

Oral (c)  
1-22-02

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

future: 2/12/02 RM

DATE: JANUARY 31, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

FROM: SANDRA WHITMORE, DIRECTOR *SW/estm*  
RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT REGARDING CHETWORTH DOG PARK AND THE  
PLANS FOR A TEMPORARY DOG PARK AT RAIL PARK



This memorandum is in response to Mayor Donley's request from the January 22, 2002, City Council meeting that staff provide a status report regarding Chetworth dog park and the plans for a fenced dog park at Rail Park in Potomac Yard.

Staff prepared a status report in December regarding an analysis of alternative sites for a fenced dog park near Chetworth Park, which concluded that we would proceed with Crescent Resources to develop one acre of the three acre Rail Park as a fenced dog park site as rapidly as possible (Attachment 1).

Since the December 4 report to City Council, staff from the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities have held a series of meetings related to the development of a fenced dog park at Rail Park.

- The first meeting was held on December 6, 2001 at Charles Houston Recreation Center to brief the residents of the Chetworth Park area on alternate sites and the staff recommendation to develop a fenced dog park at Rail Park in Potomac Yard. Twenty-six people attended this meeting, including Councilman Euille and Councilman Speck. Attendees were divided between accepting this plan or leaving the fenced dog park at Chetworth.
- On December 8, 2001, twenty-five people toured the Rail Park site with staff and gave input. Comments ranged from possible parking problems, safety concerns, and the lack of a playground in the Old Town Greens area<sup>1</sup> to enthusiasm for a such a large dog park.

---

<sup>1</sup>Staff held a follow up meeting with residents of Old Town Greens and members of Northeast Citizens' Association to address this concern on January 14, 2002. Representatives from both Crescent Resources and Eakin Youngentob, the contract purchaser of the Potomac Greens site, were in attendance. Residents voiced their concern that the City was moving ahead on a dog park before addressing the issue of a children's tot-lot in the Old Town Greens and Potomac Greens area. After a discussion of the development process for Potomac Yard, which includes the fenced dog park as a component of the concept plan, and the Old Town Greens development, which did not include a tot-lot in the initial design, both Eakin Youngentob and Crescent Resources, as good neighbors, agreed to explore with the residents possible solutions to their lack of a playground.

- A third meeting was held on December 13, 2001, at Lee Center for citizens that were interested in contributing ideas for the initial one-acre dog park at Rail Park, as well as for the three-acre permanent dog park. Twenty-seven people were in attendance, including Councilwoman Pepper. Ideas ranged from drinking water for both dogs and people, double-gated entrances, shade and benches, safe crossing across Slater's Lane, lighting for night use, bulletin boards, pick-up bag stations and hard surfaces beyond the entrance gates and around the drinking fountains.

In accordance with the time line presented in the December status report, the Planning Commission will consider Crescent Resources' application for a special use permit (SUP) to make initial improvements for a public fenced dog park on the one-acre southern portion of Rail Park at its February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. This SUP will be docketed for public hearing and consideration at Council's February 23 public hearing meeting. Amenities in the initial plan incorporate several of the suggestions from the citizen input process during December, include fencing around the perimeter of the dog park, fenced leashing pens at the dog park entry, park seating and benches, ground surface material for the park such as blue stone dust, screening of the fence area that faces the Old Town Greens tennis courts, an asphalt trail that connects the dog park entry and the street, covered trash receptacles, pick-up bag stations and a bulletin board for posting park regulations.

City staff will also work with neighbors to make a safe route from the Chetworth neighborhood to this site. At this time, the dog park at Rail Park will not be lighted. It should be noted that the City does not currently light any of our existing fenced dog parks.

If the Planning Commission and City Council approve the SUP for the initial fenced dog park at Rail Park, Crescent Resources intends to begin work as soon as possible with a target date of late May 2002 to complete the project. It is the recommendation of staff that, at the time the initial one-acre dog park at Rail Park is completed, the designation of Chetworth Park as a fenced dog exercise area be eliminated and that the City allow only dogs on-leash at Chetworth Park. We will be docketing this recommendation for Council's consideration at the February 12 legislative meeting.

