

**West Stockbridge Dog Park Advisory Committee                      December 9, 2023, 9:30 a.m.**  
**Special meeting to discuss Stanton Foundation grant application**

**Present:** Michael Bolognino, Heather Hicks, Roni Kramer, Paige Orloff (via Zoom), Lorri Santhay, Jana Sax

**Absent:** Renee McCormick, Sharon Vidal

**Guest:** Molly Vreeland

Jana Sax called the meeting to order at 9:38.

Michael Bolognino reported on his meeting with the Select Board on 12/4/23. He explained the time limitations for the Stanton Foundation grant, i.e. the application is due 12/15 and funding ends after this year. The town approved a contribution to the dog park construction costs to be funded by the Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds (already collected) in principle but noted that formal approval is needed at the town meeting in May.

Following that 12/4 meeting, Marie Ryan prepared the communication from the town needed for the grant application, but Mr. Bolognino will also ask the Select Board for a letter of assurance. The group discussed the optimal request for funds from the CPA funds. Roni Kramer noted and the group agreed that we need to work with others to launch a Friends of West Stockbridge Dog Park organization which can obtain 501c(3) status and raise additional funds for the creation and support of the park. Ms. Sax and Ms. Kramer agreed to research this.

Paige Orloff shared that the open space plan for the town endorsed Card Pond as a location for a dog park. Lorri Santhay shared that the old dump is above grade and largely hilly, while the land between the cemeteries and Card Pond are largely flat. Ms. Santhay noted that potable water is a requirement and Mr. Bolognino noted that water can be brought in and not necessarily piped in.

The group continued to discuss the application process for CPA funds, which is due 12/30. Funds needed include \$15-25K for design. Ms. Sax noted that having funds allocated by the CPA will be an advantage, and the group agreed to apply for \$50K from the CPA. The group discussed other design requirements such as providing shade.

Guest Molly Vreeland introduced herself as a neighbor of Card Pond curious to hear more about our plans, attending the meeting as an interested citizen.

As a matter of new business, Ms. Santhay reported on a proposed budget. Ms. Sax noted that the budget is based on those for parks developed in Pittsfield, Acton, and Saugus. Mr. Bolognino asked if the budget is based on a particular site, and Ms. Santhay replied that it is based on Card Pond but could be adapted for any other flat site (i.e., one that did not need significant excavation work). Ms. Santhay shared a preliminary sketch for a park which is understood to be for the sake of the application. Mr. Bolognino noted that his husband (who is a landscape architect) will refine the sketch for the Stanton Grant application. Molly Vreeland asked about the design and site plan and the committee noted that it is only for the purpose of the grant application and will be redone for practical purposes. Mr. Bolognino also explained that

the current grant application is for a \$25K design grant, after which the group has a year to complete the design and then can receive construction funds.

Ms. Santhay explained some assumptions behind the budget, such as the size of the area to be fenced and a flat site. She and the group then reviewed each category of budgeted expense (Construction, site preparation, utilities, infrastructure (including fencing, curbing, paving, signage), accessibility (the park must be ADA-compliant to meet the Stanton Foundation requirements), landscaping, amenities including benches, and waste receptacles. Ms. Santhay noted that some parks (East Greenbush, NY) have the capacity to compost waste. The group agreed that this would be worth exploring at a later date.

Renee McCormick had tried to join the meeting via Zoom but was unsuccessful; she asked Heather Hicks to notify the committed that Ms. McCormick would like to work with the Friends (501c(3)) group. She also asked if she should invite Joe Roy of Parks and Rec Committee to our next meeting and the group agreed that she should reach out to him.

Ms. Santhay shared some additional resources she had identified, including shade shelters.

Mr. Bolognino asked which elements of the budget should appear on the map, and the group agreed that they would use the Pittsfield map as a model.

Ms. Vreeland asked about the Stanton Foundation recommendation for surface (rice stone) and if it was a requirement and Ms. Santhay noted that it is just a recommendation. The group discussed other possible surfaces. Ms. Santhay showed examples of sufficiently detailed plans for the Stanton Foundation application requirements.

