

## Donna Conkling

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**From:** Grigione, Melissa Marie <mrigione@pace.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 13, 2018 5:55 PM  
**To:** Lena Crandall; Donna Conkling; Mayor  
**Cc:** Steven Frantz  
**Subject:** Weinberg Nature Center

Dear Members of the Village of Scarsdale:

I have been involved with Weinberg Nature Center for most of my childhood and adult life. During the past 12 years, I have been a member of the board for Friends of Weinberg Nature Center. I am a professor in Biology and I study wild carnivores, such as coyotes, fox, bobcats, in the USA and abroad.

I am opposed to the idea of having a dog walking park at Weinberg for two primary reasons. The first involves the exchange of parasites and other microorganisms between wild and domestic animals primarily through feces. In Florida, my research on coyotes detected parasites of domestic dog in the feces of coyotes. It is likely that this exchange occurs in both directions. While dogs can be cured by antibiotics (if they have bacterial or parasitic infections), coyotes and other wild animals suffer a reduced immunity and stress. Novel parasites can and will be exchanged between wild and domestic canids -- particularly when they are in close proximity.

Secondly, and perhaps more important, if there are regular, routine visits between pet owners and dogs at Weinberg, coyotes -- and other wild animals -- will become habituated to these organisms. We see the results of wild animal habituation in cities like Boulder, Colorado and the foothills of Sacramento, California. Coyotes will lose their fear of people and become more aggressive towards people and domestic animals. Indeed, Weinberg prevents habituation by having "formal" activities that are "supervised" accordingly.

I look forward to finding an appropriate place for dogs and their owners to congregate, but do not believe that Weinberg is an environment for such activities.

Yours sincerely,

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