

Item 8 – Special Resolution re: Councillor Hofland’s Notice of Motion

General Correspondence

If people can not social distance in these parks then I urge that the parks remain closed. Has Public Health been consulted?

Brenda Walton

Good evening,

I wanted to follow up in regards to both Peter Misersky and Bristol Street Fenced in Dog Parks.

I, like many fellow dog moms here in Guelph, I have been anxiously awaiting the reopening and opening of our much needed fenced in dog parks. With COVID being so overwhelming over the past few months, my dogs have been home, and not out as much. Which is entirely understandable, and not the City or any of the Counselor’s faults. Now I am hearing that although the City is nearly done the updates and construction on the parks, we could lose them again?!?

Come on!! We need a safe space for our dogs to learn how to play.

Please take a moment to learn about my dogs. Violet and Maybelline were both rescued from puppy mills near Listowel. They have never been around other dogs in a playful environment. They were caged alone for years, suffering. As they have had a traumatic past, they understandably get scared and can run off easily. Therefore, we cannot safely take our dogs to a non-fenced in dog park. That’s why these fenced in parks are so important! So Dog Mom and Dads can socialize their dogs, without any children under 6 being around, and help them live their best life!!

As a homeowner in Guelph, I am now being faced with the idea of selling my townhome in Ward 3, to purchase a property where my dogs can have a bit of freedom. We purchased our home in downtown Guelph, and in your Ward, June, with the knowledge that a fenced in dog park was planned for within walking distance of our house. Now you’re threatening to take that away. If you continue to oppose these essential fenced in dog parks, you will lose the vote of every pet parent in your ward. And that’s a lot of people.

Please make these parks open as soon as possible and have them stay open! Please give my dogs, and all of the other dogs a safe space to play.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hollands

Why would Councillor June Hofland let the city spend ALL that money and give us dog owners hope that we’ll have a place to go and then just screw us? Not fair at all!!!! I guess she doesn’t care about the cost to the City as long as her “friends ” get what they

want. This is really getting "old". There is a huge demand for fenced in dog parks here in Guelph and all criteria were met when council approved them. How can council back out now and also justify all of the expense (meaning my property taxes) incurred so far? Really Councillor Hofland - give your head a shake!

Lynn Hamilton

As a tax paying citizen of Guelph I am absolutely frustrated and at the end of my rope with a counsellor actually trying to shut these dog parks. I will remember you Hoffman and never ever will you get my vote. You are infringing on my rights and freedoms. Who hurt you?. Enough is enough! Mister ski should be open now until construction is started. There is no reason why it should not have been open already!

Take your fake excuses and shove it!

Renee Smith

I am a resident of Guelph. I have waited patiently for fenced dog parks on Guelph since 2014. I have travelled to other cities in the region to use theirs. Peter Misersky was closed due to Covid 19. We have waited months for it to reopen. Now there is a motion to keep them closed? Councillor June Hofland is wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars. Thousands of dog owners can swing elections, simply by making sure we vote.

#VoteThemOut

Chad Hagan

As we get ready in anticipation for the PM and Bristol parks to open we now hear one of the short sighted council persons, Ms Hofland, has brought forth a motion to re close the parks. These parks had been passed by council twice. How many more times is this women going to waste taxpayers money. Is there nothing else to be concerned about?

How about the TENT CITY (not a town anymore) in the area? These people are regularly stealing items at night from homes. (A sweet lady had a table stolen a couple of days ago). Does this issue not need council's attention?? It's quickly becoming a crisis for residents of Ward one.

No let's waste our time talking about dogs and their owners, we aren't breaking the law!

Stop wasting money!! The parks are built. Listen to the people in your Ward, not just the ones screaming like babies and have not taken their medication. (Sorry maybe Covid is getting to me.)

Oh yes, I'm to say why we want the parks to stay. How many times do we have to reiterate why we want the parks. Why bother, stop this women and her friends in her tracks.

Regards, Lynn Tyler

PS: Mayor Cam, you are doing a good job.