Mr. Bolognino commended the efforts of Ms. Sax and Ms. Santhay on the budget.

Ms. Sax asked if all committee members have visited the possible sites. Ms. Santhay reviewed maps of all possible sites, including many which are locked in by land or water and thus lack access. Land at Town Hall may be a possibility. Ms. Sax asked how we decide which site to select. Mr. Bolognino noted that the site will need to be approved by the town. Ms. Sax asked if the location must be finalized in order to apply for the Stanton Foundation grant. Ms. Kramer and Mr. Bolognino noted that we are not locked into the site we apply with. Mr. Bolognino noted that we may have to ask the town for a special meeting to approve a site. The group discussed that the design process will be most efficient with an approved site. Ms. Sax asked if we should consult with the town about site selection, and Ms. Santhay noted that Mr. Roy may be helpful with this.

Ms. Hicks left the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

Ms. Sax noted that Mr. Roy should be the next person to ask to a meeting. Mr. Bolognino also noted that representatives of the Pittsfield Dog Park group (one volunteer, one town official) have offered to meet with us.

Ms. Sax asked for any thoughts following the previous meeting's discussion with the Brewster, MA dog park volunteer leadership. Ms. Kramer noted that we might involve veterinarians and dog trainers. Mr. Bolognino noted that he will make a Facebook page for our efforts.

Ms. Santhay noted that Sharon Vidal was unable to join due to illness and that she has done successful fundraising for the Berkshire Humane Society.

Ms. Vreeland was asked for her comments, and noted that Card Pond is a very public site with lots of traffic from out of towners using it including travelers from the Mass Pike, and that it's a busy road that will encourage use by residents of other areas, not just West Stockbridge. Mr. Bolognino shared that out of town use may encourage economic advantages for the town, and Ms. Kramer noted that the Brewster, MA park has much out of town use with little ill advantage. Ms. Vreeland noted that the committee should consider safety concerns including vaccination and traffic, but that she is not against the park nor its siting at Card Pond, should that site be selected. She has not discussed with her neighbors. She does worry about preservation of wildlife. She does like the Town Hall site as it is already more developed.

The group discussed doing a better evaluation of the Town Hall site and Ms. Kramer suggested that Mr. Roy be consulted on this topic.

The group invited Ms. Vreeland to join the committee perhaps to focus on environmental issues and she will consider this.

Mr. Bolognino is going to take charge of getting grant materials completed by Friday for submission to the Stanton Foundation by Marie Ryan on behalf of the Town. He reviewed the Stanton Foundation checklist for materials to be submitted with the committee, and all are completed except the site map and letter from the Town. Mr. Bolognino also noted that he will amend the CPA grant application.

Ms. Vreeland departed the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Ms. Santhay asked if we want to do a group tour of the different sites. The group agreed on 12/22 at 2 p.m. The group will meet at the Town Hall and will ask Mr. Roy of the Parks and Recreation Committee to join the site visits. The group asked the Ms. McCormick make this request of Mr. Roy.

Ms. Orloff lost the audio of the meeting at 11:08 a.m. She was readmitted at 11:10 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be January 6, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paige Orloff, Secretary



**West Stockbridge Dog Park Advisory Committee**  
**Regular meeting**

**December 2, 2023, 10 a.m.**

**Present:** Michael Bolognino, Heather Hicks, Roni Kramer, Renee McCormick (via Zoom), Paige Orloff (via Zoom), Lorri Santhay, Jana Sax

**Absent:** Sharon Vidal

**Guests:** Tom Lincoln, Carmen Scherzo, both of Friends of Brewster Dog Park (via Zoom)

Michael Bolognino called the meeting to order at 10:05. He noted that guests from the Brewster Dog Park would join at 10:15. He noted that the town has money from the town preservation committee and there is an application that is due at the end of the month, that we need someone to research and complete. Heather Hicks noted that Rep SP suggested we apply for the Stanton Foundation grant but there is no additional funding from the state that he shared. Ronni Kramer, Lorri Santhay, and Heather Hicks will research these funding sources.

