
3. Are there liability issues associated with a dog park?

The group continues to meet monthly with members assigned research tasks, visiting established dog parks in other areas and evaluating potential sites for a dog park in Farmington.

Section 2

BENEFITS FOR DOG OWNERS, DOGS AND THE COMMUNITY

FARMINGTON'S DOG-OWNER POPULATION

In 2010, 1,671 dogs were licensed by the Town of Farmington, and informed estimates suggest there are at least as many as 100 more that are not licensed. In 2010 the estimated the population of Farmington was 25,304 — which means we have more than one dog for every fourteen residents in our Town. Considering that many dogs are owned by couples or families, more than 15 percent of our citizens are actually dog owners.

The advantages of allowing dogs access to public, open space are substantial. Even Farmington Dog Park Coalition researchers were surprised to realize how broadly the benefits of a dog park extend.

BENEFITS TO DOG OWNERS

Research shows that just petting a dog can temporarily lower a person's blood pressure and that being around a dog can alleviate depression. The ability of dogs to make humans relax is why they are increasingly accepted as therapy animals in assisted-living facilities, hospitals, and hospices.

If simply being with dogs makes us feel happier and less stressed, it stands to reason that being with dogs who are playing freely and joyously would be a profoundly satisfying form of recreation - especially when it includes sharing enthusiasm for dogs with other dog lovers. A dog park invariably creates another social hub in a community, allowing people with common interests to get to know one another while exercising their canine companions. As we all know, dogs often help "break the ice," making it easier for neighbors get to know one another and build a sense of community. Dog parks foster friendships.

Allowing a dog to run in a securely fenced area is also a very efficient way to exercise a dog. Fifteen minutes of unrestrained exercise can equal an hour of merely walking along on leash. Energy is burned more quickly, making a visit to a dog park a boon to folks who don't have unlimited time to exercise their pet. A so-called dog park is, first and foremost, a park for people who love being with dogs. Just how numerous are such people in our community?

BENEFITS TO DOGS

Dogs are innately social animals. Being leashed not only inhibits a dog's natural movement and social interaction, but it causes such frustration in some that they actually become aggressive when they're on leash (and only then). On the other hand, romping with a group of dogs helps each to learn what it can and cannot do with others; play is the natural way for dogs to learn their manners.

Free play is a fun way to keep a dog in good physical condition and emotional balance. Sedentary dogs, like inactive people, are prone to obesity and associated health issues, whereas lean and fit dogs tend to have longer, healthier lives.

In an off-leash recreation area, dogs not only engage with other dogs, but they also meet and interact with people who are unfamiliar to them. Since nearly everyone at a dog park is a dog lover, this creates a wonderful, safe place for dogs to learn how to deal with strangers. The better socialized a dog becomes — both with people and other dogs — the better neighbor and canine citizen it makes.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

In addition to helping create better canine neighbors, a dog park offers several potential benefits for the community at large. Having a dedicated space for dogs to be off leash eliminates a prime excuse some dog owners give for letting their dogs wander along without a leash. No one will be able to claim, "There's no place around here where my dog can just run."

Users of the dog park can provide a valuable service in public outreach by modeling responsible pet management and helping to educate the public in what “accountable” ownership means. Collaborating among themselves, for instance, they can encourage other dog owners to pick up after their dogs and set a higher civic standard. A well-managed dog park can foster a culture of responsible dog ownership that benefits the entire community.

Furthermore, travel authorities report that more people are traveling and vacationing these days with their canine companions, so any community that is home to a dog park is attractive both because of the convenient facility (travelers need to exercise their dogs) and for what it says about the area's attitude toward dogs. The Farmington Inn, the Centennial Inn, and Homewood Suites, for instance, are proud to offer dog-friendly accommodations, and several stores in town allow well-behaved dogs to enter their premises. A community with a reputation for being particularly dog friendly has a valuable marketing tool.

Being a community with a dog park could also have some small effect on the local real estate market. A town with a dog park can be considerably more appealing than one with just a leash law for dog lovers looking for a place to settle in Central Connecticut.

As many other towns and cities across the country have learned, a dog park is a bona fide community asset with both social and economic benefits — another place to have fun in town.

