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# Council supports off-leash dog park

**By Angela Gismondi**

King council supports the development of an off-leash dog park on the King Station site in King City.

The matter was brought up and discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting Monday. A public session was held March 19 to obtain input from the public for an off-leash dog park in the township.

Many people commented a dog park is needed in King and would benefit dogs and their owners. Two potential sites were considered at the public input session ? Cold Creek Conservation Area located on the 11th Concession in Nobleton and King Station located on the south west side of King Road and Keele Street.

According to the staff report, of the two sites presented, King Station was preferred due to size, accessibility, existing amenities and future growth of the area. Some of the additional features people would like to see incorporated in the site are double gated entrances, a water station, shelter for patrons and their dogs, disposable waste bag stations and covered garbage containers. The consensus was the off-leash dog park should be functional and accessible to dog owners and their dogs.

A preliminary financial evaluation completed by staff has provided an estimated range of $45,000 to $75,000 to design and complete the construction of the project, depending on amenities that would be included. It's up to council to decide whether or not to include it in the budget.

Councillor Peter Grandilli was not impressed with the dog park proposal.

?We're always looking for land,? said Grandilli. ?Now we have a piece of land and we're going to give it to the dogs??

He wanted to know how many of the people who attended the public input session were residents of the township. He also wondered if there was a way to charge a user fee for the dog park.

Chris Fasciano, director of the parks, recreation and culture department responded he was not sure how many residents were from King but said that a majority of them probably were.

?We contacted all registered dog owners in the township of King to make them aware of the session,? said Fasciano, adding the session was well-attended.

As for the user fee, Fasciano said the staffing cost would far outweigh any user fee the township could charge for using the park.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti provided a bit of background on the matter. He explained that the developer decided to provide this piece of parkland and the township was hoping to use it to build much-needed soccer fields. But when it was determined that soccer fields wouldn't work because of accessibility issues Mortelliti started asking himself what else could be done with the property.

?We're limited as to what we can use it for, certainly not active park land,? said Mortelliti. ?There had been requests for a dog park in King City.?

Mayor Steve Pellegrini pointed out that a dog park is much more than a place to walk your dog.

?It's not about walking your dog, it's about socializing the animal,? explained Pellegrini. ?You can walk your dog on any street. It's a destination park.?

Councillor Debbie Schaefer said she discussed the proposed dog park on her blog and got a comment from a resident who doesn't own any dogs but occasionally watches dogs for her family. She commented the location on Station Road would be perfect and suggested a separate area for small and large dogs. Schaefer said the park has to be implemented in an economical manner but she sees it as a benefit to local dogs and their owners.

?It's about socialization for the owners too,? said Schaefer. ?It's where you meet your friends and other people who have dogs.?

The matter was received and referred back to staff who will bring a further report back to council for consideration.