



<- logo will go here

A Community Dog Park for Monkton -- Newsletter

Welcome to the first issue of our *Monkton Community Dog Park* Newsletter!

You are receiving this newsletter because you have asked to be added to our email list, or have shown interest in receiving news about our progress. To unsubscribe, please write to us at dogpark@monktonvt.com

In this first issue of our newsletter, we will review our history and plans for our proposed Monkton Community Dog Park, answer some frequently asked questions, and kick off our fund-raising phase.

Our History and the Dog Park Location

In 2018, a group of Monkton residents interested in creating an off-leash area for dogs in our town came together to brainstorm and explore ideas. The workgroup organized into a committee structure and includes the following officers:

Cathie Buscaglia, Chairperson

Ian Schulze, Secretary

Deb Gaynor, Treasurer

Other regularly participating members include: Callie Brynn, Corine Farewell, Linda Reynolds, Nora Woolf, and Lizzie Woolf.

For a number of years members of the Monkton community have enjoyed the use of the walking path in Morse Park. Many of us bring our dogs here to keep us company and share in the exercise. While most follow the town leash laws and keep their canine companions properly under control, there are times when the desire to let dogs run and play together lends itself to breaking the leash law. We believe that the creation of a designated off-leash area will reduce the incidence of dogs running free in the Morse Park area, which infringes on the enjoyment of runners, walkers, and others, and creates a dog waste problem around the Park.

A dog park will create opportunities for Monkton residents to socialize with each other while their dogs can get important off-leash interaction and exercise. With over 500 canine residents in Monkton, and many, many more in our surrounding towns, we expect this area to become a popular spot.

We have identified a roughly 1 acre parcel within Morse Park as an ideal location. We plan to build the Off-Leash Area just south and southeast of the Recreation Field parking lot on Pond Road. This area can be fenced and is easily accessible by residents and park visitors.



The boundaries of the Dog Park are now mowed and staked, showing the perimeter of the off-leash area and the entry paddock. Please go visit the park, and envision your dog happily playing with friends, while you visit with their people. [Map by Callie Brynn]

We have reviewed the grant and conservation easement for Morse Park, and have researched the requirements regarding archaeological considerations, and have found no issues of concern. We have worked with the ANR-DEC District Wetlands Ecologist to mark both the wetlands boundary and the wetlands buffer area, and will lay out the fencing to be 5-10 feet from the buffer boundary. At ANR's suggestion we will also plant locally-sourced native plants such as willows and red-osier dogwood within the buffer area along the fence edge, to increase the attractiveness of the area.



If they come, will you build it?

Some members and friends of the Dog Park Committee with hopeful canine companions standing within the proposed dog park area (*photo by Buzz Kuhns, August, 2020*)

What will Monkton's Dog Park consist of?

Fencing: The off-leash area will be fenced in using 5 ft heavy-duty plastic coated wire with steel or cedar posts with a smaller fenced entrance space where dog owners will unleash and leash their dogs as they enter and exit. In phase two of the project we plan to include a separate small dog area on the same parcel.

Rules posted at entrance: At the entrance there will be a notice about the expectations of dogs

and their owners while utilizing the Off-Leash Area. Neither the Park nor the Town will be responsible for injury or damage; like Morse Park this will be a “use at your own risk” arrangement. We have researched local and regional dog parks, and the Veterinary Medical Association recommendations, to identify what expectations are most common as well as what rules we want to include in our park. We have agreed on the following set of Rules:

Monkton Community Dog Park Rules

- Valid license and vaccination tags required
- Limit: 2 dogs per adult
- Minimize excessive barking
- Pick up your dog’s waste and dispose of it properly
- Dogs that display aggression toward people/dogs must be removed immediately
- Children under 12 must be supervised by an adult
- Keep your dog from jumping on other dogs or people
- No glass, food, alcohol, or smoking

****** Use at your own risk ******

Waste Stations: We will have two poop stations (bags and disposal for dog waste). One will be located at the entry gate for the off-leash area and the other (bag dispenser only) will be located at the Monkton Road entrance to Morse Park near the Park and Ride. The dog park group will be responsible for maintaining these stations. We are excited to announce that we already have pledges from two donors to cover the costs of installing both waste stations!

What will this cost the Monkton tax payer?

The dog park group will take responsibility for obtaining grants, raising funds, and soliciting sponsorships from local/national businesses to fund the building and maintenance of the dog park. We do not expect or desire the dog park to have any impact on Monkton tax payers.

Public Information Event

On Saturday, August 15, 2020, we held an information event at the location of the dog park. We were visited by excited community members who came to explore the area, ask questions, and volunteer to help. Visitors took home a doggie bag with biscuits and candy, dog stickers, and a handy dog park information card. Thanks to everyone who came! We look forward to working with you to build the dog park, and having our dogs play together in the park.



(photo by Callie Brynn, August, 2020)

So, What's next?

FUNDRAISING!

- The group is working on fundraising ideas and identifying and securing grant funding. We have submitted two grant proposals (sadly, both were unsuccessful, but we are learning from our failures), and we are working on two more now.
- We will approach the manufacturers of the fencing materials for donation of the materials, or at least providing them at the cost of manufacture.
- We are starting to approach local businesses for sponsorships. These sponsors will be honored with signs on the entry fence.
- We will also be providing an opportunity for dog-lovers to memorialize a beloved pet's life with a small engraved plaque attached to the fence.

It is our goal to make this an inclusive and transparent process and anyone interested in joining the workgroup or sharing ideas is welcome. The next meeting of the Dog Park Committee is Tuesday, August 25 at 7:00 pm by Zoom. Please contact us (see below) for meeting login information.

Off-leash areas are terrific community resources that provide an assortment of opportunities for leisure-time enjoyment. We look forward to bringing this resource to our community.

To join the committee or request additional information contact us at dogpark@monktonvt.com.