Mr. Bolognino reported that he spoke to Renee Dodds who did the grant work for Pittsfield dog park, and she is willing to share her knowledge. For the Stanton grant, Ms. Kramer, Ms. Santhay and Ms. Hicks will work with Marie Ryan to gain necessary info.

Mr. Bolognino reviewed available properties from the town. Assessor was very helpful and shared a number of possible properties. The ones that seem the most applicable are outside of Card Pond and the former town dump. Ms. Sax asked about Iron Mine Rd location. Mr. Bolognino shared a pdf of possible sites with the committee.

Renee McCormick will take over communications with Parks and Rec Committee (Cait). We will review other town resources with whom we hope to meet at a later time.

At 10:16, Tom Lincoln from Brewster MA dog park committee joined our meeting. Mr. Lincoln introduced himself and shared that in Brewster, the whole process took approximately 12 or 13 years. It was very contentious in the town due to feeling that dogs represented a special interest and thus the town shouldn't be involved. He elaborated on the reasons that support was finally gained, primarily issues with dog waste in other public areas i.e., beach.

Ms. Sax asked how they selected their location. Mr. Lincoln replied that they looked at several sites. Several sites were selected and then rejected by newly-elected selectboard members. They looked at town owned property, checked locations, size, zoning and ended up with only a couple of options. Some town or zoning issues with sites arose, for example conservation areas can't be fenced, which eliminated some sites. The location they selected was central, municipally zoned, and at the time it was the best choice. Their large park is about 1.5 acres, small is .75 acres. The two parks share a fence line (thus abut).

At 10:23 Mr. Scherzo joined. Mr. Bolognino recapped and noted the areas our committee has already covered.

Mr. Bolognino asked Mr. Lincoln if there were zoning issues that they came up against and Mr. Lincoln reiterated the issue with fencing conservation properties. The real thing they found with several properties was opposition from neighbors. This was true at the location they chose, which is in a residential area and thus sound was a concern. He noted that public impressions (negative) of dog parks are lots of fighting, barking, and noise. In reality Mr. Lincoln shared that those are inaccurate, although there are occasional issues.

Ms. Hicks asked if the Brewster park is open to visitors. Mr. Lincoln reported that it is, although there was discussion of making it a membership based park due to high tourism. They elected to be tourist friendly, and they also learned that a member dog park vs an open dog park resulted in a much larger insurance premium, because a member based dog park should be able to be responsible for status of all dogs admitted, while an open dog park cannot bear that responsibility. Mr. Scherzo added that the park is located on 40 acres of town property, next to the police station which many residents especially seniors and women, appreciate for safety. Mr. Bolognino noted that we do not have info about possible sites in West Stockbridge next to town hall.

Mr. Bolognino noted that we are eager to learn about their funding process. Mr. Lincoln reported they did get the Stanton Foundation grant, and the foundation worked well with them. Some of the process is difficult because of the single point of contact (town employee) but the reasons for that structure are sound. Ms. Kramer noted that the Stanton grant is going away after 2023. Mr. Lincoln noted that with the Stanton grant, the initially funding is for one year of design and that clock starts as soon as funds are received, so it's important to not accept funds until ready to work. Mr. Lincoln noted that they also received funds from the Community Preservation Commission. Mr. Scherzo noted they spent approximately \$25K on design (Berkshire Design Group), \$185K from community preservation funds, and the Friends of Park (501c3) spent \$50K (benches, kiosks, misting fire hydrants, etc). Mr. Scherzo reported that they formed Friends of Brewster Dog Park in 2019 and the park opened in 2022.

Ms. Sax asked how they promoted involvement. Mr. Scherzo reported that the town committee worked on this. They currently have a volunteer steward program; volunteers come and walk the park to check and clean it. Those volunteers "make the park" according to Mr. Scherzo and Mr. Lincoln, keeping it clean and friendly.

Ms. Kramer reiterated that no design grants from the Stanton Foundation will be offered after this year and the group agreed to see if there is any way to complete that application.

Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Scherzo noted that In Brewster, the Friends of Brewster Dog Park have a memorandum of understanding with the town that allows the Friends to maintain the park. In addition to stewards, they have a program for soliciting funding from the general public. They provide waste removal services, mutt mits (poop bags—quantity 80K per year at a cost of about .06 each). Agway and other businesses donated services. Agway provided plantings and they continue to fund a lot of programs. Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Scherzo noted the advantages of

corporate sponsors. For example, in Brewster, a local waste removal company initially donated waste removal.

Ms. McCormick asked about Brewster pop (winter pop 7000). Mr. Scherzo noted that 34 stewards volunteer for the park, and not all are from the town of Brewster. Mr. Bolognino noted that we might gain support from Richmond residents, too.

Mr. Lincoln noted that when they established Friends of Brewster Dog Park, town committee members liaised with the non profit. They had a liaison with the town Board of Health and a dog trainer, and to establish the non profit it was important to have separation from town committee. Mr. Lincoln was not involved with Friends until the Brewster dog park committee was decommissioned. Ms. Kramer noted that Marie Ryan had said we cannot do that from Advisory committee but we can have a separate group form.

Ms. Sax asked how they managed donations. They explained that they established a Facebook page, took checks, cash, sold tees and hats (no sales tax on clothing), offered sponsorship opportunities for "biscuit benches"; essentially every item that went into the park had a sponsor. Ms. McCormick asked how much they charged for benches, and they reported that at first, the donation was \$1000, but is now \$2500, because the actual cost is 800-900 for the bench plus the same amount for a concrete slab underneath.

Ms. Sax asked how they found their designer. Mr. Lincoln said they used a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, which comes with specific requirements due to government involvement. They had three proposals and were very happy with final company chosen. Mr. Bolognino asked about annual operating expenses. Mr. Scherzo said approximately \$20K of fixed expenses between insurance, mutt mits, waste removal, portajohn, miscellaneous expense like blowers to clean paths; these are all raised through donations. The town does do some of the maintenance. Adding shade gazebos in each park will be an additional expense this year (\$5-10K). Drainage issues, leaf clearing, other maintenance costs arise annually. The MOU with the town of Brewster lays out what the Friends of Brewster Dog Park are responsible for and what town is responsible for. For example, the town will install benches and plow parking lot (but not the park). It's a symbiotic, good relationship public/private that really makes the park work. They are currently working with town regarding incidents in the park and legal enforcement. When there are issues they step back and allow the town to take over. There are airhorns in the parks (provided by Friends) for breaking up dog fights. Mr. Scherzo said the only vaccines they can require is rabies per state law. Rules are posted on their website (and these are set by selectboard and reviewed by dog park group). Mr. Bolognino asked who initiated rule making for park. Mr. Lincoln said liaison from selectboard to the dog park committee spent a lot of time working with the committee on rules.

Mr. Bolognino asked if there was anything they wish they had done differently. Mr. Scherzo said it has to be a collaborative effort between dedicated individuals and a willing town. Mr. Bolognino asked about guidance for dealing with neighbor concerns. Mr. Scherzo said invite them in, hear them out, listen to them, see if something can be worked out. He noted that they

changed the location of the park due to neighbor concerns. Mr. Lincoln noted that it is important just to expect reactions from neighbors.

Mr. Bolognino asked about final approval for the park. Mr. Lincoln noted that it was a town meeting vote to allow the dog park to happen. Mr. Lincoln noted again the issue of a dog park being perceived as a special interest and how many special interests are actually accommodated by the town, and that they successfully argued that a dog park should be no different.

Ms. Sax asked if the dog park had created a financial burden on residents. Mr. Lincoln said that while there was a minimal increase in town expenses, the Brewster Department of Public Works is able to absorb most of the costs. Mr. Scherzo noted that this year they got the town to include \$10K in town budget for capital needs for the dog park; Mr. Lincoln noted that the Brewster annual budget is now approximately \$44 million.

