

November 17, 2005

Connie Brown, Acting Director
Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks
3001 East Drive, Druid Hill Park
Baltimore, MD 21217

Dear Mr. Brown:

On behalf of the Board of the Friends of Patterson Park, we are writing to request that a 1.9-acre section of Patterson Park be reserved for consideration as a site for a fenced dog run. Your approval of this preliminary measure will support the ongoing work of a resident-led committee that we convened last year to research and recommend strategies to reduce off-leash dog walking in the park. Following a community survey and forum, the Dog Area Steering Committee drafted a work plan and engaged with the 12 community associations that represent the neighborhoods around the park to solicit feedback on that plan. The Board of the Friends of Patterson Park continues to support the efforts of the Dog Area Steering Committee and asks that you review the attached summary of their work and the map proposing a location of a future off-leash dog area.

Note that while we are supportive of this next phase of work, we are clear that approval of this request does not commit the City or the Friends to build, maintain or even endorse a future dog park. Much hard work remains to be done before formal authorization can be granted. In addition, please know that the Friends are in alignment with the practical and pragmatic requirements described in the Baltimore Dog Park Application Process Rules and Regulations. We too strongly believe a project such as this:

- Must have the support of the city and community;
- Must make the safety, health and welfare of the community its primary goals;
- Must include a comprehensive plan and resources that support the initial construction and ongoing maintenance; and,
- Must not diminish the value of the park to the greater community or the value of the properties that surround the park.

The recommendation of a fenced dog run was developed following extensive research and engagement with the communities around the park. The consensus among the committee and the communities is that a well-designed and maintained dog run will provide dog owners with an attractive and safe alternative to off-leash activities in other areas of the park.

The Department of Recreation and Parks' conditional approval of the proposed location, size and general layout will allow the Friends to develop a comprehensive proposal, invest in design studies, and project a budget for a dog park.

We would like to meet with you in the coming weeks to discuss ways to secure the conditional approval of the site and to discuss the next steps for our committee. Thank you for your consideration of our proposed site. We look forward to discussing the project with you.

Sincerely,

Debi Clark
Board Chair

John Sullivan
Dog Area Steering Committee Chair

Dog Area Steering Committee Progress Report – November 2005

Background

In 2004, the Friends of Patterson Park convened a group of residents from the communities surrounding the park to research and identify practical options to reduce rates of off-leash dog walking in Patterson Park.

Work to Date

- Conducted a community wide survey to solicit input on how to make the park more accessible to dog walkers and non-dog walkers. (April 2004)
- Held a community forum to facilitate dialog among residents and identify strategies to reduce the number of complaints about off-leash dog walking in the park. (May 2004)
- Researched what other communities and cities have done to address off-leash dog walking and identified a set of best practices. (Summer 2004)
- Met with City officials and community leaders to gain a better understanding of the history and current issues related to off-leash dog walking across Baltimore. (Fall 2004)
- Developed a preliminary recommendation for a fenced dog run in Patterson Park, informed by our outreach and research. (Winter & Spring 2005)

The current work of the steering committee is to test the feasibility of a fenced dog run in the park. Work and products to date:

- A draft work plan (using the Baltimore Dog Park Application Process Rules and Regulations as a template) organized by four strategy areas: Community engagement, design and development, long-term maintenance and fundraising.
- Engaged with the 12 community associations that represent the neighborhoods around the park to present and solicit feedback on the research findings, the preliminary proposal and the draft work plan.

Short-term Action Items

- Work with the Friends and City leaders to secure preliminary approval for the proposed location (November, 2005)
- Expand our committee membership to include individuals with expertise and experience to meet the demands of the work ahead (e.g. architects, engineers, community planners, fundraisers, etc.) (December 2005)
- Continue to engage the communities by providing updates on our more recent activities and findings. (December 2005)
- Prioritize from our work plan a set of fundraising activities for 2006 to support the planning work. (December 2005)
- Engage with experts (like the Neighborhood Design Center) to support the development of realistic and practical design studies. (January 2006)

Draft Proposal for Dog Run in Patterson Park

1. Introduction/Explanation of how this committee came into being
2. Background/ History of research into community support for a dog park
 - a. Community Survey
 - b. Dog Forum (do we have actual notes from the facilitators of this forum? I have seen misrepresentations of what went on and would like to see the “official word on it)
3. Proposal for location of park
 - a. Explanation of how the city requirements were taken into account
 - b. Explanation of how the park’s requirements were taken into account (e.g. the historic aspects of the west side)
 - c. Other locations under consideration (and maybe why they won’t work)
 - d. Map in appendix
4. Proposal for design of the park
 - a. Kinds of fences
 - b. Division into two parks (for large and small dogs)
 - c. How location allows us to meet the city requirements for design.
5. Proposal for Maintenance plan and Rules (in appendix)
6. Proposal for continued community involvement in planning and implementation
 - a. Results of community assoc meetings
 - b. Plans to encourage increased community involvement through activities and fundraising
 - c. Relationship with the Friends of Patterson Park
7. Appendices
 - a. Map of proposed location- photos?
 - b. List of proposed rules
 - c. Letters of support
 - i. Community associations
 - ii. Other community leadership
 - iii. Any donors?