



**City of Richmond, Virginia**  
**Department of Planning and Development Review**  
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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: August 8, 2019  
RE: **Conceptual location, character, and extent review of a new neighborhood Dog Park in Southern Barton Heights, 1920-1804 Greenwood Avenue; UDC 2019-21**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Harrison Heywood, Park Planner, Department of Parks and Recreation

**II. LOCATION**

1920-1804 Greenwood Avenue

**Property Owner:**  
City of Richmond

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for the conceptual location, character, and extent review of a new neighborhood dog park in Southern Barton Heights, 0.9 acres

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The purpose of the project is to build a new dog park to be located in Southern Barton Heights. The site to be developed is approximately 0.90 acres in size. The lot will be divided into a large dog park approximately 0.75 acres in size and a small dog park approximately 0.15 acres in size. A mix of materials will be used for landscaping including concrete for high traffic areas, a pervious geotextile overlaid with gravel for medium traffic areas, and grass for lower traffic areas. All existing trees on the site will be preserved and maintained.

Staff finds that the proposed project enhances the space for the surrounding community and will beautify an area that is currently a dumping ground. The need for a dog park in the area is apparent in that people use the current space and surrounding open green space for the recreation of their dogs.

Thus, Staff recommends that the Urban Design Committee recommend that the Planning Commission grant conceptual approval as submitted with the following conditions:

- That the applicant demonstrate there was consideration for an alternative to chain-link fencing material
- That the applicant coordinate with the Urban Forestry Division to develop a tree preservation plan for final review
- That the applicant coordinate with the Water Resources Division to ensure compliance with any required land disturbance work

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## **V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

The project site is currently divided into eight parcels that together comprise about 0.90 acres. The site is zoned R-6 Residential and is bordered by W. Home Street to the north, Greenwood Avenue to the east, and a golf complex to the south and west.

### **b. Scope of Review**

The improvements associated with this project are subject to location, character, and extent review as a “park” in accordance with Section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter.

### **c. UDC Review History**

Staff was unable to locate any previous UDC reviews of the project site.

### **d. Project Description**

A group of neighbors in the Southern Barton Heights/ Battery Park neighborhoods have worked together to request a new dog park in Southern Barton Heights. Four possible, city-owned sites were reviewed and discussed at a neighborhood meeting in January 2018. Neighbors decided that the empty lots next to the Albert Norrel School on Home Street was a preferred location for a new dog park. A request for this site to be turned into a dog park was made at the January 2018 City Council meeting. At this meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> district City Councilman, Chris Hilbert, stated that he tentatively supported the idea. An additional neighborhood meeting with Chris Hilbert was held to discuss a plan moving forward.

In the spring of 2018, the neighborhood group began outreach efforts by attending local Civic Association meetings (Battery Park and Southern Barton Heights) and conducting door to door canvassing to discuss the park and collect feedback on the idea. Feedback was generally positive, but some neighbors voiced concern about the proposed site, as it is used as overflow parking during football games at Albert Norrell School.

The neighborhood Association then met with the City of Richmond’s Parks and Recreation Department in September 2018. A conceptual site plan was developed by a professional landscape architect, as well as a neighbor who volunteered time to help with the park. The conceptual site plan presented at another round of civic association meetings and received neighborhood support. The conceptual site plan that was submitted with the UDC application is reflective of the feedback received at those meetings.

The lots along Greenwood Avenue are an ideal location for a dog park. These lots are city-owned and combine to a total of approximately 0.90 acres in size and have shade from existing trees that will be maintained. The lots are located above an old landfill, and are in a floodplain making it unsuitable for a community garden or the new development of homes or businesses. The character of the area fits a dog park as it is surrounded by other recreational resources. The lot backs up to First Tee of Richmond and adjacent to the Albert Norrel School but are far enough to provide some separation from the proposed dog park and areas where children frequent.

The Site plan submitted with this application depicts the dog park as proposed. No buildings are proposed on site and no dedicated parking areas are proposed. It is likely that the park will predominantly be accessed by pedestrians and neighbors within the area. Street parking is ample in the area. The applicant would like to request that parking be allowed in the Albert Norrell school parking lot or potentially in the empty lot along Home Street which is currently used for overflow football parking. The entire site will be an open recreational area. No future expansion is planned at this time. Landscaping on site will maintain existing trees with no trees planned for removal and no new trees or other plants added. To prevent erosion, materials of varying hardness will be used based on degree of traffic. Concrete pads are proposed at gates as these are the highest traffic areas. Watering stations will be located at concrete pads as a City water line is located along Greenwood Avenue. In the area closest to the fence where the majority of play will be, pervious geotextile overlaid with gravel will be used. A "Flexi-pave" walkway will boarder the gravel area. The back of the site will be maintained as grass. Currently, street lights are located along Greenwood Avenue. No new light poles are proposed but we are requesting the City extend lighting over the park as well. Benches will be located primarily along the fence line bordering Greenwood Avenue. Trash collection would be located along Greenwood Avenue in the small dog park and Home Street along the large dog park.

**e. Master Plan**

In the City of Richmond Master Plan, the project site is located in the North Planning District. When discussing Recreation and Parks for this district, the plan emphasizes that additional parks and open space should be provided where appropriate, and site as proposed public park space in the future land use map. Specifically the Master Plan states that "the former Fells Street Landfill and surrounding areas should be used to accommodate recreational uses to compliment the golf driving range and the ultimate redevelopment of the area to the east" (p.261).

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Urban Design Guidelines note that "a preference should be given towards materials and construction techniques which improve energy efficiency and water/soil quality. Lighting and landscaping should allow for surveillance and policing activities, but should be designed primarily to accommodate the intended use of the park" (p. 9).

The guidelines state that, "All park projects should include a maintenance plan which addresses all phases of the project" (p.9), and that, "Significant healthy trees should be preserved and maintained" (p.10).

Regarding fencing, the guidelines mention that, "In most instances, chain link fencing is not an appropriate fencing material" and that, "If a chain link fence is required, however, for safety or security purposes, a dark color vinyl, preferably black, and supplemented with sufficient evergreen landscaping"(p. 26).

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**