

Donna Conkling

From: Jennifer Armas <mjarmas5013@me.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 8:36 AM
To: Mayor; Donna Conkling
Subject: Dog Park

I am writing in strong support of the creation of a dog park in Scarsdale. Dogs need socialization and exercise to decrease aggression and destructive behavior. This is part of proper dog training and yet there are so few places in lower Westchester to allow dogs to be dogs. Additionally, dog parks bring people together. I have spent many lovely afternoons chatting on a park bench at a dog park getting to know new people and welcome that sense of community here in Scarsdale. When we lived in England, dogs were welcome in all parks and it was the children's play areas that were fenced in! It was a joy for dog owners to be able to bring their pets out of a walk in the park on a beautiful day.

Weinberg Nature Center seems like a logical spot for the new site but I am certainly open to other locations. It is a grossly underutilized public park with existing parking, easy access and low housing density. It has always seemed like a wasted resource to me and frankly, I went out of my way to go to other neighboring nature centers because ours had so little to offer.

To that end, I do not agree that it should be an "exclusive" Scarsdale park. That seems elitist and perpetuates the perception that we are an exclusive community. I imagine those of us in favor of having a dog park are members of Ward Acres or take our dogs to Rye Playland or Larchmont Dog beach. I do believe that there must be licensing and registration to use the facility but who are we to say no to non residents? Can an Eastchester family not enjoy Davis Park? Further by opening up licensing we would increase the fees collection to create a financially stable entity. This sounds like the same story of Greenacres families complaining that a White Plains man was sitting on their park bench. Is that the community we want to create?

I have had two very different dogs in my life and both have benefits immensely from having large areas to run and play. My first dog was an energetic German Shorthaired Pointer who needed to "do his job" of chasing the ball in order to burn off enough energy to be a calm and loving part of our family. Without daily running sessions he was destructive and high strung. My dog now is a sweet, scared rescue puppy. She came to us very fearful of people, especially men and would shake with fear whenever a new person entered. After taking her to Ward Acres many, many times she slowly warmed up to the other humans there, presumably because they were with her furry friends. Today she is a loving, social, well adjusted dog and I attribute much of her growth to her early socialization and learning to trust humans at the dog park.

Ward Acres is a fine facility but it is extremely crowded because it is one of the only places to take our dogs. There are a number of dog walkers who take large groups there each day and it can become unruly. We need more safe options for our dogs (and their human owners) to play and socialize.

If there is anything I can do to support the project please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Armas
270 Madison Road