



# **LYNCHBURG DOG PARK FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Prepared by the Off-Leash Dog Park Steering Committee (OLDPSC) in October of 2008.



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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Acknowledgments ..... 3**

**Introduction .....3**

**Research Methodology .....4**

**Public Process .....4**

**Facilities Review .....4**

**Advocacy Groups .....5**

**Needs Summary .....5**

**Type of Facility Needed .....6**

**Dog Park Best Management Practices .....7**

**Possible Locations .....8**

**Conclusions .....8**

**Appendix I – Survey and Survey Results .....12**

**Appendix II – Dog Park Rules and Regulations .....21**

**Appendix III – Site Map/Preliminary Drawing .....22**

**Appendix IV – Municipality Management Survey Questionnaire .....23**

**Appendix V – Project Budget .....25**

**Appendix VI- APDT Siting Criteria .....26**

**Appendix VII– BCAA Assessment .....28**

**Appendix VIII– Community Presentation Flyer.....30**

**Appendix IX– Community Presentation Letter.....31**

**Appendix X– Press Coverage.....32**

### Acknowledgments

The Off-Leash Dog Park Steering Committee (OLDPSC) would like to recognize the contributions made by other City Departments (Public Works, Community Planning, Police, Parks & Recreation, etc.), City Administration and City Council, the Lynchburg Humane Society, and the Citizens of Lynchburg. A special thanks goes to project advisor Kay Frazier, DeeDee Conner, Charlie Youell, Mike Lyons, Captain Kenneth Edwards, Lieutenant George Royal, Officer Louis H Faust, Blake Isley, Walter Erwin, and all the committee members.

### Introduction

The National Recreation and Park Association defines a dog park as “a contained public area where dog owners may allow their dogs to run off-leash.” During the past several years, both the Lynchburg Parks & Recreation Department (LPRD) and the Lynchburg Humane Society (LHS) have received numerous requests to create an off-leash dog park within the City of Lynchburg. This trend mirrors recreation changes taking place across the country. According to *DogFancy* magazine, over 700 dog parks have been constructed in the United States since the first off-leash park opened in the late 1970s. These parks allow dogs and their owners to socialize in a leash-free environment with other dogs and dog owners. As in most urban areas, open space within Lynchburg is a finite resource which is affected by development pressures, community planning, and public open space management policies. With an estimated 15,000<sup>1</sup> dogs within the City limits, there are fewer and fewer areas for owners to exercise their dogs freely. An off-leash facility is one way of meeting those increasing demands in a controlled environment.

There are a number of societal and managerial benefits to dog parks. These parks can revitalize previously underutilized properties by increasing legitimate park use and displacing illegitimate park use. Allowing dogs to socialize over time with other dogs and people in a safe environment can lead to a reduction in aggressive behavior and the frequency of dog attacks. Additionally, well-exercised dogs tend to exhibit better conduct and enjoy a higher quality of life (just like their human counterparts). When dogs have fewer behavioral problems as a result of adequate exercise and proper socialization, fewer dogs enter local animal shelters, reducing the financial burden on public resources. Finally, research shows that dogs provide important physical and mental health benefits to their owners. People who exercise their animals regularly increase their own levels of physical fitness, reducing stress levels, and living longer and healthier lives. Perhaps most significantly, dog parks create a “social hub” for urbanites—coaxing people from various economic and social backgrounds to meet and interact with their each other; thereby strengthening a cohesive sense of community. Finally, in parks with poorly defined recreation goals, this sense of ownership can be a powerful motivating influence in reducing inappropriate behavior and improper use/damage of park property.

From the onset, several assumptions were made by the OLDPSC concerning this project. The City would not purchase any new property or fund any capital dollars for the project. Instead, volunteers would have to play a substantial role in capital fund-raising, site monitoring, maintenance activities, and pet waste removal. The proposed site would also have to be acceptable to the neighborhood—with noise, vehicular traffic, and other use issues adequately addressed. A formal written management plan would be drafted, denoting volunteer and City responsibilities, and establishing management goals. Finally, while proponents hope that this park will be the first of several similar parks within the City, the long term viability of dog parks in Lynchburg rests squarely on how this pilot project is supported and utilized over time.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 and 2006; 2002 US Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook, calculated using national percentages.

### **Research Methodology**

The Steering Committee utilized myriad research tools to garner dog park information, including: a formal written survey (see Appendix I), telephone and in-person inquiries (see Appendix IV), internet data searches, a community meeting with design charrettes, and professional literature queries.

The following municipalities were contacted and the staff responsible for operating the dog parks were interviewed: Fairfax County, Richmond, Roanoke, Charlottesville, Williamsburg; Montgomery County (Maryland); Charlotte and Durham (North Carolina); and Myrtle Beach (South Carolina). The Committee also spoke with representatives from the Six Wags Dog Park, a private dog park in Salem, Virginia. A copy of the municipality management survey questionnaire that was used is enclosed in Appendix IV.

### **Public Process**

The public was consulted throughout the feasibility study process. The Steering Committee made a concerted effort to ensure input was received from a diverse user base, not just dog park enthusiasts. The LPRD sponsored several public service announcements in the local media beginning early in 2008, which led to a front page article on the dog park feasibility process in the *News & Advance* and a TV news segment on WSET Channel 13 News. The user demand survey was posted on the City website, emailed to residents, and made available in hard copy form at various community events and at retail outlets and veterinary offices within the community.

While the Steering Committee only expected a few dozen completed surveys to be returned, over 265 surveys were received and compiled. This response exceeded those received by other, much larger municipalities that had implemented similar surveys as part of their dog park feasibility process.

The user demand surveys and public informational meeting helped supply the following important information:

- Level of community support
- Approach to park monitoring
- Frequency of park usage
- Important dog park features
- Database of existing parks which are dog park compatible
- Citizen concerns about off-leash dog parks

Once a draft of the study had been completed, a second phase of public input was put into action. On Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, a draft of the Dog Park Feasibility Study was presented to the City's Physical Development Committee (PDC) and their input included into this report.

On Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. a Community meeting was held at Miller Center to present the findings of the draft Dog Park Feasibility Study and gather input from the Community (see Appendix VIII). In addition to Public Service Announcements, letters were hand-delivered to the neighborhood surrounding the proposed site of the Off-Leash Dog Park Facility (see Appendix IX). The meeting was attended by over 30 Citizens in addition to staff and members of the press. A design charrette was hosted in the hallway which was followed by a presentation and question and answer session in the auditorium. While all of the comments concerning the proposed dog park were positive, a few comments concerning historic speeding along Monticello Avenue should be part of any park management plan discussions.

The press was well represented at the event and coverage generally positive (see Appendix X).

Written comments from Citizens included the following:

Dog Park – Community Comments

1. Need aggressive dog separation/protection
2. Need City Staff on site
3. How will rule #17 be enforced? – Rule #17 is: Violations of the leash law, dog waste law, and/or dog license law may result in fines, loss of park privileges, and/or other punitive measures
4. Do you need to be a City resident to use the Dog Park?
5. Need Waste containers close to entrances / exits.
6. Male dogs must be neutered to use the park.
7. Should have a gateway that connects the large and small dog areas so that dogs can pass back and forth.
8. What are the criteria for designating a dog large or small?
9. Should reduce the size of the small dog area and increase the large dog area.
10. Need to round the acute angles in the small dog area.
11. Should have a “buddy system” for volunteers who will open and close the park.
12. Need access to an emergency phone.
13. Rule #12 should state “Significant bites should be reported to the Police” rather than “All bites”.
14. Need to have phone number posted to call if patrons refuse to obey the park rules.

Fund Raising Ideas

1. Volunteer Park Monitors
2. Poop Picker-uppers
3. Corporate Sponsors
4. Memory bricks for pets on a Memory sidewalk
5. Entrance fees for “doggie Olympics”
6. Advertising signs
7. Donated landscaping materials – Arbor Day Foundation
8. Donations of Benches, cleanup supplies

9. Sell the name of the Park
10. Park Rental – doggie B’day parties
11. Silent Auction – Estate Donations
12. T – shirts
13. Sponsored Runs
14. Yard Sales

### Facilities Review

#### Lynchburg Area

There are currently no official off-leash dog parks in Lynchburg, or in the surrounding counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Campbell. However, according to news reports, the master plan for the development of English Park in the Town of Altavista does include plans for a proposed off-leash dog park. There are also plans to eventually include an off-leash dog park area as part of the Seneca Park development off Route 29 in Campbell County.

#### Existing Off-Leash Dog Parks in Virginia

Currently, there are at least 24 off-leash dog parks in Virginia, including 18 in Northern Virginia, and one each in Richmond, Eastern Shore, Charlottesville, and Salem.<sup>2</sup> Steering Committee members have spoken with officials from several of these dog parks, and have incorporated their advice, lessons learned, and best practices in the development of this feasibility study. Appendix IV contains the Municipality Management Survey Questionnaire which was used in our interviews and discussions with other dog park officials. Perhaps revealingly, *none* of the dog park officials we spoke with in VA, MD, NC, and SC regretted having established a dog park in their municipality; all the officials seemed to be pleasantly surprised by how popular their dog parks have been and how well things are going at their parks overall, with the exception of a few minor issues, as noted below.

The closest existing off-leash dog park to Lynchburg is approximately 60 miles away in Salem, VA. The Six Wags Dog Park in Salem opened in July 2007 and is a privately owned park, for members-only. The cost of an annual membership for one dog at Six Wags is \$250 per year or \$30 per month. While there is no public dog park currently in Roanoke, the Young Professionals Group of the Roanoke Valley (New VA Connects), is leading fund-raising efforts<sup>3</sup> and working with Roanoke City Council to establish such a park.

In researching this report, the committee discovered that there are basically three types of off-leash dog areas common to the Mid-Atlantic: 1) fenced, dedicated facilities; 2) off-leash trails; 3) portions of multi-use parks that are designated as off-leash areas during a portion of operating hours. In addition, most dog parks are ‘self-policed’ by patrons and do not have municipal staff or volunteers monitoring the park. However, some dog parks do have members from their dog park advocacy group monitor the park during peak times, and in particular during the initial phase of dog park operation.

Research and field observation at numerous dog parks indicate that dog bites and dog fights are surprisingly rare. Most patrons of dog parks bring well-socialized, non-aggressive dogs to the parks.

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<sup>2</sup> From Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner, VA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation, editor of the *VA Outdoors Plan 2007*.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.roanokedogpark.com/>

Simply put, most dog's behavior is much less aggressive when "off leash" than when "on leash." Another perceived problem which seems to be diminished in real world application is the misnomer that dog park users will not pick up after their pets. However, this does not appear to be a problem since dog parks tend to be "self-policing", with patrons exerting peer pressure on other users to obey by the rules.

### **Advocacy Groups**

Many jurisdictions have built a relationship with a non-profit advocacy group to assist and/or manage their off-leash dog park. The roles of park advocacy groups are to raise funds for the park; monitor park usage, help enforce park rules and regulations (including dog waste removal), and serve as communications liaisons with City officials, neighborhood residents, and dog owners. These organizations are essential in the success of any dog park venture, as few municipalities have the funding or staffing levels to dedicate to such a facility.

For a dog park to become a reality in Lynchburg, the establishment of a non-profit advocacy group of dedicated volunteers working with the City (through the LPRD) to ensure the proper and efficient operation of the park would be mandatory. While Parks & Recreation would maintain overall management responsibility, the volunteer organization would play a crucial role in day-to-day operations, strategic planning, and advocacy. The City would also facilitate communication between the advocacy group, the general public, and City Staff. The advocacy group would be established after the dog park project has been endorsed by City Council. The roles and responsibilities of the advocacy group shall be detailed in a written agreement which would form the basis of the dog park management plan. Once established, the first goal of the advocacy group would be to construct a financial plan to raise the funds needed to build the dog park.

