

Johnson County DogPAC meeting
Thursday October 9, 2003

Present: Misha Goodman, Beth Shields; Deb Tiemens, Irene Friend, Terry Trueblood, Anne Burnside and Steph Barreiro

1. Terry Trueblood, Director of the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Dept., told the group about a meeting he attended the previous week with City Manager, Steve Atkins and Director of Public Works, Rick Fosse. Several possible park sites were discussed at that meeting:

a. Fosse believes the 40 acre tract on the south end of Kansas Avenue will not be available for a park because the landfill will need it as a source of fill in future years.

b. Fosse thinks the 40 acre tract near the north end of Kansas Avenue could be available for a park. It was purchased as a buffer for the landfill, and is not currently intended for other uses. This tract is essentially a tree-less hill. Fosse suggested that landfill machinery and crews could help us in reshaping the land, building trails, etc. Atkins suggested that trees could be planted.

c. Trueblood spoke with Julie Johnson, director of the Coralville parks, about whether Coralville might be interested in working with Iowa City, and perhaps North Liberty and/or Johnson County to establish a regional park. This topic was raised at the meeting with Atkins and Fosse as an issue to explore. Johnson told Trueblood a regional park was a good idea, but it was not something Coralville would likely work on anytime soon. Trueblood will talk with someone from Johnson County and North Liberty to see if they are interested in participating. Trueblood believes there is county-owned land west of town which might be available.

2. Misha and Terry told the group about a field trip they made on Thursday before the meeting to look at several possible sites in Iowa City:

a. Scott Park. It has two segments, one which was used for soccer games before construction of the Soccer Park south of town, and one which was originally used as a tree nursery. Both portions are still in use (Parks and Recreation flag football and rugby), but those activities could possibly be relocated. The advantages to the site(s) are proximity to town and existing parking. The disadvantage is proximity to a developed neighborhood where there may be opposition to development of an OLRA.

b. Soccer Field. There is a large, undeveloped tract of land adjacent to the new soccer park and south wastewater treatment plant. It is flat and currently used as a prairie garden (off of Sand Road on the southeast edge of town).

c. Peninsula. If you look at a city map, find Foster Road off Dubuque Street, and follow Foster Road west, you will see it ends at a peninsula (aka The Peninsula). The Elks have a golf course out there and a new housing development is being built adjacent to the golf course. But, there remain many, many acres of land designated as park. This land is bordered by the river. A portion is wooded; there are some hills. The City has built access roads to the well heads which serve the new water treatment plant, and there is a plan to route the trail system through this area. It remains possible that a portion could be set aside for creation of an off leash park, as one of the uses for the area.

3. What Now? Terry will contact Johnson County and North Liberty representatives to explore the county's interest in a regional park, and will talk more with Rick Fosse about why the fill dirt for the landfill couldn't come from the northern 40 acres on Kansas Avenue, instead of the

southern 40 acres. He will also talk with city staff about the possible use of a portion of The Peninsula, with particular attention paid to the effects of a dog park on the well heads.

JC DogPAC will hold a special meeting to again talk with Terry on Thursday, October 30th, at 7 p.m., at the old wastewater treatment plant, to explore these topics further.

In the meantime, JC DogPAC members will

- do more research on whether well heads and dog parks are incompatible uses. If you have information on this topic, send it to Misha (misha-goodman@iowa-city.org) or Beth (beth-shields@uiowa.edu).
- contact City Council candidates to ask about their support for an off leash park. Beth S. has sent a letter to each candidate on behalf of JC DogPAC and will post responses as soon as she receives them.
- determine the next meeting date of the Parks and Recreation Commission, and make sure we have a representative at their meetings
- determine the schedule for the City Council candidate forum and make sure we have a representative at each one.

What you can do NOW: keep talking and thinking about the park with your friends, with City Council members, with your vet....with anyone who does or should support the development of a park. And, if you can, attend a meeting to help us work through this planning and development process.