



Council Member Motion
Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 14th, 2022

Date: April 8th, 2022

From: Councillor Potts

Subject: Off-leash pilot for the city core

Background:

There are currently no off-leash dog areas serving the residents of the city core, including North Park, Downtown, or parts of Fernwood and Hillside Quadra.

Royal Athletic Park represents an ideal option for the provision of off-leash space in close proximity to the city core.

Royal Athletic Park (RAP) is underutilized, especially when considering its valuable status as green space in a dense urban core. While there has been new attention to programming at the park, in 2019, the last pre-COVID year on record, RAP was only booked 25% of the year. 75% of the year it was empty and unused.

When configured for baseball, the area beyond the outfield fence, which is not used for spectators or baseball, is fully fenced and gated with large open spaces and waste receptacles. When the park is not configured as a baseball stadium, the moveable outfield fencing could instead be used to define an off-leash area that is compatible with other uses (see attached image).

Council has recently recognized that additional off-leash dog parks would produce social benefits and are strongly desired by city residents (Brooke Park and Harris Green). There is also precedent for off-leash pilot projects in three city parks: Oaklands, Barnard, and Fisherman's Wharf. This direction is also supported by the Neighbourhood Associations of North Park, Downtown, and Hillside Quadra (see attached letters).

It is recommended that Council provide direction to staff to report back on the implications and advisability of proceeding with a pilot project for leash-optional use of the fenced and gated, area beyond the outfield of Royal Athletic Park during specified hours and with the provision of temporary suspension for events and other park uses/users as needed.

Recommendation:

That Council direct staff to report back at the next Triannual Update on the implications and advisability of amending the Animal Responsibility Bylaw No. 11-044 to proceed with a Pilot Project allowing leash-optional use of a designated portion of Royal Athletic Park from 6:00 am - 10:00 am and 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm daily, with the provision of temporary suspension for events and other park uses/users as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to be the name 'S. Potts', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Potts