Section 3

CONCERNS ABOUT DOG PARKS

As wonderful as the many benefits of a well-run dog park may be, off-leash recreational areas are not without hazards and risks. Even "good" dogs can get into fights, for example, and not all dog owners feel it's their obligation to pick up after their own animal. Fortunately, though, because dog parks have been long established elsewhere, most of the potential problems have already been identified and successfully addressed.

Strategies that other communities use to avoid problems include signage that clearly communicates park rules and a users' guide that explains the reasoning behind the rules and encourages all to honor them. The Farmington Dog Park Coalition intends to produce such a guide which could be distributed as residents license their dogs, at the dog park itself, at dog-friendly Farmington hotels, and on the Town web sites. Other possibilities include placing helpful resources for loan at Farmington Library and holding educational events for park users throughout the year.

Listed below are specific concerns about dog parks that have been raised in other communities. Recommended solutions follow each.

LEGAL LIABILITIES

Connecticut's Recreational Use Statute (Section 52-557g) clearly states a property owner bears no liability for mishaps occurring at a recreational area that is open and free to the public, just as it is currently not liable for injuries on the basketball courts or skateboard park. It is the dog owners themselves who are legally responsible for the behavior of their dogs.

To emphasize this point, signage will make it clear that people using the park do so at their own risk and may be liable for any harm caused by their dogs.

DOG BEHAVIOR

Although no aggressive behavior was observed at any of the dog parks we visited, and regular users report it is rare, fights can happen between dogs.

Strategies to prevent aggression and minimize harm from any fight that does break out include:

- ◆ Being explicit in posted rules that aggressive dogs are banned from the dog park.
- ◆ Banning female dogs in heat and advising owners to monitor unneutered males closely.
- ◆ Educating users on signs of stress and impending aggression in dogs through literature at the dog park, as well as books and DVDs placed in the Farmington Library.
- ◆ Providing for the protection of small dogs (i.e., less than 20 pounds) by creating a separate, visually screened area where they can romp without being bullied by larger animals.

- ◆ Banning repeat offenders from the dog park through a process developed by the Farmington Dog Park Coalition with guidance from the Farmington animal control officer.
- ◆ Forbidding people to bring or eat food inside the dog park, which could stimulate "resource protection" by dogs.
- ◆ Building or providing for a time-out pen where overly excited dogs can settle.
- ◆ Keeping all dogs on leash until they have entered the fenced park, to prevent excited dogs from interacting freely on ground used by the general public.

CHILD SAFETY

To protect the well-being of Farmington's youngest residents, we recommend that:

- ◆ No children under twelve will be allowed into the dog park.
- ◆ No children between the ages of twelve and eighteen be allowed in the dog park unless accompanied by a supervising adult.
- ◆ Parents be warned to watch their children in the park as closely as they watch their dogs.
- ◆ Children under eighteen — and everyone else — be advised that only dogs can run in the park, not people.

FECES REMOVAL

All the parks we visited were surprisingly clean. Users readily spoke to other users who had not cleaned up after their dogs, and they reported they also cleaned up piles that some owners had missed. An important asset of a dog park, we learned, is that it brings dog owners together and strengthens a culture of shared responsibility among them.

To keep the park healthy and clean, we recommend the following:

- ◆ Dog owners will be required to clean up after their dogs immediately and dispose of the waste in garbage cans that are provided.
- ◆ Plastic-bag dispensers will be located at convenient spots around the dog park, even though park users would be encouraged to bring their own bags.
- ◆ Park users will be encouraged to pick up after other dogs if they notice an undiscovered pile.
- ◆ Volunteer park monitors will confront dog owners who don't pick up after their pets and will work in concert with the Farmington animal control officer to ban users who fail to take responsibility for their dogs' waste.
- ◆ Repeat offenders should be banned from the park. The procedure for doing so should be clearly defined and equitably administered.
- ◆ Waste receptacles should be provided at the park.
- ◆ No one, child or adult, should be allowed to enter the park in bare feet or sandals.
- ◆ Farmington Dog Park Coalition members should continue to sponsor annual park clean-up days to focus attention on the need for dog owners to be responsible for their dogs' waste throughout the Town.

DISEASE TRANSMISSION AMONG DOGS

Dogs can share germs and spreading diseases is another concern when groups of dogs gather in one place. Adopting and enforcing the following rules should reduce the likelihood of this happening at the Farmington dog park.