Ms. Sax asked if the Brewster dog park advisory committee disbanded when the park was opened. Mr. Lincoln noted that it disbanded after the building of the dog park was approved by the town. Ms. Sax asked who continues to be involved: currently, these are Mr. Lincoln: the Brewster department of public works, and the Brewster town manager, and they report annually to the select board. They shared that they are the busiest park in town. Friends of Brewster Dog Park maintains the park. Mr. Lincoln noted that templates for basic MOUs for town/501c3 partnership are on the Stanton Foundation website. Ms. McCormick asked about shade shelter funding; this will be from nonprofit per Ms. Scherzo; they will get estimate and then source donations. They shared that they have people with very relevant experience on 501c3 leadership (vet, retired vet, co owner of Agway, marketing person, dog trainer, non profit experience, past chair of town dev committee). They now offer quarterly education sessions at the park with dog trainer (with board member who does it gratis).

Ms. Sax asked what was the best marketing tool they used. Mr. Scherzo said Facebook initially but they have now engaged a marketing firm. Developing a robust email list was critical. Support from a local business can assist with this. Mr. Lincoln reported that there were mailings to all licensed dog owners in town. Mr. Scherzo noted that mailings are very expensive (\$1500-2000) and they only did one prior to the town meeting vote.

Mr. Bolognino asked for final questions and comments. Mr. Lincoln noted that Mary Lynn Glasser has written a book about dog parks operation and design; she is a professor who has designed many dog parks. She is an accessible resource; [mlglasser@aol.com](mailto:mlglasser@aol.com). She came and did a training for free with the Brewster dog park committee. She was very helpful and provided insights that might not have been obvious, for example, no picnic tables in a dog park. Mr. Scherzo wanted to invite the committee to come visit the park in Brewster. Mr. Lincoln offered his contact information as well (email add [viking1929@hotmail.com](mailto:viking1929@hotmail.com) ph 508-737-0751). Group agreed to ask WS library to order Glasser book.

Mr. Scherzo. left the meeting at 11:05.

Mr. Bolognino asked that the group review Stanton Foundation requirements due to end of year deadline. Mr. Lincoln noted that final designers were not involved when they made their application. They had only a preliminary sketch. The Brewster selectboard committed to 10% of construction costs, which ended up being a total of \$500K (thus a \$50K commitment from the town). The town is going to have to pay something whether through CPA or general fund. But the commitment is that they want the town to have skin in the game. Selectboard can commit to that percentage in order to get the design done. If they had failed in town meeting, the money would never have been spent. Mr. Bolognino noted that town commitment will be challenging. Mr. Lincoln noted that the town commitment sourcing is up to the town. Ms. Kramer noted that the commitment is necessary but the funds won't be spent unless and until the construction grant is obtained.

Mr. Bolognino noted that we will need to determine if we can go to the select board before end of the year. Group discussed 501c3 and committee overlap which needs to be minimal (2-3 people). Ms. McCormick asked about ideal nonprofit leadership and Mr. Lincoln noted that (ideally pro bono) legal work will be needed, as well as experienced fundraisers and marketing professionals. Mr. Bolognino and Ms. Sax agreed that they will figure out timing with selectboard. Ms. Kramer said the grant application requires a letter of assurance. Mr. Lincoln affirmed that the selected point of contact in the town (in our case, Marie Ryan) will send the application, which needs to include possible site, rough sketch of possible park, commitment to 10% funding of hard costs, etc. Mr. Lincoln noted that the budget can be hypothetical at this stage because many costs are still unknown. Mr. Bolognino asked if their application materials are available for review. Mr. Lincoln suggested calling the Brewster town office to see if it is available. Ms. Sax noted that we can do both Community Preservation Act and Stanton Foundation applications.

Mr. Lincoln left the meeting at 11:25.

The group discussed best approach to the selectboard regarding Stanton Foundation. Ms. Kramer reviewed the list of requirements. Ms. Sax suggested we go to Selectboard to explain the grant requirements and timing. Ms. Santhay found Acton, MA Stanton Foundation application data and will share with group.

Group discussed next meeting day/time and agreed to meet next Saturday 12/8 at 9:30 a.m at Town Hall. Ms. Sax asked that minutes be completed asap for submission to Marie Ryan.

