



Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting
From: Terri Towstiuc, Clerk
Date: 2023-12-21
Subject: Municipal Off-Leash Dog Park

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from Terri Towstiuc, Clerk; And

That Council direct staff to:

1. Initiate a resident survey specific to Off-Leash Dog Parks in Municipality, advertising of Social Media, Municipal Website, Electronic Sign and the Newspaper, for a two week period; And

That Council direct staff to bring back a report once the survey has been completed.

OR

2. Begin the process to install an off-leash dog park, as discussed, with the costs associated to be brought forth during budget deliberations.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with research and information to potentially move forward with off-leash dog park(s) within the Municipality.

Background:

Recent interactions with residents have prompted the need to investigate the potential for off-leash dog park(s) within the Municipality. The recent community survey found that the following comments were received:

Individual comments (there were 11 out of all of the respondents) about dog parks from the community survey include:

- *Dog park -PLEASE!! There are SO many dogs in West Lorne, and I would love to be able to take my dogs to run freely and safely.*
- *A dog park would be great*
- *Dog park*
- *dog park*
- *Maybe having a dog park for people who have animals with not lots of yard since people complain about pets in the soccer fields etc.*
- *Dog park*

- *What about a small dog pool area that can be drained and filled with fresh water. It only has to be a few inches deep to keep safe, but what a great way for people to bring their dogs in for a cool down in the summer.*
- *Would like a dog park*
- *Available off leash dog park*
- *A large dog park in the area would be a huge benefit for locals*
- *Just a huge dog park would be nice. There's nothing close by & pl have to drive 45 mins or more to find a decent one.*

In efforts to establish better communication with residents regarding specific topics, a survey can be initiated by staff on Google Forms or similar platform, to obtain further suggestions from residents. A similar approach was taken in the Town of Perth, resulting in a response of 740 resident responses between a Survey Monkey and Open House. This gave residents the opportunity to provide input and comment, for a 2-week period via social media, newspaper and a mail-out to all residents within 100 metres of the potential location(s).

In addition to the cost of fencing, a capital expense should be considered of approximately \$20,000.00, which would include the cost of hydro/lighting, water, a pathway from the parking area and signage. The estimated cost for maintenance would be \$5,000-\$7,000 annual, which would cover cutting/trimming grass, hydro for the lights, water consumption, garbage bags and labour.

Email correspondence was exchanged with Intact Public Entities, who advised they do not typically charge for these exposures as they consider them normal operations of a Municipality, and provided a Risk Management document for consideration, which is attached to this report.

Also attached to this report are sample conditions, rules and regulations that apply to off-leash dog parks in Strathroy Caradoc, and Midland, for reference.

Financial Implications:

Commercial Fencing \$36,073.46 (Used higher quote)

Capital Expense \$20,000.00

Annual Maintenance \$7,000.00

Total to Budget \$63,073.46

Policies/Legislation:

By-law 2023-80, Animal Control

Dog Owners Liability Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended.

Respectfully submitted by,

Terri Towstiuic
Clerk