

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
SCOFIELDTOWN PARK DOG PARK**

**October 18, 2023**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**From:** ROBERT DEFALCO <karenwellikoff@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 15, 2023 10:51 AM  
**To:** Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>  
**Subject:** Scofieldtown dog park questions

Thank you for allowing me to ask questions.

What roll will the City provide to keep the dog park clean and groomed?

What kind of surface will the area have?

What will the look of the fencing be like? Would like the park to reflect the natural feel of the neighborhood and the natural beauty of the park.

Will there be any kind of equipment for dog activities incorporated like ramps/bridges?

How much space would be designated and where? Will the City keep the entrance to the dog park groomed to walk relatively tick free?

Will there be a separate fenced-in area for small dogs?

Thank you.  
Karn DeFalco

**From:** Vicki Wray <[vicki.wray@gmail.com](mailto:vicki.wray@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 16, 2023 3:26 PM  
**To:** Murray, Kevin <[KMurray@StamfordCT.gov](mailto:KMurray@StamfordCT.gov)>  
**Subject:** Comments re dog park in North Stamford

Hi Kevin,

Unfortunately I cannot attend the October 18th public hearing of the Parks & Recreation Commission as I will be attending a Zoom in an effort to become informed about the proposed Stamford charter revision. But I am VERY opposed to a dog park at the Scofieldtown Park and would like my comments below to be included in the public record.

Many thanks,  
Vicki Wray

Comments:

First, let me start by saying I am a dog lover and a resident of North Stamford. In fact, my dog and I walk around the Scofieldtown Park several times a week. One of the things I love about that is the ability to hear so many birds and know that we have provided at least a small refuge for the many animals (birds, insects, etc.) that we have forced out of their homes by development. I also love the grasses and feel that it is one of Stamford's peaceful havens. All that would change with a dog park. I question whether we have the infrastructure needed to successfully put a dog park there -- bathrooms (for humans), water (for dogs) -- and whether we would be able to "police" any rules/requirements. You can already see that current park dog walkers often seem unable to pick up dog poop and put in available bins despite even being given the plastic bags to do so with. And what will happen the first time a dog attacks another? Or a person? Do we really want more traffic so near a school? Is there enough parking?

In 2020, The New York Times had an article entitled ***The Dog Park is Bad, Actually*** that notes: "Dog parks may seem like great addition to the community, but they're rife with problems -- for you, and for your dog." (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/smarter-living/the-dog-park-is-bad-actually.html>).

Another more recent article (August 6) was titled ***Dog Parks Are Great for People. Too Bad They're Terrible for Dogs*** echoes the same thoughts. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/06/opinion/dog-parks-bad.html?searchResultPosition=1>)

So, for all these reasons, I am hoping that a dog park will NOT be approved for Scofieldtown Park.

Respectfully,  
Vicki Wray  
89 Haviland Road  
Stamford, CT  
[vicki.wray@gmail.com](mailto:vicki.wray@gmail.com)

**From:** Paul Plotnick <pdplot2@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:39 PM  
**To:** Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>  
**Subject:** Scofieldtown Dog Park

Les - I would like to register my firm opposition to a dog park at Scofieldtown. The Park is nesting habitat for many birds including the rare and endangered American Woodcock. This is the only place in Stamford where these birds nest. The Stamford Museum and Nature Center is having a birdwalk tomorrow morning at the Park. Since the center of the Park is taken up by the tennis courts - now also being used by pickleball players - and parking is limited to one small lot, to allow a large portion of the current lawn to be fenced in and used as a dog park would ruin the character of the Scofieldtown. In addition, many dog parks are divided in half - one for large dogs, and one for small. Scalzi Park would be a better place for a dog park.

Paul D. Plotnick  
1589 Newfield Ave.  
[pdplot2@gmail.com](mailto:pdplot2@gmail.com)

**From:** Ellynn Rey <ellynnerey@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 1:19 PM  
**To:** Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>  
**Subject:** Dog Park at Scofieldtown

Dear Lesley,

I will be working this evening during the zoom meeting regarding the dog park being proposed for Scofieldtown Park. I am a Stamford resident and taxpayer. I visit the park often. Please note my objections below:

### 1. **Birds & Wildlife**

Scofieldtown is a unique habitat and one of the few public open spaces left in Stamford where migrating and nesting birds can go. Scientists estimate 3 billion birds have disappeared since 1970 due to a variety of factors. One of the most profound reasons is habitat loss. A dog park will not be conducive and welcoming to birds and other wildlife, especially meadowland bird species and those in migration.