As an addendum. I notice Covid is being used as an excuse to relook at the parks or at least not re open them this year. Does council, Ms Hofland, realize how ludicrous this sounds. It's actually pathetic and an insult. Schools, SCHOOLS, restaurants, pools, children's parks are open but we can't let dogs run around.

Regards, Lynn

Hello,

My name is Justine Kraemer and I am a resident of Guelph. I was very frustrated to read that after much anticipation regarding their opening, that at least some of the off leash dog parks could potentially be closed.

The off leash dog parks will add so much to our community. In my opinion, the greatest of these will be to provide a safe place for owners to bring their dogs to play outside while maintaining distance from their respective humans.

My dog does not live with me in Guelph, but when my mom brings him for a visit we are always looking for somewhere to bring him where we can all enjoy the outdoors as a family. I would be very disappointed if they were to be closed shortly after they open.

I am so passionate about this that I will be sending a corresponding email to Mayor Guthrie and my city councillor.

Thank you for your consideration,

Justine

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am responding to the recent motion by June Hofland to close the off-leash dog parks before they even get open.

There is no valid reason for these parks not to be open for dogs and people to enjoy. The money has been spent, the parks are ready, Covid is not an issue as stated by Public Health. What is fear mongering all about?

Although I will not personally use these dog parks, I prefer not to bring my little dogs there, they don't do well in those types of settings, I am in full support of the dog owners of Guelph to have access to these parks.

This is ridiculous, the money has been spent, and they got clearance from Public Health. Let the dogs play.

Denese Renaud

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this email, as well as the others you receive, regarding the opening/reopening of the fenced-in off leash dog parks.

The city of Guelph has made great strides in improving the public recreation opportunities in Guelph over the past few years. Trails, outdoor play structures, skate parks, outdoor pools/splash pads, green spaces. It's been wonderful to see, and even better to get out and enjoy it all.

The recent addition of fenced in dog parks has been incredible for both the "with dog" folks, and the "without dog" folks. Having a place where dogs can exercise and play freely has been WONDERFUL. It has also had the added benefit of helping the "without dog" folks to feel safer while out walking/playing, and not having leashed, or unleashed dogs near them.

The fenced dog parks are not perfect, nor do they need to be. The city will get better at building them over time, as they learn from the citizens about what is most important to them.

For all the tax money that has been spent, and all the surveys and information sessions that have been held, it is infuriating that both parks are currently sitting closed.

The initial issue of Peter Mesersky being so busy would be hugely helped by there now being a second fenced in dog park, as well as being helped by the sports fields that are off leash dog appropriate now being signed as such.

The Bristol Street dog park looks phenomenal, and is obviously ready for use. It is such a waste for it to be sitting empty, and locked. It's a loss for the locals who would walk their dogs there, or use the space before it was fenced in... Now it's just something to sit and look at, instead of a green space to be enjoyed.

We are in stage 3 of covid, and as such there are no provincial health mandates that suggest that these kinds of outdoor public recreation areas should be closed.

As a tax paying, and long term resident, of Guelph, I ask you to kindly unlock the gates, and let the pups run.

Take gentle care of yourselves. And again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Cheers

Kim Kilpatrick

Dear City of Guelph Clerks

On Friday, Guelph Today reported one new COVID-19 case in the past 8 days. Restaurants and other facilities are opening, yet the Peter Misersky Dog Park remains closed. At what point will it open?

The Dog Park serves adults, and children must be accompanied by an adult. Is there some doubt about the safety of dog owners when we have fewer and fewer COVID-19 cases in Guelph?

I look forward to your response. Thank you. My dog thanks you too.

Yours truly

Gordon Truscott

Good Morning,

I am reaching out in regards to Guelph's fenced in, leash free dog parks and Councillor June Hofland's recent motion to keep the parks closed.

As a dog owner, you can imagine how frustrating this is and has been - specifically after the events that unfolded with regards to Peter Misersky.

