

3 Montgomery Road
Scarsdale, New York 10583
November 21, 2021

Board of Trustees
Village of Scarsdale
1001 Post Road
Scarsdale, New York 10583

RE: Dog Park Update

Mayor and Trustees:

In relation to the Scarsdale Village Board Work Session held on Tuesday, November 16, 2021, these comments pertain to the Dog Park Update discussion. Unlike those residents who were able to attend, we have never been dog owners. But even more so, we are dismayed by some inconsiderate and even irresponsible dog owners because of routine reports in the press and social media, as well as through personal experience, instances of: dog owners not cleaning up after dogs or disposing of their waste in private property receptacles; ignoring others and traffic on streets or leaving dogs unleashed; violating signs prohibiting dogs on school or park property; and even permitting attacks by unrestrained dogs.

From correspondence and comments during the work session, there also seems to be many unlicensed dogs in Scarsdale Village. One correspondence claimed that there were 450 licensed dogs, but possibly the same number of unlicensed dogs! However, the 450 cited seems outdated because Trustee Whitestone noted at the meeting that the number of licenses had hovered around 400 for ten years, peaking at 488 in 2016, but this year had dropped to 268. Dog-owning residents are that irresponsible!

Given this background, we are not particularly eager to see a dog park in the Village and are not so convinced that the "Village could depend on residents' conscience and good character to treating the grounds with respect" (to quote a reported comment from the work session). We would just as soon see the Board focus on more pressing matters. However, we are civil-minded enough to understand the dogs' recreation and perceived socialization desired by their owners.

So, if a dog park is pursued, here are some requirements: compliance with all dog-related ordinances must be enforced; sufficient maintenance and regular monitoring is needed to ensure compliance about admission and park rules; annual paid passes for use should be required to help support it (some of these have been suggested by proponents). But the big question is the location. As the Mayor had noted at the work session, many people want such a facility but may not want it in their area, which was a major issue when several sites for a Dog Park were first considered at a Village hearing in 2018. I spoke at that meeting and suggested that this would be the most difficult aspect of any plan, so the Board should put the idea aside and focus on more pressing issues. In fact, many vocal Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) residents at that meeting seem to have stopped those plans then.

Now at the working session, there were preliminary ideas for pop-up dog parks where one of the four sites suggested is Drake Park. We have been residents since 1984 of Montgomery Road, which dead-ends at Drake Park. Given our disposition about dogs and primarily dog-owners, we certainly do not want it in our backyard. More importantly, this site does not appear well-suited: it seems small for this use; off-site parking on Drake Road is limited (much less than the 20 cars suggested); Montgomery Road is fully parked daily with cars related to the Edgewood School down the street (as well as landscapers); and now Con Edison has dug holes in multiple spots where the pavement will not be permanently repaired until spring 2022. In addition, the whole pop-up suggestion at any of the sites does not seem very feasible/useful at one-month stints for the expense (particularly on the paved surfaces) plus the set-up / tear-down disruption.

Aside from the particular situation for us and the other residents on Montgomery Road, a single, permanent Dog Park should not be placed nearby residences where any of the possibly 4,000+ non-dog-owner households (or even the dog-owner families) should suffer such imposition. Some proponents of this facility have suggested at least two sites where NIMBY would not be a problem: the Village maintenance and storage property at Ramsey Road and the municipal pool complex. Either site could have some logistical / physical problems; but not the BIG NIMBY PROBLEM. Our advice is make the suggested or similar sites, if any, work. Logistical / physical problems can be managed; neighborhood problems cannot.

You may contact us at the address above, 914-723-1626 or e-mail: giordanotf@verizon.net, if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas and Gail Giordano