### **Needs Summary**

The exact number of dogs in the City of Lynchburg is difficult to ascertain as only ten percent of dogs are believed to be licensed. However, according to the Pet Demographics Sourcebook, 36.1% of households own a dog, and those households have an average of 1.6 dogs per households. According to the U.S. Census, the City of Lynchburg had approximately 25,477 households in 2006 which translates into about 9,197 households with dogs and a total of about 14,715 dogs in the City. It is also estimated there are approximately 47,302 dogs total in Lynchburg and the surrounding counties of Amherst, Bedford and Campbell.<sup>4</sup>

Of the 265 respondents who completed the user demand survey, 97% said they had dogs and 95% responded they would support an off-leash dog park in Lynchburg (see Appendix I). A surprisingly high 44% of respondents said they would use the dog park multiple times per week, while 42% said they would use it once a week. Additionally, 98% stated that they were willing to show proof of vaccinations and obtain a dog license in order to use the dog park. It is currently estimated that only about 10% of Lynchburg dogs are licensed. Encouraging Citizen compliance to existing licensing laws is certainly an additional benefit that cannot be ignored.

Since this proposed dog park will initially be implemented on a pilot basis (at a single park), it is important that the park is centrally located within the City to allow convenient access for all residents.

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<sup>4</sup> Data was not available for Appomattox County.

### Type of Facility Needed

This section summarizes the major findings of the user demand survey conducted as part of the public input process, including site features. A more detailed tabulation of the survey results is included in Appendix I.

When asked what features were essential in a successful dog park and to rank the ‘top three’ features by priority, the 265 respondents of the survey listed the following priorities:

- A separate area for small dogs
  - Double gated entry
  - Pet waste station
  - Drinking water
  - Shade
- a) Other important findings from the dog park survey include:
- Seventy percent of potential users in Lynchburg plan to use the park between 4 PM and 7 PM.
  - Most of the survey respondents (110 out of 265) live in the 24503 zip code, followed by the 24502 zip code with 79 respondents. There were 31 responses from the 24501 zip code and a total of 33 responses were received from residents in the 24551 and 24572 zip codes. Therefore, the dog park would have to be centrally located to all city residents.
  - 98% of survey respondents are willing to show proof of vaccinations and get a dog license in order to use the dog park.
  - 98% said they are willing to pick up after their pets. (Interestingly, the City has found the recently installed dog waste stations at the Ed Page Entrance to the Blackwater Creek Bikeway and the Kemper Station Trail Entrance are being used on a consistent basis. Perhaps it is evidence people will pick up after their pet if provided with the facilities.
  - 33% of respondents said they are willing to volunteer for the dog park, but few of them provided their contact info.
  - 90% of respondents said they were willing to pay a small nominal fee to use the dog park

### Dog Park Best Management Practices

#### Liability Issues

It is anticipated that no fee will be charged to use the dog park (though donations and fund-raising strategies will be employed). This strategy reduces both City and partner liability exposure as detailed in the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Recreation Use Statutes (RUS).

#### *Code of Virginia - Recreation Use Immunity*

*State Code 15.2-1809. Liability of localities in the operation of parks, recreational facilities, and playgrounds. No city or town which operates any park, recreational facility, or playground shall be liable in any civil action or proceeding for damages resulting from any injury to the person or from a loss of or damage to the property of any person caused by any act or omission constituting ordinary negligence on the part of any officer or agent of such city or town in the maintenance or operation of any such park, recreational facility, or playground. Every such city or town shall, however, be liable in damages for the gross negligence of any of its officers or agents in the maintenance or operation of any such park, recreational facility, or playground. The immunity created by this section is hereby conferred upon counties in addition to and not limiting on, other immunity existing at common law or by statute. (Code 1950, § 15-714; 1962, c. 623, § 15.1-291; 1979, c. 277; 1990, c. 18; 1997, c. 587.)*

In addition, according to the City Attorney, strongly worded signage should indicate that the dog park is not monitored by City Staff and that park users assume all risks when entering the dog park.

In the end, the City faces the same type of exposure here as exists in every other park. Most people are bitten by dogs on a leash and most bites involve family pets and children. Some of these concerns can be minimized through park rules and possible additions to City ordinance setting forth the rules for the dog park and making it an offense to violate the rules. In addition, a provision in the ordinance stating that the dog park is a recreational facility may be beneficial. A court might disagree that a dog park is a recreational facility, but adopting an ordinance labeling it a recreational facility certainly wouldn't hurt. Finally, risk can be reduced through management plan policies which control access, hours of operation, and other management goals.

The experiences of other jurisdictions with dog parks offer the following risk management recommendations which the Steering Committee have carefully considered<sup>5</sup>:

### **Park Layout**

Locate off-leash dog park away from children's playgrounds, beaches, picnic areas, sport fields, and horse or bicycle/motorcycle tracks.

Clearly define where on the grounds the dogs must be leashed and where they may be unleashed. This is particularly important in multi-use parks, and can be accomplished with a combination of landscaping, fencing, and appropriate signage at each entry point to the park.

Consideration should be given to the adequate land spacing between different parts of the park to minimize any spillover effects of one area on another.

### **Signage**

Signage designating where dogs must be leashed and where they may be unleashed should be specific, clear and consistent throughout the park.

Rules particular to the off-leash area should be clearly posted and enforced (see Appendix II).

### **Waste Removal**

Rules shall specify dog owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. However, it should be recognized that additional costs for maintenance staff, time and equipment may be needed to repair fencing, fill holes dug by the dogs, and to clean up dog waste left by irresponsible dog owners. Documentation should be kept and maintained as for any other park maintenance activity.

### **Site Design/Amenities**

The Steering Committee's research and the experience of other municipalities have repeatedly shown that dog parks are successful when developed with the following factors in mind: appropriate site selection, noise levels, adequate parking, public health concerns, City support, traffic issues, park maintenance and supervision, and clearly identified roles for a dog park advocacy group.

Therefore it is important for newly developed dog parks to incorporate design aspects and amenities that contribute to the overall success of the park. According to Dogpark.Com and other resources such as the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) a successful dog park should: minimize the environmental impact (including harmful foliage), be appropriately sized and in a safe location, buffer noise, utilize double-gated entryways, provide water and shade, drain properly, and provide adequate parking. In addition, the site should be regularly maintained. Finally, amenities such as water, pet waste stations, benches, and signage should be provided. Other improvements include the minimization of corners to reduce dog-on-dog conflict, additional service gates and agility equipment.

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<sup>5</sup> From City of Olympia Parks, Arts & Recreation, *Off-Leash Dog Park Feasibility Study*, September 9, 2006.