- ◆ All dogs in the park must bear a current license tag, which indicates that they have been vaccinated against rabies; out-of-state visitors must be prepared to show proof of current vaccination.
- ◆ Dogs under four months of age will be banned from the park, as their immune systems are not fully mature.
- ◆ Signage will remind people to use common sense and keep their dogs out of the park if they exhibit symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal illness or any other contagious condition.

NOISE

Barking dogs are generally a concern of neighbors to any proposed dog park. All of the dog parks we visited, however, were surprisingly quiet places. In addition, we are recommending that the selected site be separate from residential areas.

TYPICAL DOG PARK RULES

Solutions to realistic hazards are found in rules posted at every well-managed dog park. In every instance these rules — which are surprisingly similar across the country — are calculated to prevent adverse incidents and address common concerns. The rules outlined in [Appendix A](#) are adapted from signs posted at various dog parks we visited.

ORGANIZATION, FUNDRAISING AND SUSTAINABILITY

The primary model for establishing and funding the dog park is a not-for-profit approach under which the Farmington Dog Park Coalition would form a 501(c)(3) and raise the necessary funds from private citizens, corporations and foundations. Under this model, the land would be donated by the Town or a private entity. The Farmington Dog Park Coalition would raise necessary funding for capital improvements, and the park would be open for use by the general public without subscription or membership fees.

The Farmington Dog Park Coalition is currently a group of volunteers whose intention is to raise awareness and funds for a dog park in Farmington. It is our goal that we identify key community influencers, funders and donors, as well as those who are willing to collaborate with us become aware of and support our efforts. ***This model was outlined by PUPS West Hartford for the same purpose, referenced below and has been adopted by our coalition.***

A coordinated effort involving marketing, communications, development, and community relations provides opportunities to reinforce our message across target audiences in order to influence their giving decisions. As with other local park groups, Glastonbury and West Hartford, production of collateral materials will be completed, such as brochures, newsletters, fliers and PowerPoint presentation. By unifying the message and logo across all

communications, the message is efficiently reinforced. We currently have established relationships with local media outlets including; Farmington Patch, Farmington Valley Press, Farmington LIFE and the Hartford Courant.

The Farmington Dog Park Coalition will employ a variety of techniques to raise the funds to establish the dog park. These include direct mail campaigns to dog owners and special fundraisers (such as sponsoring park benches, signage and sections of fencing). We will also approach the business community, including dog boarding facilities, trainers and specialty shops for larger donations. We will also seek In-kind donations, which may include, construction labor, fencing materials, benches, trash receptacles and clean-up bags. The Farmington Dog Park Coalition also plans to apply to private foundations and corporations for cash grants and/or in-Kind support under a non-profit fiduciary right. We also plan to appeal to those corporations and foundations which generally support animal welfare projects. Many private foundations and corporations require a non-profit or government status in order to apply for and receive grant or in-kind funding. We project that the initial fundraising process should take between a year and a year-and-a-half.

The Farmington Dog Park Coalition will not begin fundraising or file for non-profit status until the Town of Farmington has formally accepted the subject proposal. The Farmington Dog Park Coalition will create a website and a Facebook page to accumulate additional interest, provide information and solicit donations.

PARK UPKEEP AND ONGOING MUNICIPAL INVOLVEMENT

A group of volunteers generally takes responsibility for developing dog park rules, signage, resolving any issues that may arise, and as necessary, scheduling clean up and general maintenance days. Dog park attendants have an interest in a clean and safe park. Therefore, self policing occurs for the day-to-day upkeep. Other parks from around the country report that peer pressure motivates owners to pick up after their dog and to pitch-in for larger upkeep projects.

To keep the park healthy and clean, dog owners will be required to clean up after their dogs immediately and dispose of the waste in provided garbage cans. Plastic-bag dispensers will be located at convenient spots around the dog park, even though park users would be encouraged to bring their own bags. We would be looking to the Town for garbage pick up and basic park services such as snow plowing.