Ms. McCormick asked if the committee has additional questions for Parks and Rec beyond details on site selection. Ms. Kramer noted that fencing at Card Pond may be an issue. Ms. Sax asked again about 0 Iron Mine Rd property (3.2 acres) and Mr. Bolognino will follow up on that. Mr. Bolognino asked if we can change location of the park if necessary after receiving grant funds, and Ms. Kramer affirmed that we can. Mr. Bolognino and Ms. Sax agreed that they will go to select board meeting on Monday 12/4 at 6 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paige Orloff

**West Stockbridge Dog Park Committee  
Regular meeting**

**November 11, 2023, 10 a.m.**

**Present:** Jana Sax, Roni Kramer, Heather Hicks, Renee McCormick (via video)

**Absent:** Michael Bolognino, Paige Orloff, Lorri Santhay, Sharon Vidal

Jana called the meeting to order and shared the meeting's agenda, then called for a motion to approve minutes from the prior meeting. Renee McCormick offered the motion, Jana seconded the motion and the minutes were approved. The group discussed making minutes available to both the committee and the general public. Michael Bolognino will send minutes to Marie Ryan for posting.

The group present understands the Mr. Bolognino has attempted to learn from the assessor of available properties but has yet to connect.

Ms. Sax has been in contact with people responsible for the Brewster (MA) dog park and they are willing to Zoom with our committee, date TBD but possible in December (12/2 or 12/16). Ms. Sax recommended that all look at the Brewster dog park website and prepare questions for that meeting.

Roni Kramer has been looking into the Stanton Foundation grant but has not heard back. She also learned that we are not able to create an LLC because we are just a committee so no bank account for us at this time; we will have to revisit this down the road.

Heather Hicks was in communication with Rep. Smitty Pignatelli about Senate docket number 923/Senate number 1956 filed 2/9/2021 by Patrick M O'Connor, an act establishing the commonwealth municipal dog park trust fund, asking if these funds were available to us. Rep. Pignatelli said the act was not refiled so not available at this time, but did say if we needed more help to reach out. Ms. Hicks will be emailing him again to see if he has any ideas and also ask him about the Stanton Grant that Ms. Kramer was looking into.

Ms. Sax reported that Lorri Santhay was in communication with Cait from Parks and Rec to determine if there have been past attempts to create a dog park and if so, why they did not come to fruition. Ms. McCormick will also reach out to relevant town officials to speak with us at a meeting. A town resident who was in the meeting room overheard the conversation and offered her support for the committee's efforts.

Ms. Sax called for a motion to adjourn, which Ms. Kramer offered, Ms. Sax seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Hicks and Paige Orloff

## **West Stockbridge Dog Park Committee - Regular Meeting    October 21, 2023**

**Present:** Michael Bolognino, Heather Hicks, Roni Kramer, Renee McCormick, Paige Orloff, Lorri Santhay, Jana Sax

**Absent:** Sharon Vidal

Jana Sax called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Michael Bolognino offered a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Roni Kramer seconded the motion and all present voted to approve.

Mr. Bolognino and Ms. Sax reported on their appearance at the Select Board meeting. Board members were supportive of the efforts of this committee and approved the West Stockbridge Dog Park Committee as an ad hoc town committee. Marie Ryan agreed to be the town employee contact for the committee, for example for the purposes of applying for grants.

Renee McCormick asked if we are connected with the town's Parks & Recreation committee, and Ms. Sax and Mr. Bolognino noted that we are a subcommittee of the Select Board, not of the Parks & Recreation committee. Ms. Kramer asked if not being part of Parks & Recreation will impact maintenance needs for the park, and Ms. Sax explained that town involvement with a future dog park will fall under Parks & Recreation although the operations of this committee do not.

Mr. Bolognino noted and Ms. Sax and others agreed that the committee should speak with Curt Wilson about working with the town for maintenance for a future dog park. Ms. McCormick asked if there are others we should involve in discussions early on. The group agreed to invite Mr. Wilson and make a list of others who should be invited to meet with this committee. Ms. Sax and Mr. Bolognino suggested we develop questions for Mr. Wilson and the Parks & Recreation committee as opposed to inviting them to a meeting with just an open discussion.

