

[e] Dog Park Feedback

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To: Hatch, Jay <jhatch@madeirabeachfl.gov>

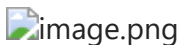
Hi Mr. Hatch,

I hope you are having a good day.

This is just a thought and some feedback on the dog park. The biggest thing I see deficient with the proposal is that there is no area carved out for smaller dogs. If you go to the Treasure Island, St Pete Beach, Walsingham or Walter Fuller dog parks, they all have an area specific for small dogs. Why is that? Safety. A larger dog that weighs 80 lbs running into a smaller dog weighing 15 pounds can cause permanent injuries to the smaller dog.

For that reason, I frequent those other dog parks more than the Madeira Beach park at this point. Owners can't control when larger dogs start interacting with smaller dogs in our park. I actually leave when certain larger dogs show up as they are too rough for my smaller dogs and have hurt one of my dogs before which is why I frequent the other parks more now. Do I have that problem when I go to the other parks? No, as they have a section for smaller dogs. It is very similar to when you have kids playing football or wrestling. They have weight classes to protect the smaller kids. You don't allow the 90 pound kids to play football or wrestle with the 50 pound kids due to safety. This is no different and the dogs are our "kids" to many of us.

Small dogs don't need a lot of space. If you fenced in about 15 feet in width off the end of the current dog park for small dogs, I surmise that would be plenty (but please check with the professional dog park architects to get their input). So roughly 15'x50'. Since the park is roughly 115'x50', the smaller dogs would get roughly 15'x50' and the larger dogs 100'x50'. So the larger dogs would have about 87% of the area if the park size stayed the same. I put a red line on the picture below where roughly the 15' mark is just in front of the palm tree. If you look at the picture, the light pole in the back corner is where the end of the fence roughly is. So from the palm tree to the light pole would be all larger dog area.

image.png

When I brought up the request/concern to have an area set aside for the smaller dogs at one of the presentations by the city, the response was that the large dog owners were asking for more space so they did not know how they could fit in a small dog area. I would ask you to visit the park for a few hours here and there. Watch how the dogs use the park. I don't think I have ever seen a large dog doing circles the full length of the dog park. Judge for yourself if taking 15 feet off of the current length would have a pronounced impact to the larger dogs. I think you will come to the conclusion it will not.

Whatever your position on this is, I would like to thank-you for your service to our community. I know that it is hard to please everyone and many times it is a thankless job. But I do appreciate your commitment to making our community a better place. If you would like to engage me on this subject any further, please feel free to reach out to me at the number below or reply to my email.

Have a great night!

Best regards,
Bob Bello
609-743-0650

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