### **Possible Locations**

The Lynchburg Department of Parks & Recreation evaluated the following potential locations as possible off-leash dog parks:

- 1) Allen-Morrison Property
- 2) Blackwater Creek Athletic Area
- 3) College Park
- 4) Fairview Heights Neighborhood Center & Park
- 5) Forest Hills/Fulton Street Greenspace
- 6) Hollins Mill Park
- 7) Jefferson Park & Neighborhood Center
- 8) Perrymont Park
- 9) Sandusky Park
- 10) Younger Park

It should be noted that popular parks such as Peaks View Park and Riverside Park were not considered for inclusion in the study because these parks already have distinct management objectives (prescribed recreation, environmental education, and/or passive use goals) and are well frequented by residents. The selected ten parks were considered because they either lacked clear recreation management objectives or are currently being underutilized by residents (or both).

After visiting and carefully considering each of the parks and vetting each against the siting criteria described earlier, the Steering Committee determined that the Blackwater Creek Athletic Area (BCAA) at 515 Monticello Avenue would be the best suited site for a dog park. Specifically, the dog park would be located in the field below and to the *right* of the parking lot (see Appendix III for a map of the location). The field is bordered on one side by the Blackwater Creek and on the other by the Creekside Trail (a section of the James River Heritage Trail system contained within the Blackwater Creek Natural Area). The dog park will be designed and situated so that a buffer separates the dog park from both the creek and the Creekside Trail.

In addition, meetings were held both on and off site with important project partners such as the Police Department, Animal Control, Risk Management, Athletics, and others in order to garner important project feedback. Discussions centered on the use of entrance tags, isolation areas, coordination of incident reports, compatibility of dog toys, number of dogs allowed per user, and other subjects. The final management plan and Dog Park Rules will reflect a consensus of these concerns.

The City is currently working with a consultant to complete an athletic feasibility study of Sandusky Park and Blackwater Creek Athletic Area. In addition, the City's 2009 Capital Improvement budget contains funding for the renovation of the existing field at BCAA. The dog park will have no effect on future improvements to the athletic field located nearby.

In conclusion, the Steering Committee selected BCAA as the top choice for the dog park because it is compatible with most of the siting criteria required for the development of a successful dog park. The site has electric service, some lighting, is flat, drains well, contains ample parking and restroom facilities, and water is available nearby. In addition, the City is currently investing monies which will help define the management objectives of the park. However, because the park is limited to one athletic field, the addition of a dog park component within the Park would increase usage and strengthen legitimate park visitation, thus reducing both perceived and actual illegitimate site use.

### **Conclusion**

The Lynchburg off-leash dog park will be located at Blackwater Creek Athletic Area, at 515 Monticello Avenue (see Appendix III). The fenced in area shall cover slightly less than one acre, including separate 'large' dog and 'small' dog areas. While the 'small' dog area will be recommended for dogs less than 30 pounds, separation of

small dogs and large dogs shall be at the discretion of the dog owners. Small and large dogs may interact if the owner chooses to and believes their chosen area is the best for their dog. All dogs must have proof of rabies vaccination, be licensed, and be well-socialized. Those entering the dog park are responsible for controlling their dogs and assume all liability for using the dog park.

The off-leash dog park will be enclosed by a secure five-foot galvanized fence. A ten-foot maintenance gate will provide access for routine mowing and maintenance. Several dog waste stations will be placed conveniently within the fenced-in area, making it easy for patrons to pick up after their pets. Refuse cans will be provided outside of the enclosure.

Both the small dog and large dog areas will have double-gated entryways, to create a “buffer zone” between the off-leash dog park and the rest of the park. This will make it easier for dogs and handlers to enter and exit safely, and minimize the incidence of dogs slipping out of the park unleashed. Patrons will be required to leash their dogs prior to entering or exiting the fenced-in dog park area. These instructions and other dog park rules will be prominently posted at the entrance to both the ‘small’ and ‘large’ dog off-leash areas. (see Appendix II).

The off-leash dog park will be wheelchair accessible. The fencing will be knuckled with a bottom rail. Corners will be minimized as much as possible. Ground cover within most of the dog park will be fescue grass; however, high-traffic edges along the fence, where dogs tend to run, will be comprised of a crushed stone treadway to minimize wear and tear. As funding becomes available benches, tether poles, landscaping, and other amenities will be installed to further improve the visitor experience.

Construction is broken up into three distinct phases. The first phase will provide the minimum amount of structures and amenities necessary to open and operate a dog park. The second phase will contain those amenities believed to be critical to the long-term viability of the park. While the final phase of development will contain those items that may lend themselves to funding through a giving program, but are not essential to the operation of a successful dog park.

During the six-month pilot phase of the dog park project, the park will be monitored by at least one volunteer from the to-be-established advocacy group during operating hours. These hours of operation may be limited during the pilot phase, to allow for the flexibility necessary when utilizing volunteers. These hours will correspond to peak expected usage hours as determined by the Steering Committee’s survey results.

Upon endorsement by City Council, volunteers will immediately begin forming a Dog Park Advocacy Group (DPAG) and begin work on a financial plan and project timeline which includes milestones and critical paths. Working with the DPAG, the Lynchburg Parks & Recreation Department (LPRD) will begin drafting a written management plan which will denote the relationship between the DPAG and the City, and define best management practices of the off-leash facility. Both documents will be presented to the Director of the Lynchburg Parks & Recreation Department (LPRD) for final approval. City Council will be updated periodically on the status of the project through timely written reports and/or project presentations.

Finally, it is important to remember that this is a pilot project taking place at a single park. This facility will not meet the expectations of every dog owner. If successful the park may serve as a template for future dog park development. However, the burden of emotionally and fiscally moving the project forward must fall on the shoulders of the dog park advocates who have worked diligently to make this project a reality. However, critics would do well to be cognizant of the time and effort put into this project by their fellow Citizens and keep their comments constructive and fair-minded. In the end, this Citizen-driven process has already fostered myriad benefits to the City in the form of new frugal park planning models that maximize an inclusive participatory process for all.

Appendix I – Survey & Survey Results



The City of Lynchburg, Virginia

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
 PARK SERVICES DIVISION  
 301 GROVE STREET, LYNCHBURG, VA 24501  
 TEL: (434) 455-5876  
 FAX: (434) 528-2794

Over the last year, the Lynchburg Department of Parks & Recreation has been working with a group of concerned Citizens exploring the development of an off-leash dog park. In order to better understand public perception surrounding this issue, we are asking that you please take a few minutes to complete this user demand survey. Thank you! We greatly appreciate your timely response.

