

**CITY OF HERMANTOWN
PARK BOARD**

Agenda

September 21, 2021

Convene at Art Olson Park

(located ¼ mile north of the corner of Lindahl and W Arrowhead Roads – see map)

4:30 PM

1. **ROLL CALL**
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - 2A. August 17, 2021 regular meeting minutes.
3. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**
4. **CONTINUING BUSINESS**
 - 4A. Update on sod at Rose Road Field #3
 - 4B. Update on tuckpointing of building at Stebner Park
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
6. **COMMUNICATIONS**
 - 6A. Denette Lynch – Dog Parks 101
7. **BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

Michael Miller –
Gene Shaw –
Jim Sonneson –
Kelly Tasky –
Dwight Morrison –
Jenna Warmuth –
Jesse Stokke –
Natalie Peterson –
8. **ADJOURN**

**CITY OF HERMANTOWN
PARK BOARD
August 17, 2021 Meeting Summary
Convened at Keene Creek Park
4:30 PM**

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mike Miller; Gene Shaw; Jim Sonneson; Dwight Morrison; Kelly Tasky; Jesse Stokke; Jenna Warmuth; and Natalie Peterson.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Eric Johnson, Community Development Director. Tony Marino, Lisa Smith, Bart Porter, Denette and Bill Lynch, Barb Harris, Laura Kleffman, Jeff Sapp.

2. MINUTES

Motion made by Gene Shaw to approve the June 21, 2021 regular meeting minutes. Seconded by Dwight Morrison. Motion carried.

3. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Bart Porter – snowmobile trails, beginner ski trails/ski grooming; Barbara Harris Hermantown Youth Soccer – status of vent in concession building, security cameras in park, removal of trash in garbage cans, removal of kickboard and overall desire for communication; Dennette and Bill Lynch – opportunities for a dog park in Hermantown; Tony Marino – use of future trail north of Morris Thomas Road to serve as emergency access to future development.

4. CONTINUING BUSINESS

4A. Provide update as to timelines for Rose Road batting cage and flagpole installation.

Paul Senst stated that the flagpole should be installed the week of August 16-20 and the batting cage the week of September 20-24 at the latest.

4B. Provide update on contractor proposals for Rose Road reseeding.

Eric Johnson provided proposal from Kerrick Sod - \$13,700 to seed, \$39,000 to sod \$500 to water per occurrence. Discussed pros and cons of seeding vs. sodding with Park Board stating preference for sodding. Eric to work on obtaining additional bids for work. Park Board voted 5-0 to pursue sodding of field 3 outfield with Jim Sonneson motioning to approve and Kelly Tasky seconding.

Laura Kleffman stated that softball can address cinch bug issues in the future at the field and asked about future spraying. Eric to discuss this with contractor and let softball know.

4C. Update on discussions with baseball pertaining to use of Keene Creek Park.

Eric provided update on discussions with Mike Fox of Hermantown Youth Baseball Paul Senst. Baseball prefers to move coach's pitch to Keene Creek for games but work needs to be completed on the field. Mike to send a letter to the Park Board

requesting use of the field and upgrading the facility. Baseball could work on the infield with the City addressing the backstop, fencing and dugouts. Price for work ranges from \$25,000 for upgrades to practice status to \$45,000 for game ready field.

Natalie Peterson stated this is something to look into however, the priority is the completion of Rose Road since the City has already made a significant investment in that park.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5A. Review of Keene Creek trail and discussion about future park improvements.

Briefly discussed future park improvements at Keene Creek Park – playground, frisbee golf, dog park, benches and tables, etc. Natalie Peterson asked Park Board members to think about the park and their visions for it in the future.

Question about need for lights in the park to aid security.

5B. Information on Boulder Trail segment grand opening – August 24, 2021 5-7 p.m.

Natalie Peterson provided an update on the upcoming grand opening.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Mike Miller – Tuck Pointing of concession building at Stebner Park

Gene Shaw – None.

Jim Sonneson – None.

Kelly Tasky – Rename Keene Creek Park to avoid confusion with Duluth's park.

Dwight Morrison – None

Jenna Warmuth – None

Jesse Stokke – None

Natalie Peterson – None

8. ADJOURN

Motion made by Kelly Tasky to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jim Sonneson. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Officiated by:

Transcribed by:

Mike Miller, Chair

Mary Melde, Administrative Assistant

Location Map



DOG PARKS 101

All of the things written are my and my husband, Bill's, personal opinions based on visiting many dog parks around the country as well as doing improvements at Keene Creek Dog Park, building Observation Dog Park and Jean Duluth Dog Park and being involved with maintenance and many aspects of keeping them clean and running well.

