

Dickson Park Master Plan Update

Edgewood Borough, Allegheny County, PA

Public Meeting – April 29, 2015

Meeting notes:

1. Pat Schaefer, President of Borough Council provided some background on the interest expressed by residents to revisit the master plan for Dickson Park, with a special interest in investigating the potential for an off leash dog park. She indicated that this meeting was the beginning of the process and she welcomed everyone. She then introduced the planning consultant, Jim Pashek from Pashek Associates, a planning firm with special expertise in parks and recreation planning.
2. Pashek the presented a brief slide show photos of the existing park and then images of other dog parks around the country. He pointed out that great dog parks included:
 - A sensitivity to neighboring properties in terms of noise
 - Well drained soils (existing or constructed)
 - An area of 1 to 5 acres to give room for aggressive dogs and to spread out the use so that turf can grow
 - Shade
 - Water for both dogs and their owners
 - Fencing and double self-closing gates
 - Non-toxic plants
 - People benches and play equipment for dogs
 - Separation of areas for large and small dogs
3. Several photos of Riding Meadow Park in Fox Chapel were provided as an example of a trail-oriented off leash dog park as opposed to a wide open field dog park. Given the woods and steep slopes of Dickson Park, this model might be of interest to the group.
4. The room had been set up with tables to accommodate small group discussions about the park. Maps of the park were provided at each table along with markers and paper with some facilities drawn to the map scale. Four groups were asked to discuss around the table their ideas for Dickson Park. They then could paste on the plan the cutouts or add marker notations of issues of concern or opportunities on the plan. The discussion at the tables lasted about 45 minutes. Then, each table was invited to tape their plan to the wall and one person presented the highlights of their discussion and what they recommended. The following are lists of what was presented.

- Group 1: Access to park via Aberdeen Street
Convert old tennis court to street hockey area
Maintain the large flat green lawn area as is; do not schedule organized activities
Take over portions of the Public Works site for a dog area
Plan for incorporating habitats for bees and birds
Consider acquiring or getting permission to park at the old tennis center for dog park users
Provide trails for hiking
- Group 2: Keep open space
Add a small shelter towards the neighborhood side of the existing lawn area, maybe with a bench
Access via Aberdeen Street with parking along that road in the park
Provide dog trails like the example at Fox Chapel
Fence in a small area of the existing green turf area for small dogs
Provide Accessible parking near the green space at elevation of the lawn area
Do not provide a playground
Keep most of the existing flat lawn area for unstructured play
Somewhere other than Dickson Park, add a playground for this side of the Borough
Install a fence between Public Works and park uses
- Group 3: Access via Aberdeen Street
Parking at the old pavilion site along the existing road into the Public Works site
Provide two accessible parking spaces at the end of the existing lawn area
Incorporate sledding area
Provide a pavilion on the old court area
Include benches
Widen the flat green space where possible
Add access to the site from the old tennis club
Maintain and protect trees next to the residential area
Safety concerns were mentioned
Create a dog friendly park versus a dog park
- Group 4: Access and parking along Aberdeen Street
Currently there is shortage of on-street parking on Oakview Street, congestion
Provide flower gardens
Include picnic tables and trash receptacles
Place dog park in the Public Works area
“Front” area of the park should be for families
Important to fence in dog area
Very concerned with parking and traffic – suggest parking permits like city

5. Once everyone presented their group's plans, Pashek asked those in attendance to list what issues were common to all four presentations. The group developed the following list:

- Provide car access to the park only on Aberdeen and keep parking along that road leading to the Public Works site
- Consider the park as a multi-use space
- Public Works needs to relinquish space for the park
- Maintain green space that exists today
- Add trails
- Nature is important
- Off leash dog area should be in the back of the park where the Public Works site exists

6. Pashek indicated that the next steps would be to take all of this information and begin developing one or more concepts plans. They would be refined and brought back to the group for review and comment. It is hoped that this will take place this summer with conclusions reached by the fall.

Schaefer thanked everyone for participating and looked forward to their future input as the Borough works on updating the Dickson Park master plan.

Note: 20 people signed in as attending. The meeting started about 6:30pm and was over by about 8:30pm.

Notes prepared by Jim Pashek on May 5, 2015