



September, 2002
Volume 2, Issue 1

QUINTE DOG PARK ASSOCIATION

c/o Quinte Conservation, 2060 Old Hwy # 2, RR # 2, Belleville, Ont K8N 4Z2

<http://www.quintedogpark.com>

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The mind of a dog is really very simple to understand. All it wants is to have someone to love and respect, to be given a reasonable amount of fun, to be useful to its owner, and to have a comfortable well-fed tummy.

No Bad Dogs - the Woodhouse way

-by Barbara Woodhouse

History of the Belleville Dog Park

Well, it has been quite a year for dog owners in the Quinte area.

Just over a year ago, we had no place to legally let our pets run free except for our own yards. Now we have the Pooch Path at the Quinte Conservation Authority, and a three-acre dog park at East Zwicks.

Because this all happened so quickly involving just a few people, I thought I would review the steps that made it all happen.

In the spring of 2001, there were a number of letters to the editor of the Belleville Intelligencer, about the massive cleanup needed at Zwicks park after the snow melted, revealing the mess left by dog walkers who had used Zwicks park throughout the winter. There was also much criticism about dog owners who let their dogs run off leash bothering other park users. There was even talk of banning dogs from the parks completely, even on a leash.

Doing some research, I learned that many other cities had the same problem, and had created dog parks to help solve the problem. Casey and I visited dog parks in the Toronto area, and were impressed with the enthusiasm of the owners and their dogs.

When I returned to Belleville, I learned that Owen Kerr of Woof-Walkers also had the same idea, and had put up petitions throughout the area asking for support. I contacted Owen, and we decided to work together. We sent letters to the 175 people who signed the petition explaining our goal, and inviting them to a public meeting in July, 2001. Only SEVEN! people showed up. Although discouraged, based on the enthusiasm of those who attended, plus the support of the Quinte Conservation Authority for a dog trail on

their property, we decided to carry on. A trail was cut for us through an adjacent field, signs and benches were put in place, and in August 2001, the Pooch Path was opened.

The Pooch Path is very popular for those who like to hike through the fields while walking their dog. Many people however, were not able to use the trails because their dogs might run off from the unfenced trails, or they were not able to navigate the uneven terrain.

We approached Doug Moses of the Belleville Parks and Recreation department to explain our idea for a dog park. Doug was immediately supportive and we talked about several possible sites. We decided that the current location at Zwicks park would be best because the area was largely unused, it had parking, and a lack of neighbours who might object. We got a quote for the fencing and signage, and in August, made our presentation to City Council. Although at first skeptical about fencing off part of the park for the dogs, with Doug's recommendation, and our association's pledge to pay back the city for the costs, the council approved the park for a one year trial period.

Fence construction began, signage was ordered and installed, the city cut the grass and trimmed the trees, and on October 20, 2001, Eastern Ontario's first fenced dog park was opened.

Since then, the park has had five times as many visitors as we originally anticipated. The dog population in Belleville is healthier, more socialized, and many of us have made new friends at the dog park.

Let's continue to keep it safe, clean, and fun.



Cleanup Day



RAINBOW BRIDGE

Behind the sponsor board is our "rainbow bridge" board. This is where we list dog park patrons who donate \$50 or more. The revenue from these donations is used to pay for the board and for the "in memoriam" plates.

If you know of a member who has lost their dog, let us know so we can express our sympathy and remember their dog on our board.



Let's work together to make our leash free area a success

Financial Results

Our first year has been very successful financially. As you may know, we made a pledge to pay back to the city \$15,000 over five years for the cost of the fencing. We have received revenue from membership dues (310 members), our sponsor board, fund-raising events, member donations, and our donation box at the park.

We have spent some money for park maintenance to fill in the middle area and spread wood chips, for benches etc., and have paid the city \$5,000 towards our debt. We should easily meet our obligation to pay down our debt over the next four years. A copy of our financial statement prepared by our treasurer, Peter Heryet, has been mailed with this newsletter to all our members. If you would like to get a copy, please get in touch with me at 613 966-3070.

Sponsors and Friends

Please thank and patronize Moira Glass-Mirror for their very generous donation of a dog park shelter to our dog park.

With this new shelter we will not need to huddle behind the sponsor board this winter to protect us from the cold winds coming across the Bay of Quinte.

We are indebted to our sponsors for their support, including Pet Valu who always contributes to our projects.

We are also lucky to have Bob Dowdell who donates his time each day to be at the dog park to help keep it clean and safe.



Membership Meeting

Thursday Oct 3, 7:00PM

Belleville City Council approved our dog park for a one-year trial period after which a report must be made to council. Before I make this report to council, I would like to have our annual member's meeting to discuss our financial position, and how we should proceed with the operation of the Dog Park. Once we have paid off our debt to the city, the dog park will be finished, and all that will be necessary is for us to keep it safe and clean. At our annual meeting I would like to discuss three possible directions for the Dog Park.

1. Not send out membership renewals or do any more fund raising.
2. Continue with membership renewals and sponsor board renewals but do not do any major fundraising (yard sales, concerts).

3. Continue to actively raise funds for park improvements i.e. park expansion, water system, lighting, agility equipment, etc.

This annual member meeting will be held on Thursday Oct 3, at 7:00PM at the Quinte Conservation Authority office (corner of Hwy 2 and Wallbridge-Loyalist road). The agenda will be:

Financial Report and Discussion

Future of Dog Park

Operation Suggestions

See you there.

Jim Moore