Section 4

A LOOK AT SUCCESSFUL DOG PARKS IN OTHER COMMUNITIES

Recognizing that Farmington is a unique place with its own special history the coalition nonetheless felt it important to learn about off-leash areas in other towns. To find out what might be most appropriate for our own community, we researched dog-park web sites via the internet, we visited off-leash areas in surrounding communities and we spoke with individuals living both in-state and nationally who have had experiences with off-leash areas in other places.

Despite the great variety in the size, fencing, and amenities among the parks, we discovered that all adhere to essentially the same rules and all were clean and free of dog waste. One popular feature that impressed us was a covered message/information board to hold dog park users' guides offering information about Town ordinances, park rules, pet-friendly accommodations in the area, other nearby parks and hiking trails, and local veterinarian and dog services. Interestingly, most of the dog parks we investigated were part of or adjacent to other, larger recreational areas such as playing fields or other municipal facilities.

The most striking commonality among them all, however, is that the pet owners we spoke to were overwhelmingly positive in their praise of their local dog parks and openly appreciative for the opportunity these places offer for exercising their dogs. In general they were also very friendly people, happy to talk to other dog owners and eager to help them get the most out of their local parks. Clearly, we learned, people socialize at dog parks as much as the dogs.

DOG PARKS VISITED

GRANBY, CONNECTICUT

The very active Granby dog park is about .50 acre in size and enclosed by a chain link fence and a double gated entry. The dog park is located within Salmon Brook Park on RT 10 which is a similar complex to Tunxis Mead in Farmington. The dog park has trees, benches, information board and mulched surface. Amenities include a water spigot, metal water dishes, and trashcans, as well as bag dispensers. The dog park is monitored by a volunteer staff and is accessible to dogs of all sizes.

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

The Southington dog park located on Mill Street is a converted little league field approximately 1.25 acres. The dog park is bounded by a chain link fence, double gated entry, waste bags, trash cans, covered with grass and offers separate parks for both large and small dogs. The dog park is monitored by a dedicated volunteer staff and is only offered for Southington residents.

WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

The Wethersfield dog park is located within Mill Woods Park. The dog park here is fenced with chain link and has a tree line. It is mulched but has poor drainage. The dog park is about 1.00 acre, has a double gated entry, separate areas for small and large dogs, water access for canine drinking, toys, picnic tables and an information board. This dog park draws from the greater Hartford area and is heavily trafficked.

BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

Bristol offers two dog parks. The first, located at the Roberts property on Chippens Hill, is an informal dog park that consists of 50.00 acres of open space. Waste bags are available. The site is a grassy field with a hill in the rear without fencing.

The second is located within Rockwell Park. The dog park has chain link fencing, a shelter, drinking water, and a double gated entry. This site is not ideal, as it is heavily wooded and located on a steep grade. This topography makes it difficult to see your dog in the event of a behavioral problem.

GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT

The Glastonbury dog park opened in May 2011 within Riverfront Park. The dog park is approximately 2.00 acres with chain link, double gated entry, water fountains, ADA compliant, waste bag dispensers, trash cans, dog toys, port-a-potty, and separate areas for small and large dogs. Glastonbury chose the subject site to take advantage of existing infrastructure, location, safety and municipal synergies.

OTHER DOG PARKS VISITED

Dog parks visited by others within our group include those in Southbury, CT, South Windsor, CT, Windsor, CT and Barrington, RI. Farmington residents who have used these parks had complimentary reports about each.

Section 5

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DOG PARK

BASIC FEATURES OF THE BEST DOG PARKS

Drawing on a wealth of information from the nation's already long-established off-leash areas for dogs, as well as visits to several dog parks throughout the State, we found that the best of these areas all have certain basic features. These include the following:

- ◆ One acre or more completely enclosed by fencing – 3 to 5 acres for future expansion
- ◆ Chain link or other fencing that is at least five feet tall and sturdy enough to withstand weather and protect dogs of all sizes.
- ◆ Flat enough terrain that dogs are never out of their owner's sight.
- ◆ Adequate drainage so area can be used year-round.
- ◆ Safe location, not isolated.
- ◆ Easily maintained surfaces such as grass, mulch, or concrete.
- ◆ Double-gated entryways to prevent dogs from slipping out accidentally.
- ◆ A minimum of two entryways to facilitate access to park and dogs at play.
- ◆ Ample shade for both dogs and their owners.
- ◆ Water for drinking, park maintenance, and also dog control.
- ◆ Covered garbage cans with regular trash removal.
- ◆ Dispensers for plastic doggy bags.
- ◆ Seating for dog owners and spectators located throughout the parkway, not all bunched together.
- ◆ Wheel-chair accessibility.
- ◆ Regular maintenance.
- ◆ Support and oversight from a committed group of volunteers.
- ◆ Sensible, simple, proven rules posted prominently near the entrance and elsewhere inside the enclosure.

