

Burlington Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, 02/09/2021, 6:00PM

[Virtual Zoom Meeting](#)

Dial in: 1-253-215-8782

Log in: <https://tinyurl.com/129eem5v>

Meeting ID: 859 9970 0682

Passcode: 241233

CALL TO ORDER	Sarah Ward
APPROVAL OF MINUTES (01/12/2020)	Sarah Ward
OPEN COMMENT	Sarah Ward
OLD BUSINESS	Sarah Ward
1. Update on Park Entrance Signs	Jim Rabenstein
2. Prioritization of Park Improvements	Sarah Ward / Jim Rabenstein
NEW BUSINESS	Sarah Ward
3. Election of Officers	Sarah Ward
4. Recreation Report	Christi Kinney
5. History of Jason Boerner Memorial Park	Craig Bloodgood
6. Dog Park Project	Jim Rabenstein / Sarah Ward
7. Grant Cycles	Sarah Ward

ADJOURN

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Tuesday 03/09/2021 @ 6:00p.m.

Enclosures:

: 01/12/2021 Meeting Minutes

: "What Makes a Good Dog Park"

CITY OF BURLINGTON
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Tuesday, January 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes
(The board meeting is conducted via Zoom due to COVID restrictions)

Representatives in Attendance

Board Members: Marylynn Baker, Bill Black, Craig Bloodgood, Darla Chafe, and Rob Norman

City Council Members: Keith Chaplin and James Stavig

City Staff: Interim Parks & Recreation Director Sarah Ward, Parks Supervisor Jim Rabenstein, Recreation Coordinator Christi Kinney, and Parks & Recreation Secretary Shelley Johnstone

Guest: Michael Armstrong

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Interim Parks & Recreation Director Sarah Ward at 6:04PM.

MINUTES: A motion to approve the minutes of the 12/08/2020 meeting as read is made by **Marylynn Baker**, seconded by **Keith Chaplin**. All in favor; motion is carried.

OPEN COMMENT

Whitmarsh Rental House. **Keith Chaplin** asks whether the house is still vacant. **Jim Rabenstein** responds that the house is newly rented by a BPD officer and his family. The City did not plan to re-rent the house after the last tenants left; plans for either remodel or demolition were being considered. The COVID crisis has delayed those plans and **Jim** says he is happy the house is not sitting vacant in the meantime.

NORA R/C Track. **James Stavig** asks if the r/c track on Whitmarsh Road is available to anyone for use. **Jim Rabenstein** responds that the off-road track is open to the public, but the groomed oval track is managed by NORA. Persons interested in using the oval track may contact NORA for guidance.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Parks Report. **Jim Rabenstein** updates the board on the Parks crew's current undertakings. He says focus during the winter months is directed to deep cleaning of the park facilities and annual maintenance on equipment & vehicles. Other projects have included changing out Skagit River Park's restroom lighting to more efficient, more reliable LEDs, improvements to the Whitmarsh practice field parking area, and outfitting the Parks Shop complex's 'back shop' with new doors and walls making the building less appealing to further theft. Monitoring the river level is a priority for the crew with its frequent fluctuations at this time of the year.

In response to a question posed by **Keith Chaplin**, **Jim** responds that the grinding spoils left from a Pease Road project were used for the improvements to the Whitmarsh parking lot. He adds that a future project he would like to make happen is an addition of a one-way gravel road, running east to west, just south of the treed fence line between The Cedars housing community and Skagit River Park's west playfields. **Jim** feels this would greatly relieve some of the congestion experienced during large events and tournaments, and also create a little extra parking. Screened grinding spoils would be the ideal material for this.

Current Park Improvement Priorities. **Sarah Ward** tasks board members with reviewing the information provided within their project binders in the coming weeks with the ultimate goal being to determine if changes are needed to the park improvement projects outlined within the city's current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Jim Rabenstein says there are a number of factors to contemplate while considering improvement projects. Putting the factors aside for the present time, he would like board members to simply focus on the individual parks. Which need attention first? Later conversations can focus on improvements within each park and funding options. Information in the board's project binders includes the city's principal goals for improving its park system as determined through the PROS Plan development. **Sarah Ward** says a key component to the success of the priority list will be its flexibility, recognizing that opportunities & needs will likely change over time. **Jim** adds that grant funding will play a prime role in determining the city's capabilities. Grant writing for the type of projects being considered will be an immense undertaking in a highly competitive arena.

Board members spend time in discussion. Creating a dog park in Burlington is discussed at length with members feeling it is long overdue for the community. The southern tip of the Whitmarsh complex has been discussed in the past as a viable location for an off-leash area, although it would now share space with the new disc golf course. **Jim** has interest in developing a portion of a 9-acre parcel near the Tjeerdsma boat launch as a dog park. **Darla Chafe** comments that this could also help serve the city's goal of creating another 10-acres of usable park space. The vacant parcel just north of the Sewer Treatment Plant would be another option, however it may prove to be temporary as expansion of the plant is being considered. Jason Boerner Memorial Park is also mentioned as a possibility with its location central to a large residential complex. **Christi Kinney** cautions that as a memorial park it will be important that any improvements be in keeping with the memorial spirit. **Craig Bloodgood** suggests that a little information about the history of the memorial park might be helpful to board members. Other considerations mentioned were the feasibility of separate parks for small & large dogs, access to water, and access to restrooms.

Park signage and SRP irrigation are two other projects discussed at length. **Rob Norman** mentions that he has access to 10,000-50,000 gallon sterile tanks as his workplace equipment is changed out and asks whether they might be a solution to irrigation concerns. **Jim** answers that he will keep them in mind, they may be a solution to consider if current plans do not develop as desired.

