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From: Betty Johnston <seaspruce@peak.org>
Subject: Cottage Grove man files application for city's first dog park | Local | Eugene, Oregon
Date: October 5, 2015 at 2:17:30 PM PDT
To: ron brean Brean <rbrean@peak.org>

Ron,

An article that ran in the Eugene newspaper. The city is very excited about this piece of news. I thought you could read it and maybe address the topic of a dog park once again. I would appreciate it very much. Thanks Ron, Betty Johnston.

<http://registerguard.com/rg/news/local/33535875-75/cottage-grove-man-files-application-for-citys-first-dog-park.html.csp>

Cottage Grove man files application for city's first dog park | Local | Eugene, Oregon

COTTAGE GROVE — At the Lulu's Car Wash he owns on Main Street, Stephen Nisewander noticed that customers would often walk their leashed dogs in the field behind the business while their cars were being washed.

Sometimes, Nisewander would walk his own dog, a malamute named Thor, in the same undeveloped field, which Nisewander owns.

So it didn't take much of a mental leap, says Nisewander, when he noticed an article in the Cottage Grove Sentinel newspaper bemoaning the lack of a public dog park anywhere in the city.

"I thought, 'I've got this bit of land I'm not using for anything, so let's turn it into a dog park.'"

Nisewander, 61 and recently retired from his job as a vice president with Forrest Paint Co. in Eugene, first went to the city to seek its permission.

City officials were more than just intrigued — they have offered to cover the liability insurance if Nisewander will make good on his pledge to fence and maintain the property, which is not quite an acre.

"It's an absolutely amazing example of civic-mindedness," said city planner Amanda Ferguson of Nisewander's proposal. "We are excited to see this project move forward."

Nisewander doesn't have the green light quite yet, however. He has applied for a conditional use permit, which is slated to be considered by the city Planning Commission on Oct. 14. If the planning panel were to give its OK, any resident would have 14 days to appeal to the City Council.

Neither Nisewander nor Ferguson has heard of any opposition to date.

"As soon as (city officials) say OK, I'm going to start putting in fenceposts," Nisewander said. "I hope to get it done by Christmas, if I can afford it."

In his application to the city, Nisewander said the park eventually would have picnic tables, a water supply and plastic gloves available for dog owners to clean up after their pets.

Nisewander said he has designed gates and fencing, and can envision as many as 15 to 20 dogs playing in the park at once.

As far as the rules that dog owners would have to follow, Nisewander said he would model those after the rules at the city of Eugene's several dog parks.

In Eugene, dogs are allowed to roam off-leash in dog parks provided that the dog is properly licensed and vaccinated, the owner is present and maintains control over the dog, and the owner cleans up after the animal.

Nisewander's property at 1104 E. Main St. is zoned for commercial use, which is why a conditional use permit is needed.

Ferguson said city staff is excited about the project in part because Nisewander's property is next to the Row River trailhead and to nearly 3 acres owned by the city, dotted with gazebos and other structures. There's already a gravel area where motorists can park their vehicles, and the city's long-range plan calls for a formal parking lot and turnaround there, she said.

Ferguson said providing liability insurance for such a project is not without precedent: The city already covers that cost for the nonprofit Bohemia Park Foundation, which built, owns and maintains Bohemia Park in the city center, for example.

Nisewander said he believes that, many decades ago, the back area of his car wash property served as a miniature golf course. But for years now, "it's just a field I mow every week."

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Nisewander is a dog lover from way back — especially malamutes. When he and his wife Mary moved from Chicago in the 1970s, they settled on Cottage Grove because that was roughly half the distance between Eugene, where Nisewander landed a job with Forrest Paint, and Drain, where Mary Nisewander was hired as a teacher.

Stephen Nisewander said he told his wife they couldn't have a dog until they had a house with enough land for a dog to roam. They built their log house outside Cottage Grove — and soon thereafter went to the humane society and came back with a Siberian husky that became their beloved pet for 12 years.

More dogs followed, especially after they discovered a nonprofit group in Southern Oregon that specializes in placing huskies and malamutes that have been abused or neglected.

Their current malamute, which had been mistreated, was named "Jake." But the dog suffered from such anxiety "that we decided to build up his self-esteem by renaming him 'Thor.'"

Today, Thor is happy, Nisewander said. The only thing missing, perhaps, is a dog park where he can meet and befriend some canine buddies.

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