In addition to these basic features, dog parks can also have such amenities as trails; a separate enclosure for small dogs, shy dogs, or aggressive dogs; simple or elaborate landscaping with trees and shrubs; dog agility equipment (such as weave poles or obstacles to jump over); a dog-bathing area or fountain; and a bulletin board for communication among dog owners. Pools, streams, and natural or constructed water features are common.

THE VOLUNTEER COMPONENT

Repeatedly in our travels and research to learn about dog parks, we found references to the absolutely indispensable role local dog owners themselves play in the success of an off-leash recreational area.

Few municipalities in Connecticut or elsewhere can afford to pay for policing a dog park properly, and no Town official could be expected to manage a dog park single-handedly in

addition to his or her regular job load. In virtually every case we studied, the success of the local park depended on a coalition of local dog owners – the people with the most to gain, or lose, by how well a particular park is run.

In every instance, dog owners told us they didn't just use the dog park, they also felt an ownership of it. They worked together with everyone else interested in dogs to adopt the slate of rules appropriate for their area, to spread information about how to use the park safely, and to encourage one another to keep the area clean and pleasant. In town after town, these are the people who constantly assess the condition of the dog park, pinpoint needed improvements, and figure out how to obtain them.

Although the Town of Farmington has been generous in trying to meet the recreational needs of such disparate enthusiasts as mudhogs, lacrosse and skateboarders, we are confident that dog owners themselves will fund establishment of a dog park in Farmington. Whether it's selling T-shirts and drinks at local festivals, sponsoring or participating in events in Farmington, or launching a capital campaign, the dog owners — by their numbers, diversity, and passion — should be able to raise enough money for the park.

United in their efforts to manage the local dog park, dog lovers can also invite speakers to the area - experienced trainers, groomers, veterinarians, for instance — to learn more about caring for their animals. In ways like these, the value of the volunteer organization could extend well beyond the dog park.

Dog owners allied with other dog owners could also bolster the Town's efforts to keep dogs around town safely on leashes and to keep the streets and sidewalks clean. Those of us out walking our dogs every day are among the first to notice when other dog handlers don't clean up after their animals.

Clearly the single most important component of a local dog park is the volunteer group of dog owners who oversee it. From the beginning, the Farmington Dog Park Coalition has been impressed by the numbers of dogs and dog-owning households in the Town and the widespread enthusiasm for a safe site for dogs to run off leash.

RECOMMENDED DOG PARK SITE

The Farmington Dog Park Coalition is dedicated to working with the Town of Farmington's municipal leaders to locate an appropriate parcel. We believe that a public – private partnership will provide benefits to the Town, community and park users. We are requesting that the Town of Farmington provide a parcel of land dedicated to be utilized as an off-leash dog park and the Farmington Dog Park Coalition will provide funds for improvements to the property. Below is a list of features and the related costs we feel are required to start a dog park. Over time more amenities will be added as funding allows. We also recommend that a parcel be a minimum of 1.5 acres. If a stand alone site is chosen, improvements would be structured in phases with the initial costs outlined below. If the parcel is more than 1.5 acres, we may choose to fence a portion in the beginning and expand the size as funding dictates.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN ELEMENTS FOR FARMINGTON PARK

Size

- ◆ Minimum 1.5 acres – minimum 1 acre for fenced are, excess for parking, etc.
- ◆ Two dog areas; one for large dogs and one small dog area
- ◆ Dog areas will be completely partitioned by a fence and will employ a double- gated entry
- ◆ All partitioned dog areas and entrances to consider handicap accessibility

Fence

- ◆ 5' tall galvanized, vinyl-coated green or black chain link fence
- ◆ Service gate for service vehicle access

