

REVISIT DOVER PARK DOG PARK

Hello ..

My name is Emily Baptiste and I am here to speak on the importance of having a Dog Park at Dover Park.

I have lived on Dover Crescent for 19 years, before Dover Park was developed. I was thrilled to see that its design accommodated a variety of activities:

Soccer Field

This field, on the West side of the park, is clearly the perfect size for children but certainly has not deterred adults from using it as well for their games. The spectators always include the players' families with their children and dogs. I have spoken with many and they love coming to Dover Park because it offers everything they need to entertain their children and they were especially happy when they noticed that a dog park had been added so they could all play together.

2-Tennis Courts

Without a dog park some owners have had to resort to having their dogs play in the tennis courts. Even though the signage clearly states that 'No Dogs Are Allowed' they have no choice. Also, they have to be extremely careful since the surface of the courts is such that it can injure their dog's pads and can actually give them 'road burn' which is very painful.

Hockey / Roller Rink

This is not conducive to a safe play area for dogs either, as it has a similar surface to that of the tennis courts and it is free of any protective fencing. It is also used regularly for hockey and a perfect area to teach children how to ride their bicycles. This area is also very popular for those groups and individuals engaged in the practice of Thai Chi.

Basketball Court and Picnic Tables

The location of the basketball court and picnic tables is in very close proximity to that of the hockey and roller rink and with the popularity of both areas it tends to be somewhat interchangeable in usage and very popular. Families bringing their dogs to join them must resort to tying them up to the picnic table or nearby tree so they cannot interact at all with the family play time.

Designated Children's Play Area

This area encompasses the highest point of the park giving the families full view of all the activities of the entire parks, so regardless of what any member of the family chooses to participate in, everyone can share in their enjoyment.

Field on the East Side

In size, this field is equivalent to the soccer field on the West side of the park. Other than the cluster of trees to the North, it is open for whatever other activities one chooses to enjoy.

I have to say that this portion of the park is rarely used. Other than the Austrian Centre using the South portion of this field during their 'Annual Festival' in the summer for a day, I have not seen this field used other than with the occasional sunbather or a golfer practicing their putting. If residents and visitors decide to play botchy ball or volleyball or any group type activity their preference has been to set up in the soccer field on the West side leaving the East side field unused.

Though this field was the perfect location for the Dover Dog Park it was not shaped or positioned correctly. It should have been a rectangular shape that would run parallel to the sidewalk and tennis courts and would encompass some of the cluster of trees. This would certainly have helped to muffle any noise and it would have given a shaded area to be used as a rest area for the comfort of both the dogs and their owners.

In Summary

Having identified the versatility of our beautiful Dover Park it still excludes an area that addresses the needs of a very vital population in our community and that is an area for dogs and their owners.

It may be thought that this concern has, in fact, been addressed by relocating the dog park to McCallum ... this is definitely not the case. Many elderly dogs and owners are not able to walk that distance and there is nowhere to park and an owner may not even drive. Another consideration is the weather ... it could be too hot, too cold, too icy ... whatever the case, thereby making the distance even more difficult if not impossible.

No, the perfect location for a dog park for our community is at Dover Park and I have no doubt that concerns brought forward could certainly have been addressed to fulfill everyone's quality of life.

Over the past 20 years I have held the position of President and Vice President on the Strata Council and if there was a disturbance issue of any kind the Strata required detailed documentation before they would even consider following up on the concern. This detailed documentation had to include the Dates, Times and Duration of the disturbance for a period of no less than 2 weeks and in some cases a month. If the proper detailed documentation was not submitted, it was not necessary to be addressed.

We would be most interested in reviewing the documentation that Richmond Council received as I am sure that if we had been made aware of the details a common ground could have been easily reached.

A successful community is a blending of many, many things and children's laughter, families and friends cheering at their child's game, flying kites, picnics and the like. Whatever the family activity ... the key word is 'family' and a pet of any description is a part of the 'family' and deserves to be included whenever, wherever and whatever the family is enjoying.

Our dogs are our children and with the grandeur that Dover Park has to offer there is more than enough room to accommodate a place for 'our children' to play as well.

Thank you.