I reached out to Councillor James Gordon back in 2017 with regards to an off leash dog park in Guelph. At the time he was pleased to report that there was a budget item in 2018 for a dog park in Guelph. For the past 4 years, my husband and I have traveled as "far" as Hamilton to enjoy their off leash fenced-in dog parks. In doing so we have taken our business out of the city by supporting businesses in the Hamilton and surrounding area. It is time that we are able to enjoy these parks in our very own city.

There is no doubt that there is demand for these types of parks within our city. The City of Guelph has spent a significant amount of time and money doing dog park studies and proceeding with the construction of both Peter Misersky and Bristol St. parks and for what? For the parks to remain closed? Closing these parks is not only a slap in the face to dog owners but to every single tax payer in the City of Guelph.

Public Health has confirmed that there is no public health risk to dog parks being open - the virus cannot be spread by animals. In fact, dog parks across the Province reopened as part of Stage 2 and yet here we are: patiently waiting. I would also argue that there are no noise concerns, specifically with the Bristol St. park. As you surely remember, the fields used to be home to soccer fields which yield more noise than that of a dog park. In addition, the skate park located directly across the street yields more noise than that of a dog park. In addition, the skate park has been reopened since May where social distancing is less likely to happen than that in a park setting.

City Council members have a responsibility to represent and to consider the well-being and interests of the citizens of our city - dog owners want and need these off leash fenced-in dog parks. I really have to question what Councillor Hofland's true motives are here - wasting public funds and hidden agendas have no place on our City Council.

I ask that Council please take us into consideration when voting on this motion and finally lay this issue to rest.

KEEP THE PARKS OPEN.

Respectfully,

Amy Fraser

To City Council:

I've been advocating for a large fenced dog park in Guelph for 5 years. While the 2 currently created leave much to be desired, they are better than nothing. I have tried to offer my expertise on this issue but have always been told the city staff had it well in hand. Hopefully, the staff listen to individuals much better informed for the next park that's being considered. In the meantime, OPEN THE DOG PARKS!

Sincerely,

Joy Walker

Good morning,

I have heard about Councillor June Hofland's motion to close the fenced-in dog parks in Guelph - this is completely unfounded and there is absolutely no reason to close these facilities in the current state of COVID-19.

Back in May, the Province announced that during Phase 2 of COVID-19 re-openings **that dog parks could be used**. Dog parks in all other cities around Guelph have opened to cater to citizens and their beloved pets.

If indoor facilities where people are more physically close together than ever such as restaurants, patios, small stores, etc. are allowed to open, as well as open areas such as children's playgrounds, then there is absolutely no reason that dog parks should close in comparison.

And COVID-19 aside:

Pets help people and cities thrive.

Pets give unconditional love, companionship and purpose to people.

Pets get people outside for exercise and social contact.

Pet owners have less depression, anxiety and loneliness.

Countless other places in the world are making their cities a better place for pets. Guelph cannot keep failing in this regard. Pet owners' voices must be heard.

Please do not shut down the fenced-in dog parks. We have been waiting for these amenities for years, and these facilities are crucial for our pets' well being as well as ours.

Please take the time to look at this website to help encourage you to make Guelph a better city for our pets, and in turn for our citizens:

<https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com>

Pets do much more for people than you realize. Pets should be one of the top priorities of the city. Please make the right choices for us.

Thank you for your time,

Caroline Fontaine

Re June Hofland and company and their continuing vendetta against the Fenced in Dog Parks

We waited a long time for these dog parks.

We have been locked out of Peter M since March

Public's health has no concerns about opening

This dog park meets the needs of seniors like myself who can walk to get there

I have been basically in isolation since March and have been looking forward to this part of my life getting back to the new norm of social distancing with friends and other dog owners

This city is supposed to be age friendly and now Hofland and company want to put a dog park where we won't be able to access it by walking

After the hundreds of thousands of taxpayers money already spent it seems Hofland is now prepared to spend more hundreds of thousands of taxpayers money on a park many people like myself will not be able to access

This is not right and obviously Hofland and co are catering once again to the select few

I did email Hofland but she could not even respect us enough to reply to any of the concerned citizens emails sent to her

How very disrespectful

Thank you for your time
Theresa Finamore

Good morning,

While the dog park was open my dog and I were regular users. I live in the neighborhood, in the Mountford condo, and would very much like to access the dog park again. I believe with a 2nd dog park opening on Bristol St many of the issues previously brought forward will be resolved. Please add my request to reopen the Peter Misersky dog park as is to the list being provided to the mayor and councilors. Reevaluating the issues with the 2nd park open rather than spending money on unnecessary modifications would be appreciated.

