

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, DECEMBER 3, 2001

LEASH FREE AREA

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services in consultation with the Manager of Parks Operations recommends:

That a leash free area be designated and fenced on the south west side of the Patricia Kemp Community Centre, as a pilot project; and

That a by-law be enacted to amend all necessary bylaws, to allow dogs to be leash free in designated areas;

That the leash free area be monitored; and

That staff report back within a year of the area opening on the results of the pilot project.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the implementation of a leash free dog area, as a pilot project, in Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

In the spring of this year a community resident wrote to members of Council regarding the need for leash free dog zones in Vaughan. Staff met with this resident and toured possible locations for leash free zones, looking at both open spaces and existing parks. Two community residents then came to Committee of the Whole on deputation to outline the need for such areas and the benefits to the community. Staff was directed to review the situation and bring back a report.

Staff held a meeting with representatives from across the City on October 15th, to determine the potential interest for a "leash free" area or area within a park, and to discuss the issues relating to the implementation of such a zone.

Most other communities including Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Markham have leash free areas. Staff has obtained information from these municipalities regarding their leash free areas, as well as information on successful dog parks in the United States. The provision of leash free dog areas can reduce the number of dogs off-leash in regular parks, while providing a safe area for owners to exercise their dogs. The dog areas have rules and regulations which are enforced, mainly by the users themselves, such as cleaning up the dog feces, prohibiting very aggressive dogs, prohibiting dogs in heat, and not allowing young children into the area.

Based on the experiences in other municipalities and the comments at the October 15th meeting, staff is recommending a fenced area that has an adjacent parking lot and potential for lighting.. An appropriate location for a pilot site is behind (west of) the Patricia Kemp Community Centre located on Dufferin Street north of Centre Street. This fenced area will not impact on the soccer/cricket pitch, or playground at that location. A portion of the lands could be fenced using farm fence at an approximate cost of \$10,000. These funds can be allocated from the Parks Operations 2001 operating budget. Appropriate signage would be developed and installed on site.

Conclusion

The implementation of a “leash free” area on a pilot basis will allow for the evaluation of this new level of service for the community.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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