Next Steps for Prioritization Project. Tentative priorities discussed during the board meeting are:

- Development of a dog park
- SRP irrigation
- Park entrance signs
- Addition of Rotary Park playground

Jim Rabenstein and **Sarah Ward** will research information regarding the dog park locations discussed and options for entrance signs to bring to the next board meeting. **Sarah** will also have more information regarding grant cycles to help develop a plan for grant writing. **Jim Rabenstein** encourages board members to make a prioritization list by park, then by improvement within each park. He feels this will help to determine the city's internal capacity to move forward.

ADJOURNMENT: **Sarah Ward** adjourns the board meeting at 7:26PM

NEXT MEETING: **Tuesday, February 9, 2021, 6:00PM**

Minutes transcribed by Shelley Johnstone, Parks & Recreation Secretary

WHAT MAKES A GOOD DOG PARK

A dog park can be a wonderful place for dogs to socialize. However, some dog parks are better than others, and some dogs do better at dog parks than other dogs. To help you assess your local dog park, the Association of Pet

Dog Trainers provides this information to help you decide if a particular dog park is the best option for your dog. Below are attributes which can make a dog park a good place to bring your dog or a place that has the potential for problems. Very few dog parks are perfect so consider your dog's temperament along with the features of the dog park and make an informed decision about whether or not your dog will have an enjoyable time at the park! **For more information on dog parks and other dog issues, check out the APDT web site at www.apdt.com.**

ALL DECENT DOG PARKS SHOULD HAVE THESE FEATURES

Materials for cleaning up after dogs (bags and garbage cans) — The ability to clean up after our dogs is essential for basic good health for both dogs and humans. Many canine diseases are spread through feces, and feces attract in- sects which can spread disease to humans. Cleaning up after your dog – particularly in urban areas – is a demonstration of good citizenship we should all practice.

Drinking Water and shade — Dogs can't cool themselves as efficiently as humans and therefore must have access to drinking water and shade. Dogs play very strenuously in dog parks and water is an absolute necessity – if there is no water available, it is very possible that dogs may suffer from heatstroke, which can be fatal. Additionally, there should be shady areas where dogs can lay down, cool themselves, and rest before continuing their strenuous play.

Enough space to avoid crowding — If dogs become too crowded, it is much easier for a “bully” or a pack of dogs to corner and harass another dog. Fights tend to break out more often under crowded conditions.

A GOOD PARK WILL HAVE ALL THE ABOVE ITEMS AS WELL AS SOME OR ALL OF THESE ITEMS

Separate entrance and exit gates if fenced — Separate entrance and exit gates allow dogs to come and go without meeting each other in a cramped area. Dog fights often break out when one or more dogs feel threatened yet have no way to remove themselves from the threat. Additionally, when two people attempt to get their dogs in and out of the gate, they are not focused on the dogs running loose in the dog park, and there is the potential for a dog to escape.

Entrances and exits with a two-gate system so dogs can't escape from the park accidentally — Parks with a two-gate system avoid the possibility of dogs escaping from the park, increasing the safety of all the dogs.

Natural visual barriers within the park (hills, trees, etc.) — Not only do natural visual barriers create a more enjoyable environment for both dogs and humans, but they also offer dogs a way to avoid problems. If a dog feels he is being targeted by a bully or pack, he can remove himself to a location where the bullying dog(s) cannot see him and they will quickly forget about him and move on to other activities.

THESE ITEMS ARE BELOW STANDARD ACCEPTANCE LEVELS

Dog(s) bullying another dog — Although this will happen occasionally, if it happens often in a particular park, it is an indication that aggressive and/or fearful behaviors are more likely to develop in some dogs because of exposure to the dog park. Dogs will gang up and bully another dog; or, individual dogs will bully a dog that they perceive to be weaker or more submissive. In a good dog park, the owners are on the lookout for this type of behavior and will not allow it to continue. By stopping the behavior, they are teaching the bullies how to behave appropriately in a social situation.

REALLY EXCEPTIONAL PARKS HAVE ALL OF THE “DECENT,” MOST OF THE “GOOD,” AND SOME OF THE EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

No 90-degree angles in the fence — Fences which have 90° angles allow dogs to corner other dogs and bully or attack them. Fencing without a 90° angle makes it easier for a dog to escape.

Several entrance and exit gates if park is fenced — If there is only one entrance and exit gate, or one entrance and one exit gate, the dogs in the park quickly learn where newcomers will enter. They then congregate at the entrance which can result in fights or dogs escaping from the park. If there are several ways for dogs to come in and out, they will not target a particular gate.

Special enclosed areas for smaller dogs; e.g., under 20 lbs. — It can be very dangerous to take a small dog to a park frequented by large dogs. The large dogs may not mean to hurt the smaller dogs, but they can play too rough, or they may see the small dog as a prey animal and pick it up and shake it, which can be fatal. Exceptional dog parks have an enclosed area specifically for small dogs. This keeps them safe, yet still allows them to socialize which is especially important for smaller dogs.

Fun stuff (agility equipment, etc.) — A park that provides equipment for dogs to practice their natural skills is an exceptional park. Having some basic agility equipment – although the park should not have equipment that might pose a safety problem if the owner and dog have not been trained – is a fun way for dogs and owners to interact together. It also shows that the park is aware of what dogs and owners enjoy and seeks to enhance their experience.

Dogs forming loose packs – If dogs begin forming loose packs and no one breaks them up, there is potential for serious behavior problems. These dogs will gang up on weaker dogs and may even physically attack them. If, on a regular basis, the dogs (particularly if they are always the same dogs) continue to pack together, this is a park to be avoided unless the problem can be effectively addressed.

For more information on dog parks and other dog issues, check out the APDT web site at www.apdt.com!