1. Do you have dogs? (check one)  YES  NO
2. Would you support an off-leash dog park in Lynchburg? (check one)  YES  NO
3. How often would you use a dog park? (check one)
  - Once a month
  - Once a week
  - Multiple times per week
4. What time of day would you most likely use a dog park? (check one/fill in)
  - 6am to 9am
  - 4pm to 7pm
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your resident zip code? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you aware of any unofficial off-leash areas in Lynchburg? (check one)  YES  NO (If yes, please list):  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. What features are essential in a successful fenced dog park? Rank your top three priorities from 1- 3, with 1 being the highest priority.
 

_____ Separate area for small dogs	_____ Pet waste station	_____ Shade
_____ Double gated entry	_____ Restrooms	_____ Benches
_____ Drinking water	_____ Parking close to site	_____ Staff/Volunteer monitors

Other suggested features \_\_\_\_\_
8. For health and safety reasons, dogs using the dog park must be licensed and be current on all vaccinations. Would you be willing to show proof of proper vaccination and obtain a dog license so that your dog(s) may use the dog park? (check one)
  - YES
  - NO
9. In order to help pay for park operating costs, a small, nominal park membership fee might need to be assessed. Would you be willing to pay this fee in order to use the dog park? (check one)
  - Yes, I'm willing to pay a nominal membership fee, if needed  
(If yes, how much per year would you be willing to pay per dog? \$\_\_\_\_\_)
  - No, I am not willing to pay for this service
10. In order to have a successful dog park, owners must be responsible for cleaning up after their dogs. Would you pick up after your pet if pet waste stations were provided? (check one)
  - YES
  - NO

11. Dog parks can be staffed or unstaffed (depending upon funding). Would you be more likely to use a dog park that was staffed or unstaffed?(check one)

Self-monitored

Staffed

Makes no difference

12. If the dog park were "self monitored" by citizen-users of the park (unstaffed), would you feel comfortable politely asking an individual to remove their dog from the park if you believed their dog was acting aggressively? (check one)

YES

NO

13. Would you willingly remove your dog from the park if your dog showed signs of aggression? (check one)

YES

NO

14. The Dog Park Committee is looking for volunteers to help with the implementation and management of the dog park. If you would like to volunteer, please provide your name, telephone number and/or email below so that we may contact you with additional details:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

15. The Dog Park will need financial start up and working capital. If it is necessary to fundraise among the public, would you be willing to contribute? If so, please complete any that apply below:

- Annual financial amount \_\_\_\_\_
- One time donation of money/equipment \_\_\_\_\_
- Weekly/monthly/quarterly services \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you recommend any individuals, businesses and/or corporations who we may contact that would be willing to support or aid in fundraising for a Dog Park?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you have other recommendations, concerns, or comments?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*The Dog Park Committee would like to hear from you on this issue. For more information about this survey or if you have any questions, please contact Niro at (434) 384-1972*

*(Note: if you are mailing this completed survey, please fold this sheet into thirds so that the address is showing, use tape or staples to seal it closed, and affix a first-class stamp on the space provided)*

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RESPOND TO THIS SURVEY!**

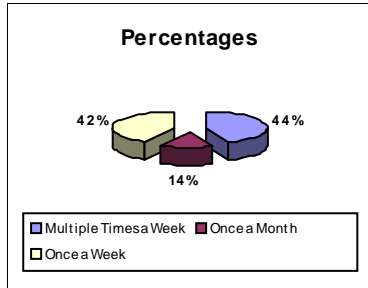
# Dog Park Survey Results

1. Do you have dogs? 97%

2. Would you support an off-leash dog park in Lynchburg? 95%

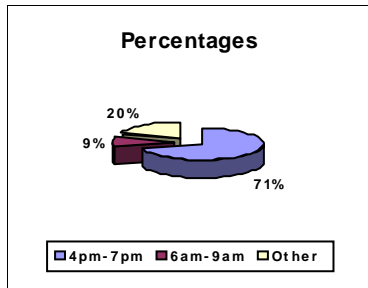
3. How often would you use a dog park?