Attachment 1: December 4, 2001 Memorandum - Status Report Regarding Alternative Sites for a Fenced Dog Park Near Chetworth Park

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT REGARDING ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR A FENCED DOG PARK NEAR CHETWORTH PARK

**BACKGROUND:** At the October 13, 2001 public hearing, City Council received comments from a number of citizens regarding the fenced dog park and the children's playground uses at Chetworth Park. Following Council discussion on these issues, Council unanimously voted that staff proceed with the playground changes<sup>1</sup> in Chetworth Park, and look for alternative sites for the fenced dog park by the end of year.

**DISCUSSION:** Staff reviewed five sites as possible locations for a fenced dog park near Chetworth Park, including the site identified by Councilwoman Pepper that is immediately west of and adjacent to Domino's Pizza on Slater's Lane. In reviewing these sites, staff took into consideration location, property ownership, and the potential cost to the City of developing the site for a fenced dog park. Of these five sites, the three acre site at Potomac Yard, called Rail Park, is currently designated to be a fenced dog park as part of the approved Potomac Yard plan.

Crescent Resources has agreed to accelerate the development of this fenced dog park by starting immediately to develop one acre of this three acre site for use by May 2002, with the remaining two acres to be developed later in 2002. I have directed staff to work with Crescent Resources to facilitate the development of this dog park as soon as possible. Crescent Resources will make application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a temporary fenced dog park in December, have it heard by the Planning Commission and City Council in February, and begin construction in March with completion planned by May, 2002. After receiving additional community input from potential users of the entire dog park site Crescent Resources will complete the remaining two acres in late fall of 2002. Crescent Resources will pay for the development of the site, with no cost to the City. A meeting for all City residents to provide input into the design of the dog park is scheduled with the architects from Crescent Resources on Thursday, December 13, 2001, at 7 p.m. at the Lee Center. Residents from the Chetworth Park area will be invited to this meeting, but they will also be briefed prior to December 13 at a separate meeting on December 6 as discussed below.

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities had been working with Northeast Civic Association for several months regarding improvements to Chetworth Park. At the October 3 meeting of the civic association, the association approved the playground improvement plans recommended by the Department of Recreation, which include removing and replacing the playground equipment, and modifying the fence and gate so children can enter the playground area directly without going through the dog exercise area.

The following is a summary of the other four sites reviewed by staff, including why these sites are not recommended as sites for a fenced dog park.

- 1) The parcel identified by Councilwoman Pepper that is immediately west of and adjacent to Domino's Pizza on Slater's Lane: this property is owned by Crescent Resources and would only serve as a temporary park until Crescent develops the property. The City would bear the expense of developing the site. I do not believe it is fiscally prudent to expend monies for the temporary development of this site as a fenced dog park, and I do not recommend that the City acquire this site from Crescent for permanent use as a fenced dog park.
- 2) The City-owned property at Slater's Lane and Powhatan Street: this property is seen as a gateway for people entering Old Town Greens and, in the future, Potomac Yard. A fenced dog park would not be seen as an aesthetically pleasing gateway to these communities. The City would bear the expense to develop the site. This site is not recommended for development as a fenced dog park.
- 3) The property at Slater's Lane and Portner Road, adjacent to the City-owned parcel: this property is privately owned. If it were made available for a temporary dog park, the City would bear the expense of developing the site. I do not believe it is prudent to expend monies for the temporary development of this site as a fenced dog park, and I do not recommend that the City acquire this site.
- 4) The property at the corner of Bashford Lane and Powhatan Street: this property is owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation, and the site is too small for consideration as a fenced dog park.

Staff from the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will hold a meeting on December 6, 2001, at 6:00 p.m. to brief residents of the Chetworth Park area on these efforts to identify an alternative site, the plan to proceed with the development of Rail Park as the alternative site, and the time line for the playground improvements at Chetworth Park. This meeting will be held at Charles Houston Recreation Center.

While the one-acre portion of Rail Park is under development, Chetworth Park will remain both an off-leash dog area and a park for children and passive users. Once the one-acre fenced dog park at Rail Park is completed in the Spring 2002, I will docket the reevaluation of the fenced dog park at Chetworth Park for City Council's consideration, as required under the approved Master Plan for Dog Exercise Areas and Fenced Dog Parks.

cc: Sandra Whitmore, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities  
Lori Godwin, Assistant City Manager