AMENITIES—There are no standard sizes or amenities in dog parks. That is one of the great things about them. They can be large or small, trees or no trees, flat or hilly, water and creeks or dry, and any shape. They can have grass, wood chips, dirt, gravel, pea rock, clay, sand, or special dog park artificial turf for a surface. Fences can be from 4-6 foot high, the grade and strength varies, can be wrought iron, chain link or woven field fencing. Some have separate small, old, low energy areas and some do not. There is no minimum size and no maximum size. Anything goes. Some dog parks have a fresh water supply, some do not and users bring their own. Lights are very helpful since dog parks are used year round and lighting makes it safer for dogs and humans in winter when it gets dark early and it makes it easier to supervise the dogs in case they are pooping and to monitor their behaviors and actions.

LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS—The size and space of the dog park can vary greatly, as mentioned in a separate category. There are outside factors to consider. Based on past experience regarding getting locations approved, it is best if the dog park is accessed by a road that is already well traveled. If it is sited on a quieter residential road, neighbors may not support additional traffic on "their" road. Proximity to residences is also a factor. A separation from homes will likely foster more support since home owners have expressed concerns having a dog park nearby. The reasons for their concern are based on fears, not facts. Concerns such as unattended dogs, extreme barking, smell, etc. have been expressed but those concerns haven't been evidenced in our existing dog parks. Lighting and access to water are a huge plus. There needs to be parking available because many people drive to dog parks since there are so few of them.

FENCE—City of Duluth requires that chain link fence be 9 gauge, corner and gate posts cemented in. That is the basic extent of fence rules that I have been made aware of. We have seen dog park fences from 4-6 foot high, the grade and strength varies, can be wrought iron, chain link (coated or left galvanized) or woven field fencing. Spacing of gates and openings is important. There needs to be a close enough fit that small dogs can't sneak out between the gate and post. The gates, hinges and latches need to be very sturdy because they can get opened more than a hundred times a day. In the winter there can be extra force put on them if they are pushed against the snow; they need to be able to stand up to a lot of use and abuse. Thousands of openings every week cause a lot of wear on hinges and latches, so proper selection is important. We are still working and modifying the hinges at Jean Duluth to bear up with the heavy use.

SAFETY—A preferred design is to have a double gated entry. This allows a person with their dog to enter the small entry area, shut the gate behind them, un leash the dog, then open the second gate to enter the dog park. This way there is always one closed gate to prevent any dogs from sneaking in or out as people come and go.

ENTRY SURFACE-Concrete in the entry and where the gates swing allows for easier snow removal. This area also gets super heavy use and concrete holds up best to the high traffic. Generally in or near the entry area is where there are signs for rules, sizes of dogs, ordinances about picking up poop, etc. There should also be bags for picking up poop in or near the entry.

SEATING CONSIDERATIONS-Location of benches should be carefully considered and strategized. The key to minimize conflict is to spread out the dogs. The key to spreading out the dogs is to spread out the people. It is also important to watch for bench placement and placement of other amenities to not have them clustered near the entry. Keeping benches and amenities away from the entry helps get people and dogs away from the entry area, which makes it easier for people and dogs to enter and leave, by minimizing congestion near the entry. It is important to place things so that people are in a vantage point to be able to watch their dogs, not to be in conversational clusters. We don't place any benches right near the entry, to minimize congestion near the entry. We also place the benches close to the fence. That way dogs can't be behind the benches, out of sight of the humans, where they can't be as easily monitored for pooping and other behaviors. Picnic tables are not our preferred seating for several reasons. One reason is that a picnic table encourages people to bring in food. Food can draw dogs over and create situations where there are too many together and wanting to get the food which can cause conflict. It also encourages people to sit facing each other. When they are facing each other, someone's back is facing the park and they are not in a position to be watching the dogs.

BENCH INFO-The benches we have are Kirby Built Providence Steel Frame benches, SKU is KBN-12 in the surface mount option. We chose them because they are recycled plastic to stand up to dogs toenails jumping on the benches. They also have a solid seat so toe nails can't get caught in little holes or cracks between boards. They are also more comfortable to sit on than steel in colder weather. Dog parks are used year round so comfort year round is a factor. We have chosen benches with a back since they are more comfortable and people often spend an hour or more at the dog park. Benches should be attached to the ground or fence so they stay in the proper location and not moved around. The benches at Keene and Jean Duluth have concrete bases to which the benches are bolted. The concrete minimizes maintenance since mowers can go around the concrete and no weed trimming is needed. The wood benches at Observation are chained to the fence; however these need to be replaced with more durable Kirby Built benches since they are starting to break down.