Monthly	Weekly	MultiWeekly
14%	42%	44%

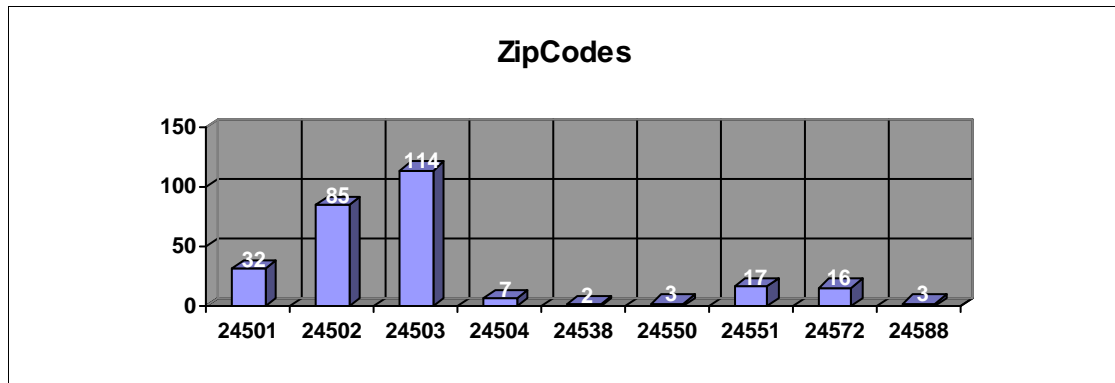


4. When would you use the park?

4pm-7pm	6am-9am	Other
71%	9%	20%



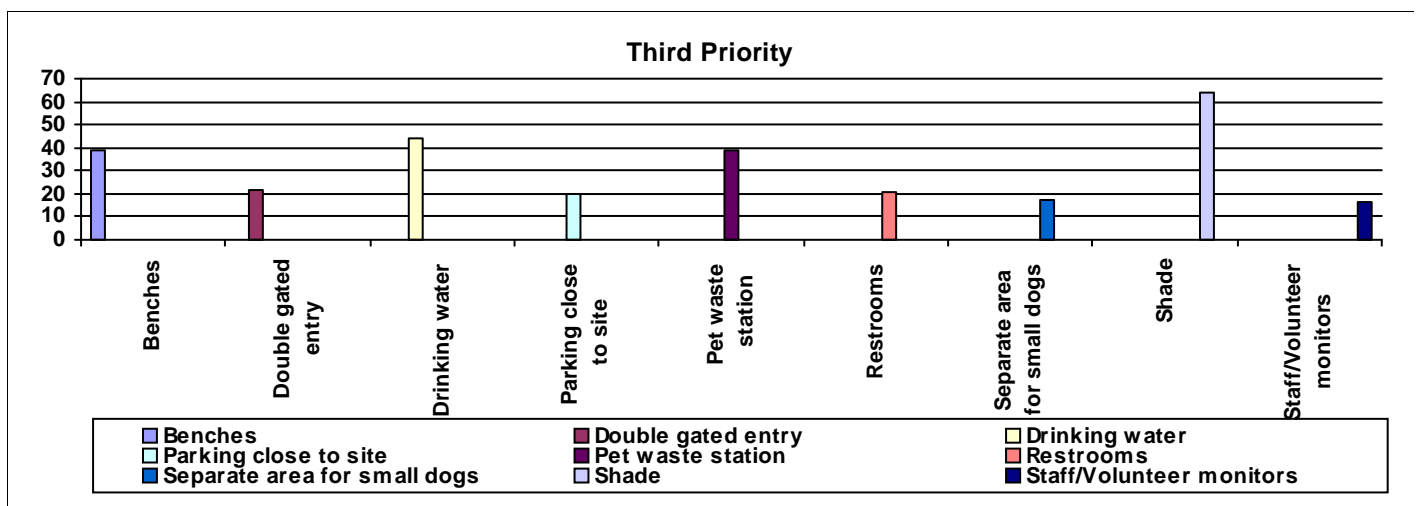
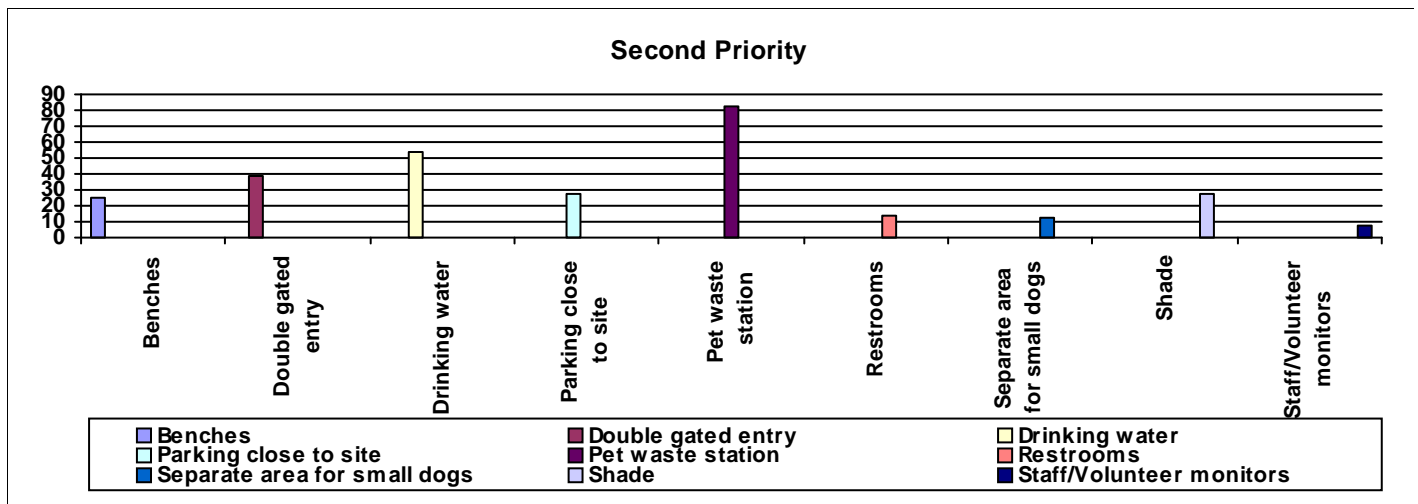
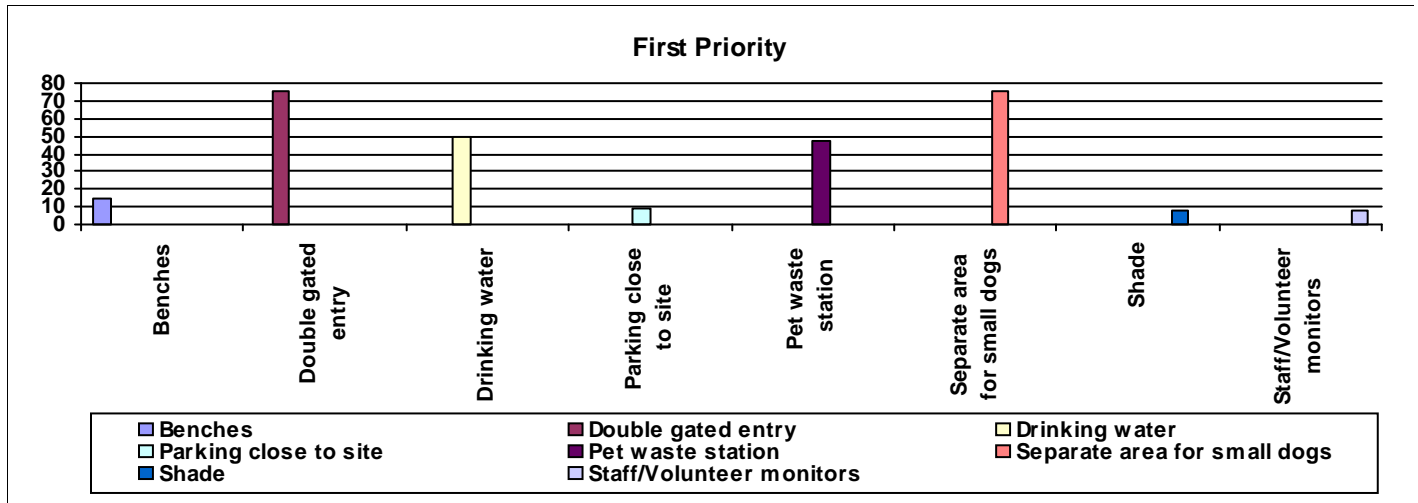
5. Zip Codes



