

May 25, 2023
WH Dog Park Update Report

Town of West Hartford
Planning & Zoning Commission
50 South Main St.
West Hartford, CT 06107

Dear Commission:

I am co-president of the West Hartford Dog Park Coalition. At its Sept. 7, 2022 meeting, the TPZ unanimously approved the Special Use Permit application for a temporary dog park at 100 Mayflower St. (SUP#1388). This status report is pursuant to condition 8 of the Sept. 9, 2022 decision letter from the TPZ to me which formalized approval of the SUP.

The dog park opened on the weekend of October 29, 2022, with the grand opening on Nov. 5, 2022, which included a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by the Mayor and which was covered by various media outlets including NBC TV news.

- **Overview.** Since the dog park opened 7 months ago, it has been a huge success. As co-presidents, my wife and I are there 4-5 days per week, and we frequently ask dog owners about their experience. Their response has been overwhelmingly positive.
- **Cleanliness.** The park is very clean. Poop bag dispensers are hanging on the fence in both large and small dog areas. A group of six volunteers (aka the "Poop Patrol") take turns checking the grounds weekly for any poop bags left behind and any poop that is lying on the ground; they then pick it up and dispose of it in the trash container. I've noticed that nearly every dog owner picks up their dog's poop right after the poop is on the ground. On a typical day, we see and pick up zero to three poops/poop bags left behind by dog owners and deposit them in the trash can. The trash container situated right in front of the park has served its purpose; I've never seen it overflowing or any garbage on ground next to it.
- **Compliance with rules.** Park rules are posted on fence next to entrance. Based on my frequent presence at the park, and what Poop Patrol volunteers tell me, compliance is very good. Of course, there is the occasional outlier – I saw someone smoking one time, for example, and someone else left a paper cup on the ground. I can't say for certain whether all the dogs are licensed and vaccinated, but I know that the ACOs have monitored that.
- **Fights / bites.** While, of course, different dogs exhibit different behaviors, the dogs have been generally very well behaved. I've not witnessed any fights personally, but I heard of one skirmish where the dog had a superficial wound and went to the vet. Dog owners at the park have told me they've not seen any fights. On a couple of occasions, a dog was being aggressive towards another dog and the owner of the aggressive dog quickly removed him from the park.
- **Parking / Fencing.** There is ample parking and there hasn't been any problems with parking. The dog park is divided into two areas – one for small dogs, and the other for larger dogs. The fence was well built and is maintained. After concerns were raised that some small dogs were going

under the gate into the large dog area, the fencing contractor lowered the gate to prevent that from reoccurring.

Thank you,
David Coleman
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