Parking

- ◆ 10 spaces minimum

Park Entrance

- ◆ Welcoming entryway with signage
- ◆ Small native, hardy plantings
- ◆ Large covered waste receptacle, preferably under shade, with odor absorbent
- ◆ Rain water collection tanks (if no available water source)
- ◆ Bulletin board on outside fence with:
 - ◆ Rules and regulations
 - ◆ State/Town ordinances
 - ◆ Emergency contact information
 - ◆ Dedications/Appreciations

Benches

- ◆ Minimum of 4-10 memorial benches spaced throughout park

Dog exercise areas

- ◆ Level ground with adequate drainage
- ◆ Mulch covering at least 60 percent of park
- ◆ All materials should promote rain water absorption, not runoff

Waste Receptacles

- ◆ Large covered waste receptacles, preferably under shade, with odor absorbent
- ◆ Waste receptacles to be located in shaded areas
- ◆ 2 waste bag dispensers - one inside each park partition near entrance

Possible Future Amenities

- ◆ Small gazebo or permanent shading for park users
- ◆ Water fountains – Pedestrian and canine
- ◆ Increased fencing area – size permitting
- ◆ More plantings

PROJECTED START-UP COSTS

Pricing is based on verbal estimates from local contractors. Prices are subject to change based on material costs, labor costs and non-profit discounts. The Farmington Dog Park Coalition acknowledges the current budget situation in Farmington. Capital improvements as well as ongoing maintenance will be provided by private funding.

Land – 1.5 acres minimum (3 to 5 preferred)	Provided by Town
Fencing - 5 foot chain link fencing 2,000 liner ft. @ \$10/lf	\$20,000
2 double gated entrance/exits and 1 service gate	\$2,500
Miscellaneous landscaping and plantings	\$5,000
Clearing and Grading - 24 hours @170/per hour (estimate)	\$4,000
Grass seeding, Decomposed granite or mulch and ground prep	\$6,000
Bulletin Board	\$1,200
Signage	\$1,300
Dog Poop bag dispensers - 2 @ \$600 each	\$1,200
Benches - 4 @ \$750 each	\$3,000
Trash containers - 5 @ \$270 each	<u>\$1,350</u>
TOTAL	\$45,550

Appendix A

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Dog Park Attendant shall be defined as a dog owner and/or other person having care, custody or control of said dog.

General

Park hours: One half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset (unless otherwise posted).

Limit: no more than 2 dogs per attendant per visit.

Attendant Rules

1. Attendants are responsible for the acts and conduct of their dogs at all times when in a Town Park.
2. Attendants assume all risks related to use of the Dog Park. Attendants are responsible for their dog's behavior.
3. Attendants must obey all other general park rules and Town ordinances.
4. Attendants must cleanup and properly dispose of any waste left by their dog.
5. Attendants must keep dogs within sight and under voice control of their attendant at all times.
6. Attendants must keep a leash on your person for each dog at all times.
7. Attendants must remove choke, prong, pinch, spiked and electronic collars when you dog is in the park.
8. Attendants must immediately stop their dog from digging, fill any holes and repair any damage caused by their dog.
9. Attendants must honor other attendants' requests regarding their dogs.
10. Any Dog Park attendant may ask someone who is not abiding by the rules to leave.

Dog Rules

1. Dogs must be licensed and vaccinated with current tags displayed at all times.
2. Females in heat, sick dogs, aggressive dogs and dogs under four (4) months of age are not allowed.
3. Dogs with a known history of aggressive or dangerous behavior are not allowed.
4. Dogs must be kept on a leash when entering and exiting the off-leash area.
5. Dogs that display aggressive or dangerous behavior must be immediately leashed and removed from the park.

Not Allowed

1. Children under the age of twelve (12) are not allowed in the park.
2. Children between the ages of twelve (12) to eighteen (18) must be accompanied by a supervising adult.
3. Bikes, strollers, baby carriages, skateboards, skates, rollerblades and motor vehicles are not allowed in the park.
4. Pets other than dogs are not allowed in the park.
5. Smoking and food are not allowed within the park.
6. Dog treats, chews, bones and food are not allowed in the park.

In the event of a dog bite, to either an attendant or dog, call the police at 860-675-2400 and the animal control officer at 860-675-2440. In the event of an emergency call 911.

