

Middlefield Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency

April 16, 2008
Regular meeting

Minutes

(Not approved at time of filing)

1. Call to order

Marianne Corona called the meeting to order. Present are Randy Bernotas-Wetlands Enforcement Officer, Doug Charles-regular members, Marianne Corona-vice chairman, Melissa Kowal-alternate, Daria VanderVeer-regular and Irene Angiletta-regular member. Melissa Kowal was seated for this meeting. Darin Overton arrived later in the meeting.

2. Amendments to the agenda

Randy Bernotas asked to include a presentation by Tyler Sibley regarding a possible dog park.

A motion was made to approve the agenda as amended; this motion was seconded and approved by all voting members.

3. Public session

There were no public comments

4. Tyler Sibley proposal for a dog park

Tyler Sibley explained that he is a boy scout in troop 33, and is working toward his eagle rank by creating a dog park in Middlefield. Tyler Sibley asked if passive recreation is permitted in a wetland and how far do they need to stay away from a water course.

Marianne Corona explained that any activity occurring within the 100 foot review area has to come before commission or the Wetlands Enforcement Officer.

Tyler Sibley stated that he was considering several portions of land, including Peckham Park, Strickland Property, King Property and the Greenway on Strickland Road.

Marianne Corona noted that the Strickland Property is leased to the Durham Fair Association.

Tyler Sibley provided a map showing the locations he was considering .. Marianne Corona noted that dog waste and how it would be disposed of properly would be an issue. Marianne Corona suggested that more details be brought forward, and to discuss the issue with Park and Rec regarding the master plan for the park. Marianne Corona noted that while dog park may be considered passive recreation, parking is not and this will need to be discussed with Board of Selectmen, and the DEP will have to determine if a dog park is considered passive

recreation. Tyler Sibley provided a letter from DEP stating that it is passive recreation, and needs for an application.

Daria VanderVeer noted that successful dog parks have enough waste bags and receptacles to dispose of them.

There was one particular area Marianne Corona recommended not be used, as it was within the wetland area.

Daria VanderVeer stated that this appeared to be a terrific idea.

Pete Sibley asked specifically how far away from the stream should they be.

Marianne Corona strongly urged that it not be done near the Ellen Doyle, and there is a 100 foot review area, but the commission can not be definitive without an application. Marianne Corona stated that a dog park within 25 feet of the Ellen Doyle would not be acceptable to her. In response to a question, it was noted that farming is an exempt activity for wetlands.

Daria VanderVeer noted that another concern may be the turf getting torn up by the dogs at play.

Doug Charles noted that to determine the distance they need to be from a wetland would be site specific.

Peter Sibley suggested a site visit to the two locations being considered at Peckham Park.

Marianne Corona suggested that the dog park plan be drawn up, including parking, and brought to Park and Rec.

Peter Sibley stated that they were on the agenda for the last Park and Rec meeting, but only one commissioner was present for the presentation, so this will be on the next agenda as well.

Doug Charles recommended staying away from the area across the creek from the park.

A speaker asked about putting gravel in a dog park area in a wetland, and also if a specific area was a wetland. He was told the specific area was a review area, and that gravel would likely not be used for a dog park.

Marianne Corona said Park and Rec and the selectmen have to approve something before this commission can review it.

A speaker asked for the specific names of the soils that they are referring to. Marianne Corona said that would not be relevant at this point, and should be discussed with the planning office. Marianne Corona explained that wetlands are determined by soil types, and there are maps that indicate soil types in parts of the town. The speaker was advised that they may be able to get that information by the next meeting.

A speaker asked about what procedure should be followed.

Marianne Corona stated that before anything is done at the park, it should go before the Board of Selectmen and the Park and Rec commission, then once a site is chosen; there should be an application to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, with a detailed site plan.

Peter Sibley stated that First Selectman Jon Brayshaw advised that the best place for a dog park would be at Peckham Park.

Marianne Corona explained that it is not up to this commission to determine what a good spot is; an application has to be put together with specifics.

Randy Bemotas said the commission will need to see a site plan, what improvements, what they plan on installing to dispose of waste material. Randy Bemotas noted that because it is in the review area, doesn't mean it will be denied. The application could be approved, denied or approved with conditions.

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Marianne Corona stated that she would be attending the Board of Finance meeting to ask for support for the proper equipment for the office, including new computer and other items.

Darin Overton asked Randy Bernotas to speak with the Land Use clerk in order to work out a system for the documents.

Daria VanderVeer stated that the commission did a bit of a disservice to Tyler Sibley and his dog park issue. One is that our regulations specifically provide for pre-application conferences so the applicant can come and get some advice from commissioners. Daria VanderVeer stated that he was trying to figure out what kinds of things the agency would want to see, and things that could be considered. Daria VanderVeer said to send him back to Park and Rec was discouraging.

Marianne Corona stated that the Park and Rec has not yet discussed this.

(Tape Three Side A)

Daria VanderVeer noted that the 100 foot review area only means that any activity in that area needs to be permitted and to tell Tyler Sibley to keep it out of the 100 foot review area might have given him the misimpression about what the agency might approved.

Marianne Corona noted that he was given advice on cars, parking and a number of things.

Daria VanderVeer noted that parking is an issue with Park and Rec; it is up to them to decide where people using the park need to park their cars.

Marianne Corona said Sibley needs to choose a site or possible two and then come to this commission.

Daria VanderVeer said that he was looking for advice on what site to choose, and more advice on what the application should include, and what would help make it successful.

Marianne Corona noted that they need to use caution giving advice, so that someone does not come back saying that the agency approved it.

Daria VanderVeer noted that within the regulations it allows for this, and notes that advice is not binding.

Randy Bernotas stated that he felt the site he reviewed with Tyler Sibley was probably appropriate.

Marianne Corona said he will need to decide exactly where and what size it should be before coming to the commission. In response to a comment, Marianne Corona said she would be opposed to it being in a certain area. She noted concerns about dog waste and who would be policing the area to be sure this is taken care of. Marianne Corona questioned why a dog park is needed.

Members discussed the need for Park and Rec to have a master plan for the park area. It was noted that Tyler Sibley was advised to get a plan together, including fence details, how they will handle dog waste etc.

14. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn; this motion was seconded and then approved by all voting members.