

From: Sarah Larson <sarahklarson99@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 8, 2022 8:23 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: November 9, 2022 BCP meeting--OPPOSE Dog friendly designation at Zook Park

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Commissioners,

I am writing to express my comments on agenda item 7440.

Along with my husband, I **strongly oppose** the "dog friendly" designation at Zook Park.

Our 16 year old daughter is autistic and we use Zook Park frequently. We have lived in the neighborhood for over 20 years, and our daughter is likely to frequent the park for years to come. Due to her disability, however, she will effectively be excluded entirely from using this park, should dogs be allowed in it.

Because of her disability, she is not able to tolerate being in a park with dogs, due to her sensory differences and severe fear and anxiety about dogs. Because of her disability, she is also unable to go to any other park by herself, but we live within 2 blocks of Zook Park, so she is able to swing on the playground equipment (her primary form of entertainment) and be comfortable there. There are no other parks with playground equipment nearby.

Further, contrary to what the city might believe, not everyone loves dogs. Other small children (and adults) who come to Zook may not like dogs being present near the playground equipment. I've already seen residents with dogs disregarding the "dog free" designation. I worry that dog owners will also disregard the "no dogs within 20 feet of playground equipment"--Zook is a small park and the 20-foot rule would be very difficult to enforce.

Most importantly, we find it very disheartening that the needs of residents with disabilities are not being considered as part of the "dog friendly" discussion in our city, or at the very least, the desires of dog owners are being elevated over the needs of disabled children within our community. Dog owners can easily choose to use a different dog friendly park, including one within walking distance of Zook Park in our neighborhood (Triangle Park). But our daughter will not get to choose. Her decision will be made for her, and she will not be able to go to Zook Park anymore.

For these reasons, we oppose the dog friendly designation at Zook Park, and we urge the Commission to vote to leave the park as a "no dogs" park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Larson
1013 Chieftain Lookout

From: Mara Eisch <eisch.mara@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, November 9, 2022 1:20 AM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; Figueroa Cole, Yannette <district10@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Anne NIENDORF <anne.niendorf@gmail.com>; Rebecca Malke-Eliganti <malkerm@yahoo.com>; pat <psb6071@gmail.com>

Subject: ITEM 15 Dog Park Designation Update

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As a resident of Summit Woods Neighborhood, with a family dog, and user of Zook Park, I would like to request that Zook Park remain at its Dog Free status. Summit Woods is a small neighborhood with 2 parks/green spaces, Zook Park and Triangle Park. Zook Park alone provides playground equipment for children. It is the only neighborhood space for children and families to gather. The space is small and would be a challenge in some areas to keep leashed dogs 20 feet from play equipment. There is one picnic table that most often is within 20 feet of play equipment so parents can watch their children. Where will dog owners sit with their dogs? There is a baseball diamond with no seating and space for a pick up soccer game also with no seating. At this time it is a dog poop free space for children and families.

Triangle Park is open space with benches and a table for seating for residents to visit with dogs. My first choice is that both parks remain dog free. There are dog parks for dogs well organized for their benefit. There is plenty of walking space to accommodate dogs on a leash.

I also live on Pontiac Trail and have plenty of dog poop in and out of bags left on my terrace. I don't want that in the park too. I know a few wreck it for many. But the increase in density of population with the current new apartments and future plans for more, there will be more dogs. I wish more people picked up behind their dogs but they don't so more dog poop will be left behind.

Finally, I would ask that in the future the neighborhood association be notified with at least 3 months notice to properly survey the neighborhood for input for these kind of changes. The neighborhood leadership scrambled to send out a quick survey that in hindsight was very flawed. There was not enough notice to construct, deliver and compile a survey to obtain a fair representation of what the neighborhood residents collectively want. We would have found out with a fair representation if there was support or opposition, and what the concerns were. As it stands there was no time to discuss this change at a neighborhood meeting and perhaps find a resolution that would serve us all.

In fact it would have been respectful to ask who ever made this request to talk with the Neighborhood Association. Isn't the purpose of a neighborhood association to work together for the benefit of the neighborhood. We need your support in timely communication to do that. We can accomplish more cooperatively than we can with a divide and conquer approach.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dr. Mara Eisch
918 Pontiac Trail
