

# Chugiak – Eagle River Dog Park Study

## Public Meeting

April 19, 2021

6:30-7:30pm by Microsoft Teams virtual meeting

### Presenters/Staff:

- Maeve Nevins-Lavtar, Senior Park Planner, e-mail: [maeve.nevinslavtar@anchorageak.gov](mailto:maeve.nevinslavtar@anchorageak.gov); 907-343-4135
- Nicolette Dent, Park Planner; e-mail: [nicolette.dent@anchorageak.gov](mailto:nicolette.dent@anchorageak.gov); 907-917-6663
- Karen Richards, Chugiak-Eagle River Parks Manager; [karen.richards@anchorageak.gov](mailto:karen.richards@anchorageak.gov); 907-343-1501

### Minutes:

#### 6:30pm Welcome/Team Intro/Overview of Meeting

Senior Park Planner Maeve Nevins-Lavtar kicked off the meeting with a land acknowledgement, ground rules for participation using the Chat and Raise Hand functions, and introductions of the planning team. She explained that the goal of this meeting is to introduce the project to the public and receive comments and feedback and record questions that the participants have about the study. Maeve also explained that with recent staff restructuring, planners based out of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department are now working with Chugiak-Eagle River on park plans and projects. **13 attendees** from the public participated in this public meeting.

#### 6:40-7pm: Dog Park Study: History, Process and Overview and Questions (Comments will be at the end)

Maeve provided an overview of the Dog Park Study performed for the Chugiak-Eagle River Parks and Recreation Department and shared the draft report which is available to the public on the **project website**: <https://www.muni.org/Departments/ERparks/Pages/DogParks.aspx>. Maeve explained that the study originated a few years ago. R&M Consultants was tasked with a site selection study and conducted a survey in 2017 of 329 residents in Chugiak-Eagle River about if and how residents would use a dog park. The study was never completed and is thus being picked up now by Maeve with the assistance of Park Planner Nicolette Dent.

Maeve explained the criteria that was used to select five site alternatives (potential sites for a dog park). Five sites were considered in Chugiak-Eagle River: Fire House Lane Park; the northwest ¼ of Section 25; a parcel in the central-east portion of Beach Lake Park near the railroad tracks; an undeveloped portion of Peters Creek Park; and one of the fenced baseball fields in Loretta French Park. After using a scoring system to rate each site based on criteria, only

two sites are recommended for consideration for the dog park: Peters Creek Park and Fire House Lane Park.

While Fire House Lane Park met many of the criteria for a dog park, there are no sidewalks yet developed along Fire House Lane. Because this park is in the Eagle River Core downtown area, it would be very important to have sidewalks constructed first to allow people to walk to this park and eliminate the need for more parking.

Before moving on to a review of the preferred concept, the discussion was opened for questions. Questions from the public included how demand for the dog park was measured, and Maeve explained that the survey conducted by R&M Consultants was one source of evidence of demand for a dog park in the Chugiak-Eagle River area.

#### 7-7:10pm: Preferred Concept – Peter's Creek South

Maeve reviewed the proposed site concept for how a dog park would be developed in a segment of Peters Creek Park. She explained that the proposed design prioritizes keeping the park natural and forested with options for scenic walking loops for people and their dogs. A parking lot and maintenance gate would be developed to allow for easy trash pick-up and accommodate users. A paved pathway also leads up to the site from the disc golf parking area. The dog park would be fenced, and one advantage of this site is that there are existing forested buffer zones that create ample space between neighboring residents and the dog park area. The topography of this area also creates buffers from residences and the park.

#### 7:10-7:25: Virtual Feedback Collection Exercise

Park Planner Nicolette Dent used a virtual whiteboard to collect questions and comments from the chat. One participant shared that they liked the design, and that they would like to see a trail extended to provide a safe walking lane at the intersection of Hunters Drive and Lace Road.

Other questions from the conversation included:

- How will this affect traffic flow with the nearby elementary school?
- Was a traffic study conducted?
- How do dog parks affect watersheds and will dog waste affect the Peters Creek Watershed?
- Will the dog park affect the well system that nearby residents use?
- How will trash dumping be prevented?
- Does this relate to the changes to the dog leash ordinance?
- Are there any studies on the economic impacts of dog parks?
- Will the dog park affect wildlife?
- Why was a lack of sidewalks an issue at Fire House Lane Park but not Peters Creek Park?
- Will drug use and vandalism be a concern (based on recent concerns at the disc golf parking area)?

Some concerns were also expressed about having this park separated from the family-friendly activities available at Loretta French Park, and that it would cause pedestrians to cross the Old Glenn Highway more often.

7:25-7:30pm: Close Out: Project Timeline and Next Steps

Maeve thanked participants and encouraged the public to follow up during the [Chugiak Community Council May 20<sup>th</sup>](#). At this meeting, more information will be provided about the study and follow-up information will be provided to answer the questions listed above.