Sincerely

Suzanne Symons

City of Guelph,

Thank you for building the fenced dog park for our community. Peter Misersky Park is a great year-round-use city owned facility in the heart of the Grange Hill E. Neighbourhood. The park supports users with an Ultimate frisbee field, tobogganing hill, children's play structure area, community garden, fenced dog park, an open non structured area and ice skating, when mother nature cooperates.

The fenced dog park has been open for 4 months, and that is a very small sample size to justify making a decision to close it. Given time it is likely that the novelty users will decrease and as the media attention decreases so will new spectators. 1,370+ responses were received by city staff via the online survey, phone survey and meetings. Only 28/160 stakeholders attended the local meeting to discuss the early days of the Peter Misersky fenced dog park. Many of the -ve comments, both spoken and written, during that meeting were no more than political bashing and were not specifically relevant to the day to day experiences at the dog park located at Peter Misersky Park.

I believe the 22 meter setback for the fence, on city property, from the Condominium property is significantly more than most single family residences have with back yards and barking dog issues.

I suggest the following opportunities for improvements can be successfully implemented:

- Reduction of dog park users – One suggestion is for the installation of an entrance key swipe card/fob system administered by the Guelph Humane Society. Cards/fobs would be issued with proof of licensing in the city of Guelph and current vaccination & health check records, for a donation to the Guelph Humane Society. This would reduce the numbers of users from other centers as well as non-compliant Guelph dog owners.
- Intro dog training/socialization sessions held at the Guelph Humane Society promoting benefits of professional obedience and barking training. Perhaps local qualified professionals would support this initiative.
- I am confident responsible users will continue to share best practices when using the fenced dog park. I suggest 4 months is too short for self-supervision to be successful, especially during the initial learning curve. There are still users who need to understand this facility may not be the best fit for their dog.
- Noise issues for the closest residents is a real concern, especially for those who are home during the day. There are 124 homes in the condo development in addition to residents who live along Mountford Dr., Hadati Rd., Leacock Ave and Auden Road. The comments and concerns identified during written and TV news reports, in my opinion, are repetitive, overstated, some resolved, and delivered for their sensation factor. A real estate agent has indicated to owners in the condo development that the dog park would not decrease property values and in fact could be a draw for purchasers.
- I suggest traffic congestion at the entrance will decrease as numbers of users, over time, will naturally drop off. A speed bump and yield sign will help manage drivers. There are 24 city owned parking spots with 2 that are designated handicapped, along the easement. None of the parking spots located along the easement are designated for local home owners. The condo provides adequate resident and visitor parking.

· Many responsible people currently using the park have voiced solutions for the tendency of owners and dogs to collect in a group near the entrance. This occurrence could also be improved with the placement of benches along the back fence which I believe would draw the people and dogs further away from the residential easement side of the park. Continued self-supervision by responsible users will educate people on the benefits of moving while inside the fenced area.

This past Sunday my dog Pepper and I enjoyed our time in the fenced dog park with several others from our community. Pepper is a City of Guelph licensed, vaccinated, obedience trained quiet 6 year old boxer. Her prey instinct still sometimes overrides my wishes when a squirrel makes an appearance. We still walk the neighborhood to maintain and reinforce her on leash manners. While we were at the park children were building snowmen near the newly updated play area and other neighbors were tobogganing on the hill near the Auden Road entrance. Unfortunately the ice skating rink has been a tough accomplishment this year.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts,

Sincerely,

Suzanne Symons