The group discussed possible locations for the future dog park, including Card Pond which was mentioned by Andy Potter at the Select Board meeting. The group discussed potential site visits but agreed other needs must be met prior to site visits, including reviewing town zoning maps, finding out which zones would allow a dog park, and identifying town-owned properties. On this last point, Mr. Bolognino mentioned that we can ask Cait Graham from Parks & Recreation for properties they have identified as possible sites. He will keep a running list of locations in a Google doc. Other issues identified as significant are parking, total acreage, and water access.

Renee McCormick reported on research into other dog parks. She and Ms. Vidal investigated four locations (2 in MA, 2 in Westchester County, NY): Pilgrim Bark Park in Provincetown; Captain Jack Peterson Memorial Park in New Bedford, MA; the Port Chester, NY dog park; and Paws Place in New Rochelle, NY.

All of these parks had in common:

- They are formally named (i.e., in honor of)
- Signage
- Website
- List of rules
- Large/small dog areas

Other varying attributes or requirements:

- One had a time out area
- Varied in requiring dog license, Immunization records, neutered or spayed
- No dogs under 4 months
- Not sick or suffering parasites
- Children under 16 supervised, no toys or strollers
- No food, no smoking, no beverage, no dog treats
- Associated with Parks and Rec in their towns
- Dog park websites communicate town dog requirements eg licensing
- one had budget of \$15K/year
- all had fundraising, some with ability to donate online
- some are 501c3
- commemorative bricks are popular fundraising
  - The group discussed other similar fundraising tactics like plaques on benches, and noted that there no similar memorial/honorary markers in raising

The group discussed limiting the number of dogs per membership and maintaining a separate fee and regulation structure for dog walkers.

Ms. Sax noted that the Brewster, MA park has a misting fire hydrant dedicated as a memorial (another fundraising opportunity).

Ms. Santhay suggested that the town's dog license fee could include a small surcharge to support the park.

Paige Orloff suggested that agility or other training opportunities could be offered at the park both as a source of revenue and marketing. Other sources of support mentioned included local clubs with kids who want to volunteer and Lions club or other similar organizations.

Ms. Kramer and Ms. Santhay presented their research on funding sources. They described the work of the Stanton Foundation which has funded 40 dog parks in MA. They noted that the deadline for the foundation's next design grant is Dec 2023, and that their funding may be ending. Ms. Kramer is going to follow up with them to find out, and Mr. Bolognino asked that she coordinate with Marie Ryan in order to have an email come from the town rather than a private citizen. Other funding sources identified include the Doris Day Foundation and Benefull. Heather Hicks noted that she has and will continue to communicate with State Rep. Pigniatelli about possible state funding.

Ms. Kramer will look into the 501 c3 non-profit process and connect with other local organizations that have done it successfully.

Ms. Sax noted that Andy Potter mentioned the Community Preservation Act at the Select Board meeting. Ms. Santhay noted that lots of towns have used CPA funds to support dog parks.

Ms. Santhay noted that some of the Stanton Foundation-funded dog parks have offered their expertise to others. Mr. Bolognino suggested we identify someone from that category to invite to a meeting as a resource. Ms. Sax noted that her contact at the Brewster Dog Park was extremely helpful. Mr. Bolognino added that the owner of local business Love Us and Leave Us was instrumental in the development of the Pittsfield dog park and is very knowledgeable.

Ms. McCormick had to leave the meeting at 10:53 a.m.

The group agreed to next meet on November 11, 2023 at 10 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paige Orloff

WSDPC 10/21/2023 meeting

## Agenda

1. Approval of minutes from 10/7/2023 meeting
2. Report on meeting with the Town Board
3. Reports from WSDPC subcommittees a)information re:other dog parks, information already gathered from previous exploration into dog park. b)possible funding resources.
4. Determine dates and location for possible site visits.
5. Other

**Oct 7, 2023**

### **West Stockbridge Dog Park Committee**

#### **Regular meeting**

**Present:** Jana Sax, Roni Kramer, Lorri Santhay, Sharon Vidal, Renee McCormick

**Absent:** Michael Bolognino, Heather Hicks

**Guest:** Beatrice

Jana Sax called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. She asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Renee McCormick offered the motion, Roni Kramer seconded, and all voted to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

