

MINUTES OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING 5-24-2018

The meeting was called for 7 pm in the Town Hall. Present were Dedun Ingram, chair; Tom Collins, Kathy Flaxman, Lees Hartman, Eric Murtagh, and Stuart Sessions; Kirk Renaud, Town Council; and two Town residents invited to present residents' proposal for a dog exercise area, Katie Bird and Bren Lizzio.

The meeting was largely devoted to exploring the idea of creating a dog exercise area (dog zone) within the Town. Town residents who have proposed the dog zone have identified a portion of Zimmerman Park as the most suitable location. Gazebo Park in Section Three and an under-construction park on Brookville Road in Chevy Chase Village were offered as models.

Among the details discussed were:

- 1) Location: Zimmerman Park is large enough (and no other public spaces in the Town are large enough) and currently underutilized. But it is not centrally located and abuts a busy highway.
- 2) Size: Approximately 7,000 square feet is available in Zimmerman Park. 5,000 square feet is a practical minimum.
- 3) Fencing: Should be a minimum of four-feet (the fence height in Gazebo Park in Section 3). Given the proximity to East-West Highway, 5 feet might be preferable. For aesthetics and safety, the fence should not be solid. Gazebo Park uses a natural wood picket fence. For even more openness, we might consider a wrought-iron fence. Two gates into the area are recommended and again, given proximity to East-West Highway, a vestibule with a second gate is recommended to prevent escapes.
- 4) Other uses for the dog zone: During non-dog hours the fenced area could be an attractive recreation area. Section 3 has a gazebo in their area providing seating and shade.
- 5) Drainage: There is concern that runoff of dog urine and feces into Coquelin Run which flows through the park in a culvert could be an environmental issue. Ways to contain runoff, including berms and a rain garden, were suggested. Stuart will follow up.
- 6) Other uses for Zimmerman Park: The Town plans to create a walkway for B-CC students and other residents to use to reach East –West Highway. A sustainable Town garden is also being considered. These three uses should be coordinated and integrated.
- 7) Maintenance: Minimizing maintenance expenses is an important consideration. Section 3 re-sods Gazebo Park twice a year for an annual cost of about \$25,000; this seems excessive. Bark chips could be used instead of grass, but then the area would not be attractive for other uses. How compliant will dog owners be about clean-up of dog feces – will the Town have to do some of this? The residents proposing the dog zone have suggested that the Town could collect a small annual fee from users (about 60 people have already indicated a willingness to contribute). Logistics would have to be worked out.
- 8) Parking: Given that Zimmerman Park is on the far north edge of the Town, many residents might want to drive there. Currently street parking is limited because the street-work machinery is being kept there, but usually there is a lot of on-street parking

available. The availability of street parking may be convenient for residents, but may also make the dog area attractive to nonresidents.

- 9) Hours/restrictions: As done for other dog exercise areas, dogs would be permitted in the area for a few hours in the morning and a few hours in the late afternoon/early evening. No lighting is proposed. A set of rules would be developed. Similar facilities in the area can be looked at for models.
- 10) Liability/insurance issues: The Town Manager should consult with our insurance company. Chevy Chase Village has the same provider so we can see how they are handling their new dog exercise area.
- 11) Ongoing organization: Is there a group prepared to continue working on this?
- 12) Costs: The cost of fencing, an irrigation system, gazebo structure, and sod are not known at this point. Section 3 spends about \$25,000 per year re-sodding their dog exercise area.
- 13) Potential impact on neighbors: Dog exercise areas are not especially noisy. Not expected that a large number of people would be at the area at the same time. Parking on Maple should not impact neighbors. The closest neighbor seems enthusiastic.

LUC will look at how other local dog exercise areas are used. If the Town does build an area, it will need to be monitored initially to assess how well the rules are working and whether any need to be modified.

Minutes of the April meeting were approved.

Retaining wall height: At the April meeting, LUC recommended that side-yard retaining walls along a driveway be allowed along the side property line, but needed to check on an appropriate height limit. Town code limits front-yard retaining walls along a side property line to 30 inches in height. The consensus of the committee was to use the same height limit for side-yard retaining walls along the property line. Note that the 30-inch wall allowed in the front yard must be located at least 30 inches from any other wall or their heights are added together. This provision should apply here as well.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

The next meeting is June 28.