6. Known areas used for off-leash. 6.1%

# Dog Park Survey Results, cont.

## 7. Essential features in a Dog Park.



## Dog Park Survey Results, cont.

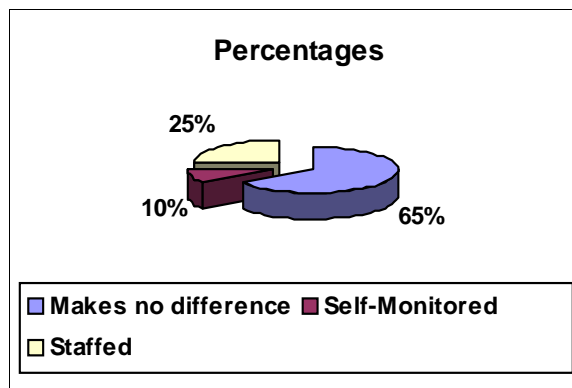
8. For health and safety reasons, dogs using the dog park must be licensed and be current on all vaccinations. Would you be willing to show proof of proper vaccinations and obtain a dog license so that your dog(s) may use the dog park? 97%

9. In order to help pay for park operating costs, a small, nominal park membership fee might need to be assessed. Would you be willing to pay this fee in order to use the dog park? 89%

10. In order to have a successful dog park, owners must be responsible for cleaning up after their dogs. Would you pick up after your pet if pet waste stations were provided? 98%

11. Dog parks can be staffed or unstaffed (depending upon funding). Would you be more likely to use a dog park that was staffed or unstaffed?

Staffed	Self	No Difference
25%	10%	65%



12. If the dog park were "self monitored" by citizen-users (unstaffed), would you feel comfortable politely asking an individual to remove their dog from the park if you believed their dog was acting aggressively? 34%

13. Would you willingly remove your dog from the park if your dog showed signs of aggression? 94%

14. The Dog Park Committee is looking for volunteers to help with the implementation and management of the dog park. Would you volunteer? 33%

15. The Dog Park will need financial start up and working capital. If it is necessary to fundraise among the public, would you be willing to contribute?

<i>Total Contributions</i>	<i>Average Contribution</i>
\$7,195.00	\$24.31

# *Dog Park Survey Recommendations*

## *Recommendations*

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Separate areas for time out - training ect.

This is a must for lynchburg-dogs need to run around free

Park should be on area where it can be observed for safety reasons. Not in remote area

This is a fantastic idea and will hopefully bring lynchburg to the next level, perhaps dog/pup obedience classes could be held there

I would be worried about aggressive dogs

FYI-I visited my niece couple of christmas ago and her city is about the size of lynchburg. The city has a dog park, they have an area for smaller dogs and larger area for larger dogs. The areas have a 4' chain link fences and it is all open, no other amenities and it seems to work fine.

I would be very concerned as to how the park would be monitored. Please read the attached article just as a start. There is a lot of information available on designing, starting and running dog parks, read, don't reinvent the wheel. I am co-owner of Happy Tails Dog Training

Fear of people sling each other should their dogs get into a "scuffle" or fight. Dogs will be dogs and this should be an understanding before entering the park.

I feel there needs to be someone on staff to help monitor situations that may arise, it would be best to have a dog trainer or someone who is familiar with dog behavior

Park not be situated in full sun. Summer heat and full sun could be dangerous for the dogs

This is a great idea. A safe well-lit and well maintained space in a convently located area would be best.

The old swimming pool area at riverside park would seem to be an ideal spot.

wonderful plus for the area. We had one in Syracuse, NY and it was well used and enjoyed. People with dogs move to such communities.

the park needs to be large with lots of space for dogs to play, socialize and run.

Need to have sign release in case of dog fight and bites

Owners must sign release to not hold "dog Park" responsible for dog bites/fights, etc

It sounds fun. I do think it would be beneficial to separate the large dogs from small dogs. Over eager small dogs tend to cause upset with larger dogs.

If unstaffed, how will membership be enforced or verification of vaccinations be monitored?

A double gate would be a must because my dogs would run out as soon as someone left the gate open.

Make this happen

If unstaffed, users not licensed bringing dogs. How will you deal with people from outside the city (eg Bedford County) who want to use this park?

Aggressive dogs-how to mange?

If the park were staffed perhaps dogs could be screened for aggression prior to obtaining a pass to the park.

K9 grass is more durable and antimicrobial than regular grass requires no water and will not turn into a mudhole

I feel strongly that an off-leash dog park could and should be provided by the city of lynchburg. I also believe that dog park users should clean up after themselves and their dogs with the exception of bulk trash pickup and landscaping. I am willing to volunteer time to clean up after others since I realize that not everyone will clean up after their dog/dogs.

Perhaps contacting a construction company/companies in lynchburg who may be willing to donate materials/time in the construction of the park. My first thought would be Borel Construction. After all the negative press for developmention greenview maybe this would give them good press.

Convenient location-downtown or midtown

*Friday, August 08, 2008*

***Recommendations Continued***

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Secure Fences. Maybe post a sign about number 12.

Should have a city employee run & staff the park.

Please find a way to make this happen.

There is a dog park I visited in Raleigh, NC. It was great! Mulch, two separate areas for big & small dogs and a pool, drinking water, etc. I recommend finding a dog park like this to emulate.

Having some type of water for dogs to play in would be helpful.

Consider Wyndhurst area close to YMCA for dog park.

How would you know if certain dogs have their rabies shot? Raise awareness on t.v.

Dog Owners Training Club of Lynchburg would like to donate 1 or more pet pick up stations, depending on cost. I am the Treasurer of the Club.

I am so excited about a dog park. My grandma goes to one in Cedar Rapids, IA That is so nice.

A location central to the city and community would be preferable. Also, if location unstaffed fines may be needed if pet waste is not picked up.

Animal control numbers should be posted, maybe with an emergency call phone number in case of major issue.