Appendix B

TOWN OF FARMINGTON CODE FOR DOGS

78-2. Prohibited Acts

It shall be a violation of this Article for any owner or keeper of a dog:

- A. To allow such dog to roam at large upon the land of another and not under control of the owner or keeper or the agent of the owner or keeper, or to allow such dog to roam at large on any portion of any public highway and not attended by and under control of such owner or keeper or his agent; the unauthorized presence of any dog on the land of any person other than the owner or keeper of such dog or on any portion of a public highway, when such dog is not attended by and under the control of such owner or keeper, shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of the provisions of this Article.
- B. To obstruct or attempt to obstruct the canine control officer or warden engaged in the discharge of such person's duties.
- C. To perpetrate any act of cruelty upon any dog or any other animal.
- D. Not to have a tag or plate on a collar around the neck or on a harness on the body of such dog.
- E. Not to have complied with any order or regulation relating to rabies applicable to such dog.
- F. To abandon or neglect or cruelly treat any such dog.
- G. Not to have such dog licensed in the Town Clerk's office as required by state law.
- H. To allow such dog to inflict damage or harm to human beings, domestic animals or property.
- I. To allow such dog to go on a highway and growl, snap, bite or otherwise annoy any person or domestic animal lawfully using such highway or chase or interfere with any motor vehicle so using such highway.
- J. To permit such dog to become a nuisance by reason of vicious disposition or excessive barking or any other disturbance or by permitting such barking or other disturbance when such is a source of annoyance to any sick person residing in the immediate vicinity.
- K. To crop or cut or cause to be cropped or cut off the whole or any part of the ear of a dog unless such person is a registered veterinarian surgeon.
- L. Not to clean up or dispose of immediately any feces or other waste matter discharged by a dog on public property, including highways and sidewalks, or on any private property not owned or controlled by the owner agent or keeper of the dog.

78-3. Violations and Penalties Any person violating any of the above provisions shall be fined not less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00). The town canine control officer or warden shall issue citations for violations of any provisions set forth above. All moneys received shall be remitted to the Office of the Tax Collector.

Appendix C

GENERAL STATUTES OF CONNECTICUT

Sec. 22-357. Damage to person or property.

Revised to January 1, 2011

If any dog does any damage to either the body or property of any person, the owner or keeper, or, if the owner or keeper is a minor, the parent or guardian of such minor, shall be liable for such damage, except when such damage has been occasioned to the body or property of a person who, at the time such damage was sustained, was committing a trespass or other tort, or was teasing, tormenting or abusing such dog. If a minor, on whose behalf an action under this section is brought, was under seven years of age at the time the damage was done, it shall be presumed that such minor was not committing a trespass or other tort, or teasing, tormenting or abusing such dog, and the burden of proof thereof shall be upon the defendant in such action.
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2005/pub/Chap435.htm>

Sec. 52-557g. Liability of owner of land available to public for recreation; exceptions. (a) Except as provided in section 52-557h, an owner of land who makes all or any part of the land available to the public without charge, rent, fee or other commercial service for recreational purposes owes no duty of care to keep the land, or the part thereof so made available, safe for entry or use by others for recreational purposes, or to give any warning of a dangerous condition, use, structure or activity on the land to persons entering for recreational purposes.

(b) Except as provided in section 52-557h, an owner of land who, either directly or indirectly, invites or permits without charge, rent, fee or other commercial service any person to use the land, or part thereof, for recreational purposes does not thereby: (1) Make any representation that the premises are safe for any purpose; (2) confer upon the person who enters or uses the land for recreational purposes the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; or (3) assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of the owner.

(c) Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall be deemed applicable to the duties and liability of an owner of land leased to the state or any subdivision thereof for recreational purposes.

Appendix D

REFERENCES

In preparing this document, several sources and proposals were utilized from several established dog parks across the country. We would like to credit the following organizations for providing information that enabled us to prepare this document:

FRIENDS OF BELFAST PARKS - BELFAST, ME

PUPS WEST HARTFORD - WEST HARTFORD, CT

GLASTONBURY DOG PARK - GLASTONBURY, CT

ESTABLISHING A DOG PARK IN YOUR COMMUNITY – AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

MAYDOG OFF LEASH RECREATION AREA – MAYNARD, MA

BARK! – BRUNSWICK, ME

BARK9 – HOUSTON, TX