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**TO:** Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator  
**FROM:** Paul Carpenter, Public Works Director  
**SUBJECT:** **St. Francis Dog Park**  
**DATE:** May 20, 2024

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**OVERVIEW:**

**Current Situation:**

Currently the hockey rink is, and has been, used as a makeshift dog park for at least a decade. The use is outgrowing the site and residents are requesting a space designed for the specific use.

- The rink provides limited space and does not allow separation of small and large dogs.
- Currently there is not access to water or shade tree cover
- With the redevelopment and maintenance needs of the rink, we will need to stop allowing dog park use within the rink when work occurs.
- Staff has not had issues related to debris, staff time, clean up, etc. Many of the concerns about a dog park have not been the reality. People have been respectful of the space.

**Park Plan:**

In July of 2022, Council adopted the Park Plan. The goals within the plan were created from direct community engagement. At that time the community identified the top five interests as the following:

1. Farmers Market – **Completed**
2. Splashpad
3. More paved trails
4. Indoor Community Center
5. Dog Park – **Proposed**

Additionally, a concept for Community Park was created that identified future upgrades of a splash pad and dog park. With the purchase of the three acres alongside the existing city trails and parking lot, the site takes little work or funding to move another community request forward. Our team was able to launch a successful Farmers Market in 2023. Of the top five, this was the least expensive option to begin with. In 2024 staff is looking to move forward with the Dog Park, the second least expensive option residents are requesting.

Currently the closest dog parks are in Ramsey, Andover, and Cambridge. As many of the inner cities have them, suburban and rural cities are quickly also adding them into the communities. There are now websites and apps that track the dog parks, their amenities and

allow people both local and traveling to find their locations. Dog parks have become an attraction for people of all ages and act as another resource that brings people into the community.

**Dog Park Location:**

The new dog park will be bordered by two county roads and park property giving a unique space from resident properties nearby. The intended location also leads to excellent visibility to activity in Community Park, similar to the successful Farmers Market on the opposite side.

**Dog Park Build:**

To build the dog park, staff needs roughly \$67,613.00 in park dedicated funds. The City has the funds to complete this project. We also have the ability to create a cost savings by completing the water line for a dog dish drinking fountain along with an existing water utility project already scheduled nearby. Completing the projects together would get the park in place by this fall. The main expense is the fencing, all other project needs are either already in place (parking, trails) or are small additions to existing projects (water). We would begin advertising the new park in the September newsletter.

**Dog Park Maintenance:**

Maintenance of these types of facilities is designed to be limited. Staff is currently mowing the area where the dog park will be placed so there are no extra mowing duties. The fencing that will be installed will have weed guard added so there will be no weed whipping maintenance. It is expected that the park would take less than two hours per week in the summer months and no additional time in the winter.

**ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED:**

Council to approve staff to begin construction of the St. Francis Dog Park as discussed at the work session May 13, 2024.

**BUDGET IMPLICATION:**

The dog park expense is broken down as follows:

- Stormwater Funds - \$5,080.77
- Anoka County Ship Grant - \$3,209.73
- Dedicated park funds - \$67,613.00

Attachments:

- Dog Park Background Information and price sheet