I want this here--- many ppl. Do--it is So Needed..

don't over analyze this. A nice dog park can be constructed and maintained very cheaply. There will be plenty of volunteers and people willing to self-monitor. See Stapleton Co. for perfect example.

A fenced-in area for training dogs not used to being around dogs to work on their aggression so they can enjoy park too.

Next to requiring veterinarians to disclose names of dog owners who live in the city, this is the most ridiculous waste of tax money I have seen in a long time. Do something to government money, apply same requirements of cat owners, rabies shot, license and lease law.

please do this

I lived in CA and the parks worked very well. Owners were great about keeping a real clean and making sure dogs got along ok. It was a great thing!

Since dog parks are new in Lynchburg I would be concerned about unsocialized or aggressive dogs at first. Maybe just monitor it for the first few months?

I think this would be a wonderful addition to Lynchburg. It would help to keep the city clean and safe from roaming pets.

Don't do it; Lynchburg has a leash law for a reason and there are too many other needs

What about a free trial period to see if your dog likes it, behaves, etc.?

A dog park is a great ideal we've had them in Arizona and Colorado and were disappointed there wasn't one here.

I'm very excited and hopeful about the prospect of having a dog park in Lynchburg, with help in whatever ways I am able to do

Make it look interesting. Does the city have any old fire hydrants they no longer use-can mount these. Maybe high school kids can paint a mural for free.

Lynchburg needs a dog park

a dog park would be great for Lynchburg and a way to social with other.

peakview park

please, please do this it would be great.

this is the best idea the city has had in years.

this would be a plus for Lynchburg

***Friday, August 08, 2008***

## ***Recommendations Continued***

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You will need to have someone monitor the park for current license and rabies certification.

Thank you for considering a dog park, much needed in Lynchburg. Thanks again from an elderly citizen. Lorra Lee.

You will find that most people who want this will abide by rules etc. in order to have the dog park. Also, most responsible owners will watch their pet closely for fear of something happening to them. I think this is the BEST idea! I hope it becomes reality!

It is a waste of the Taxpayers Money

I would very much like to be involved with the dog park opening and I am willing to be a volunteer monitor. It is important to me for Lynchburg to have a dog park.

My concern is that several yrs. Ago people had to stop bringing dogs to "Day in the Park" because guys would bring dogs that were aggressive. I'm not sure that a volunteer would be able to stop them. Police monitoring would be necessary I'm afraid. There are people in my neighborhood who let their dogs run loose and I'm afraid to walk my dog. I don't think they would respect the rules of a dog park.

Excellent idea for Lynchburg. Other cities have been doing this for a while now and the public seems to take advantage of the idea. I look forward to enjoy along with my two dogs.

have volunteers dress up like pets and collect money at fri cheers and other city wide events.

a dog park is way overdue.

I just think this is a wonderful idea. I think annual membership will help keep the trouble out.

This is a great idea!

peaksview park near bridge at tenabury parking lot. Blackwater creek on thompson drive side(no parking). Riverside park

Dog Park in Old Pool area at Riverside Park.

I think creating the dog park where the old swimming pool was located in riverside park would take a negative turn it into a positive

I think it's a great idea.

Lived previously in Colorado Senhgs-had dog park, was old baseball diamond, fenced, used old tree parts/stumps for playing on.

#9 Refers to a fee. What do my dog registration fees go towards? The park should be paid for by money from these fees and the animal warden.

I feel you need to work more on the parks for children throughout the city before you build a park for dogs.

require proff of spay/neuter

I know its in campbell cty. But timbrooke park would be a great place for a dog park.

I live in bedford and will drive for a real dog park I have been waiting for a long time for this too come.

I would like to seee it at riverside park.

staffing would create city jobs a win/win sitation! My only concern is aggressive dogs.

Installation of a phone for emergency use, dedicated live to authorities for situations

Only that this is long over due.

The park be for dogs only, if others were not there with dogs, they are not to complain about dogs activities.

Having recently moved form Santa Fa New Mexico, I was dissappointed to find no areas of leash free dog walking. In Santa Fe, there is a large dog park with miles of looping trails. It is an old dump/landfill the city tried to make into soccer fields for kids. The parents wouldn't have it. So the dogs got their park. It is self-policed. People have brought an old, large cooler and keep it filled with empty and full milk jugs of water. You bring one that is full and leave with an empty. They also have brought old dishes, dawn chairs and grocery bags for picking up poop. It was also a great social scene. I would love a place I could bring my old dog!! We miss our old park. If interested, I believe it is run by the parks Department. Thanks

camera's would be nice.

***Friday, August 08, 2008***

***Recommendations Continued***

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that breeds of dogs that are known for aggressive behavior not be able to use the park. All dogs should be spayed/neutered.

540-960-0999

I recently moved here from Nashville TN and the dog parks are very successful there. Not only did my dog make friends, I also did. People get to be "regulars" and watch out for each other and their dogs.

I think you should contact the local apartment complexes and ask them to give dog park info to residents. Dog-owning apartment residents would definitely be interested in supporting this project.

Thank you for considering this for our area!

this is a very needed project in our area. Many apartment dwellers have dogs and not much area to exercise them.

lynchburg would be a better place to live if we had a dog park.

have at downtown -think this is a great idea

just moved too lynchburg from vermont. I seen a lot of dog parks if you like to know more just give me a call.

Must have shade. What about pets having to be neutered? Has anyone talked to Charlie Burnham about the strip of property next to the soccer fields at the Wiggington Rd. entrance of Peakview Park? It has trees, convenient parking and visibility with the tennis courts nearby. Perhaps he would sell or donate it.

Testing for tempermetn is a big deal.

I think the idea is great! I would feel most comfortable if the park is supervised. It would be nice to have professionals there.

safe place for young lady to feel safe.

Yes. To overall liability concerns- Have all owners sign a waiver/hold harmless contract before entering the dog area additionally have them pay \$1-\$3 per dog per visit.

water features (such as fountains) would be nice.

There are plenty of websites about dog parks-they have similar rules and regulations. The challenge will be getting a suitable location and funds!

suggested location-old pool area at riverside park

Please let me know if I can get involved in any way.

I think a dog park would be a great attraction for Lynchburg until we get one I plan to drive to salem to check out six wags dog park.

