Ms. Sax read aloud the proposed mission statement and supporting information for the West Stockbridge Dog Park Committee, as follows:

#### ***Mission Statement***

*In partnership with the West Stockbridge Select Board and related Town Departments, Boards and Committees, the West Stockbridge Dog Park Committee shall:*

- *Estimate costs for the park's design, construction, and maintenance.*
- *Identify funding sources and secure funding for the dog park's design, construction, and ongoing maintenance.*
- *Determine options and a final location for the park.*
- *Oversee the design, construction and maintenance of the park.*
- *Research, establish, post, and maintain rules and regulations to promote safe park use.*
- *Create a plan for the long-term oversight and maintenance of the park, without creating a new tax burden on the town.*
- *Advise public officials, boards, committees and residents about the benefits of dog parks.*

***What's a dog park, and why are we proposing one for West Stockbridge?***

*A dog park is a fenced-in area with multiple gated points of entry that allows dogs to roam and play off-leash in a safe manner. An area designated for dogs to run off-leash avoids conflicts with other users of public lands such as at playgrounds or public parks. In addition to the benefit to our dogs, a dog park also gives the townspeople an opportunity to come together and socialize with each other, offers new residents an opportunity to meet and mingle with long time residents, gives surrounding towns that do not have dog parks (Richmond, Lenox, and Stockbridge) a place to run their dogs, and provides an additional reason for commuters on the Mass Pike to stop into town and visit the park and in turn, our local businesses.*

## **Members**

*Heather Hicks*

*Jana Sax, Co-Chair*

*Lorri Santhay, Treasurer*

*Michael Bolognino, Co-Chair*

*Paige Orloff, Clerk*

*Renee McCormick*

*Roni Kramer*

*Sharon Vidal*

The group discussed issues of ensuring dogs using the park are licensed and properly vaccinated. Lorri Santhay shared the Egremont dog park's online registration requirement. Beatrice suggested posting a QR code to allow people to register with the park on the spot. Sharon Vidal noted that insurance will be important to consider.

The group approved the mission statement with the addition of "including insurance" to the first bullet point:

- *Estimate costs for the park's design, construction, and maintenance, including insurance.*

Jana reminded the group that the current plan is to get this committee approved by the town at the soonest possible Select Board meeting.

As separate subcommittees, Ms. Kramer and Ms. Santhay will research grants and Ms. Vidal and Ms. McCormick will research regulations and other logistical concerns. Ms. Santhay mentioned the Lakeville, CT park as a good resource, and Ms. Sax noted Brewster, MA also has a well-designed park to view as inspiration.

The group discussed possible locations identified thus far, including the current dump, old dump, the lot between cemeteries (owned by Charter Communications), behind town hall, and Card Lake. The group agreed to source additional info on locations from the town Parks and Rec committee. Ms. Santhay agreed to research past work by Parks and Rec Cttee on dog park. Ms. Sax affirmed that the work of this committee will fall under the town's Public Works. The group discussed possible resources within the town including Kurt Wilton, Wayne Cooper, and the town Parks and Rec committee.

Ms. McCormick reiterated interest in a dog registration event to publicize the dog park. Jana noted that we need to consider how to garner support for the park.

Ms. Sax asked if we might consider partnering with Richmond and having a joint effort/joint park. After discussion, the group agreed to wait until our committee is officially endorsed by the town.

The group discussed fundraising needs, and possible mechanisms including a "Friends of" group, forming 501c3, and using GoFundMe or other crowdfunding platform.

The group discussed communication and agreed to use the group email address ([ws\\_dogpark@googlegroups.com](mailto:ws_dogpark@googlegroups.com)) for notifications and keep information on the group's shared Google Doc.

Ms. Sax will look into getting onto the Select Board agenda as soon as possible, and see if the group can use a town meeting room in the future. If not, Ms. Kramer offered her home as a meeting location.

Ms. McCormick will see if Heather Hicks wants to join either of the research subcommittees.

The group agreed to meet next on October 21, 10 a.m., location TBD (Six Depot, Town Hall, or Ms. Kramer's home).

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paige Orloff