CLEAN UP- There should be bags and trash cans spread around the park for ease of the users. Just like with trash cans in other parks, if they are placed conveniently, people are more likely to use them and pick up after their dogs. If it is inconvenient to get bags or throw the trash, it can cause some people to ignore when their dog is pooping. There are commercial bag dispensers available. We have them at Keene and Observation. Jean Duluth does not have a commercial bag dispenser; all bags used are brought in by dog owners. In an effort to decrease cost, we keep a supply of plastic bags that people donate for their reuse. Repurposed bags include bread bags, grocery bags, newspaper sleeves, produce bags, etc. We have designed and made covered crates to hold the plastic bags. The cover helps keep rain and snow off and keeps the bags from blowing around. The cover is stenciled with CLEAN BAGS NO TRASH. The milk crate container has openings in the side for drainage and it also allows a person to see if there are bags from a distance. At times we have overflow of bags and some bags may be hanging

from the fence. At other times we are running low and post on Facebook that bags are needed. If we are low I will get bags from a recycling container at Super One, Walmart or Target and put them in the crates. It is best if the trash cans and bags can be spread around the park so it is convenient for the park users. Regular pick up is needed based on the park usage, once a week minimum to prevent smells. It isn't like most parks where the trash is fast food containers and beverage containers. The trash in the dog parks is heavy from the poop. If they get too full it could be a big job for whoever has to empty them.

TURF- This is a very tricky aspect. Due to the very high use, especially in the large area surrounding the entry, no grass will survive. It just can't handle the heavy traffic so plan on needing an alternate surface in high use areas. Dirt gets muddy, so that is not ideal. A small rock surface is better, preferably without lots of sharp edges from the crushing process. But too rounded isn't great either because then it rolls around and moves out of place. The organic mix that has been used in the dog parks is an ideal surface in that it isn't sharp, stays in place and doesn't have dirt so dogs don't get muddy. Some parks will use wood chips as a surface. We had that for a while at Keene but in heavy rains the wood chips would flow downhill and pile up against the fence and the water would pool behind it. They had to be removed. There is also some concern about the pee saturated chips. But we have seen dog parks that are entirely covered in wood chips so it has potential in the right locations. Artificial turf made for dog parks is manufactured but it is more expensive and I don't know how it holds up.

COMMUNICATION- We have a website, www.duluthdogparks.com. It was started because of years of frustration regarding the continual difficulty in people finding the Keene Creek Dog Park. We had asked for signage from Grand Ave. since it opened in 2006. In spite of several promises to have this well used and difficult to locate park signed, it still does not have wayfinding signs. The city website also had poor directions. I decided to start a website to do what I could to improve the ability of people to locate it. This site is linked to on the City of Duluth and Visit Duluth websites. It was designed by collaboration between Jamie Parent, co-owner of A Place for Fido, and me. We have a variety of information including locations, maps, rules, etiquette, dog related resources and a blog. Information is added and changed as indicated. After a request by Cheryl Skafte we added City of Duluth Parks logo and wording to indicate the partnership with the city. We also have several active Facebook groups including Duluth Dog Parks with over 2,700 members, Jean Duluth Dog Park with 563 members and Duluth observation dog park with 357 members. This is our prime way of communicating with each other and has been working very effectively. We also occasionally post temporary signs of interest to the users as needed near the entry.

MAINTENANCE- The design of the dog parks has always included efforts to minimize maintenance needs. Keene does need mowing, but many areas are now rock or is beaten down by the dog use so less than half needs to be mowed. Unfortunately the fence has and continues to be damaged by city mowing, snow removal and other equipment. The chain link has been damaged, posts bent and broken, etc. Volunteers do what we can to keep the fence intact so dogs don't escape through the damaged areas. Observation was designed with no grass. Volunteers regularly trim weeds that grow through the rock surface as well as the nearby black top area outside of the dog park, since the city does not maintain it. Volunteers also cut and treated the many trees and weeds that grow in the fence line. The fall 2016

efforts has permanently stopped the majority of the tree growth. Jean Duluth was planned to not be mowed and kept in a 'wild' condition. Due to the extremely heavy use most of the grass is now trampled flat or cut off at ground level, no mowing needed for sure. Snow does need to be removed from the parking lots as the parks are used year round. Volunteers do lots of repairs including repairs to gates, mounting signs, building and mounting bag crates, picking up orphan poops, providing bags for poop pick up, and other tasks.

TREES-Consideration should be made to avoid trees that would drop things that dogs might try to eat or that could make them sick. For example, avoid fruit trees. If there are pine or spruce trees, consider trimming the lower limbs so people can see under the trees to monitor their dogs.

VENDORS-The "rules" signs have been made locally by Glenwood Signs. They are 20" by 28" and were \$67.50 in 2016. The custom signs, such as size for use of the small dog area, were also purchased at Glenwood signs. Most are 12 by 18 and were \$37.50 in 2016. "Pick up your poop" signs have been purchased at a variety of places. In 2016 they were purchased from Compliance Signs since they had the best pricing and selection. They were \$20 each. The covered bag crates were made by my husband and myself at low cost using donated crates, hinges that were free on rebate at Menards, primer and paint free from the WLSSD Re-Use Center. Exterior plywood was cut to maximize the number of lids that could be made from one 8' by 4' sheet. The benches we have are Kirby Built Providence Steel Frame benches, SKU is KBN-12 in the surface mount option. In 2016 they were \$352 including shipping. Trash cans are heavy steel barrels provided by the city.