

Dog Park Project – Summerland Dog Owners Association Correspondence with Council – September 26, 2020

On September 19th at 12pm, members of the Dog-owning community and ourselves attended a Zoom conference meeting with the Consultant Lesley.

The purpose of our meeting was to provide stakeholder input to a presentation document that will accompany a community survey that is being planned by the consultant for October.

While we are appreciative of the opportunity to help provide feedback and suggestions before items are recommended to the council, we had a few questions about the current process.

1. Did council provide direction to Parks to conduct **yet another community engagement process** in regards to dog parks? Our understanding is that the council requested Parks to return with location and costing options for review, not to restart the process that was already conducted last winter, not to mention all the previous consultations and open houses from prior years.

2. While we were asked to provide input to the presentation information, we were denied the opportunity to be permitted to provide feedback regarding the **community survey** that is planned to be released in October. **Was this also under direction of the council?**

In the presentation information we reviewed, we identified instances of **misleading information, biased wording, and unsubstantiated opinion**. All of which seemed designed to *minimize recommendations and concerns of dog owners* in favor of other substantially smaller user groups. We provided to the consultant many recommendations to improve the document, and **are now concerned that the same bias will be present in the survey**. Once again, we see influence by staff to direct the information and outcomes of this issue through excessive review processes (essentially searching for anti-dog supporters). More study and review has been put into this missing community amenity than has far more contentious concerns. As council, we would be heavily concerned at this point that staff have now expended more taxpayer funds studying the issue than what our initial December 2013 proposal would have cost to implement.

Our recommendation to you, the council, is that you review the revised site proposals (**as was your last directive**) prior to the time and **expense being wasted on additional surveys**. At that point if you feel more feedback is required you can make further recommendations. If you find the document has more than enough information and you understand the issue well, you would then be able to finally **make a final decision on the matter**.

Lastly, we decided to take a quick trip to the Rodeo Grounds before taking our dogs for their swim, we wanted more pictures of the proposed site. Within 10 mins of walking our dogs on the pathway, Max like any other dogs, likes to sniff the ground as we are walking (both dogs were on leash). Max (being Max) briefly stepped off the gravel path to sniff a bush and walked right into a cactus patch, getting several on each paw. This particular cactus can be found all over the grounds and pictures were taken to show how close this was to the path.

We have sent pictures to show you there are numerous risks and safety to dogs and their owners at this location that have not been acknowledged, or mitigation costs explored. We are available next week to meet with you each on an individual basis to show you the enormous logistical and financial challenges the

District would have implementing the Rodeo Grounds location. We have recommended to the consultant that the District not waste any more staff time and expense reviewing this location and it should be removed from the list of viable options.

Also, attached is our list of recommended corrections to the draft documents for your records.

Thanking you

.....

Response to SDOA email by Lori Mullin, Director of Community Services, September 28, 2020

Thank you for your participation in one of the stakeholder meetings for the Dog Park project (phase 2). Your input is very important.

As a follow up to your questions:

1. Yes, council provided direction to staff to conduct further community engagement in regards to dog parks. After the recommendation coming from the Final Report (on Pickleball, Tennis and Dogs-in-Parks) for the installation of a fenced dog park at Peach Orchard Beach was not endorsed by Council, Council provided staff direction which included:
 - Conduct further research on a proposed fenced dog park in the following locations: Lutheran Church, Julia Street Church, Powell Beach Park, Rodeo Grounds and Living Memorial Field #3.
 - Complete additional works including:
 - Conduct research on the proposed layout and estimated costs for the installation of a fenced dog park at the selected locations
 - Conduct community consultation on the selected locations
 - Compile information and present to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
 - Report back to Council for final direction

Both the Lutheran Church and Julia Street Church have recently notified us that they are no longer interested in considering a dog park on their property so those options have now been removed.

2. Survey questions are not typically vetted by stakeholder groups. This specific direction (to deny stakeholder input on the survey questions) was not given to the consultant from Council.

I will provide your information provided in this email to the consultant, Lesley Dyck, who is leading this process, to ensure she is aware of your feedback and concerns. She has informed me that she is updating her draft 1 documents based on the feedback she has received through the stakeholder meetings. The consultant is also looking at potential strategies/solutions to mitigate any impacts of the implementation of a dog park (ie alternatives for user groups or activities which would be displaced, if applicable) for council's consideration.

The consultant has developed a work plan which includes updating the site documents and costing, gaining community input (IE conducting stakeholder meetings, implementing an online Q&A session, conducting a community survey, etc.), compiling results to present to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee and then presenting recommendations to Council.

The removal of the Rodeo Grounds to be considered as part of this project as well as removing the community engagement process would require Council direction.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.