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**To:** Shawn Everitt, Director of Recreation

**Date:** 27 April 2012

**Re:** Town of the Blue Mountains Dog Park

The current By-law 2006-32, Being a By-law to control and regulate dogs within the Town of the Blue Mountains was passed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2006.

## **Background**

The possibility of a dog park was first discussed at a series of visioning meetings for the future of the Tomahawk property in the Spring of 2007. Initial proposals called for expansion of the golf course potential, six new soccer pitches and a fenced dog park. This location would centralize a number of public activities, provide adequate parking and facilitate maintenance of the grounds. As these plans moved forward the dog park was dropped from the Tomahawk site.

In 2007 the Recreation Committee approved the use, on a trial basis, of the large ball diamond as a leash free area. This project would allow staff to determine the use as well as the maintenance requirements of a permanent facility. Appropriate gates would be required to ensure that dogs would be contained in the area.

Norm Paterson and I, along with a number of other dog owners, met with yourself and members of the Beaver Valley Athletic Association during 2008 and 2009.

In January 2008 a proposal was put forward to consider using the large ball diamond to the west of the Community Centre and possibly another Town owned property on Peel Street near the water plant. On June 9, 2008 you made a presentation to Council recommending the use of the large ball diamond as an immediate site for a dog park and further investigation into developing the Peel Street site for future use as a dedicated dog park. Further work was done with dog owners to research signage, operating rules and responsibilities of Town staff and dog owners.

On August 28, 2008 you presented another staff report to Council recommending two "Off lease Parks", one on Peel Street and a second on Hamlet Road in Swiss Meadows. This report also contained a Policy Statement, Rules for an Off Lease Park and financial estimates of \$61,500 for the Peel Street site for the 2009 capital budget. Following this meeting Norm and I contacted Ardiel Animal Hospital and Blue Mountain Veterinary Services asking if they or their suppliers would be interested in contributing funds for the dog park. Ardis Ardiel expressed some interest in contributing toward the cost of fencing.

A further report to Council on September 30, 2008 revised the cost of the Peel Street site downward to \$26,500. Funding for the project remained a problem.

Further meetings continued through 2009. My files end at this point, but eventually a "handshake" agreement was made between the dog owners, the Beaver Valley Athletic Association and the Town to use the large ball diamond on a trial basis. The dog owners would be responsible for dealing with their dogs and keeping the park clean. The Town would provide garbage containers and bags for pick up.

## **Current Usage**

I live in Rankins Landing, across the road from the large ball diamond and have acted as a contact person explaining the rules to dog owners who use the site. There is a group there most mornings from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and we have as many as 12 dogs on a good day. The dogs all get along fine and have welcomed new dogs when they come. This group of owners have worked hard to keep the site clean. Not only do they consistently pick up after their own dogs but they also pick up any other droppings found.

The site is also used during the day by others but I am not present at that time.

We have noticed other dogs using the two smaller diamonds but have little contact with these owners. Some have told us that their dogs are not friendly and consequently they prefer not to bring them into the larger diamond.

Our group has very much enjoyed the opportunity to use the large ball diamond over the past few years. Many owners are able to walk to the site due to its central location. We are certainly interested in meeting with you and the Beaver Valley Athletic Association to find a way to continue the "handshake" agreement which I feel has worked well.

On behalf of our group, I would like to thank you for your support over the years. I am compiling a list of the regular users who would be interested in continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

John Corrigan