Notable Species seen at SP:

Bobolink\*, E. Meadowlark, Am. Woodcock, Vesper Sparrow, Clay Colored Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbirds\* to name a few.

\* = species that are losing habitat and declining in numbers

### 2. **Dogs Don't Need Land**

North Stamford residents do not need prime public land for their dogs. They can use their own property or visit an existing dog park in a more urban part of town. Dogs are domestic and not in need of recreational areas that wildlife depend upon for survival.

### 3. **Noise**

The area will attract dog owners but disturb anyone else there for peace and relaxation. Especially due to the pandemic, people have turned to the outdoors for comfort, meditation, & solace. A dog park is loud and will interfere with those going to the park for peace and relaxation.

Those are the primary reasons I oppose a dog park at Scofieldtown. It is a very special habitat that needs to be treated as a valuable resource for migratory bird species. Every effort should be made to prioritize this. Besides, a dog park can be built somewhere like Scalzi or somewhere that does not attract critical species. If you go back and look at the records of bird species seen at Scofieldtown you will see what a rich variety of birdlife the park has hosted.

Sincerely,  
Ellynn Rey

**From:** Ron Jaco <ronn.jaco@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 4:27 PM  
**To:** Capp, Lesley <LCapp@StamfordCT.gov>  
**Subject:** No dog park

As a dog owner, dog lover, someone who walks regularly in the Scofieldtown Park, and North Stamford resident, I am TOTALLY opposed to putting a dog park there. It would seem to me if there is to be a dog park, Dorothy Heroy Park would be a much better location with much of the "infrastructure" already in place such as bathrooms, potable water and parking areas. Why would we go to the expense of putting these things and more in a new place when they already exist there. Also consider if we need more traffic near a school. who would "police" the area to ensure regulations would be adhered to? Who is going to be responsible for overall maintenance? Why would we want to disturb an area that provides refuge for so much wildlife when spaces of calm and tranquility like that are rapidly disappearing in Stamford? Finally, you can find multiple articles on how dog parks are more for humans than for animals. Multiple articles on attacks in dog parks; diseases spread in dog parks, on dogs that simply cower on the sidelines. To quote a recent article:

"For humans, dog parks are like miniature town greens — except muddy and smelly — where people can go to gossip, swap dog care tips and enjoy the camaraderie of like-minded folks who are not embarrassed to share cute animal photos. Some people have even discovered romance at a dog park.

It was all wonderful until my dog's ear was ripped off and the attacking dog's owner refused to pay the vet bill — or even remove the dog from the park. Such incidents are all too common."

For these many reasons, I hope you will NOT put a dog park in Scofieldtown Park.

Respectfully,

Ron Jaco

Comments posted anonymously in the Q&A during the meeting:

The dog park on Courtland Ave is quite a mess. There does not seem to be any upkeep. This all looks nice but how will it be maintained? There are dead trees in the park for years. They have never been replaced. Suppose these trees die? Do we just have to look at them too? As it is there are doggy bags provided and many do not use them. I wonder if people will be more concerned in a park?

[Answer live](#) [Type answer](#)



**Anonymous Attendee** 07:22 PM

Natural grass will become a mud pit. It will never stay grass with dogs running around

[Answer live](#)

[Type answer](#)



**Anonymous Attendee** 07:29 PM

Why not put \$150000 on a shelter? Our shelter is a disgrace to this city!

[Answer live](#)

[Type answer](#)



**Anonymous Attendee** 07:32 PM

...

People who walk the trails at the arboretum are not looking for a dog park to take the place of a hike with their dog

[Answer live](#)

[Type answer](#)

**From:** maureen deponte <[mfdeponete@hotmail.com](mailto:mfdeponete@hotmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 7:01 PM  
**To:** McKenna, Erin <[EMcKenna@StamfordCT.gov](mailto:EMcKenna@StamfordCT.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: public hearing on possible scofieldtown park dog area

Hello Erin,

I am opposed to adding a dog park at Scofieldtown Park.

The park is greatly enjoyed. When it comes to dogs, there are a tremendous number of people who walk their dogs, large and small, at the park, including me! Without planning, we have great interaction with neighbors and dogs. There is a natural socialization for dogs that occurs on the path, in the grass & even in the parking lot. Dog owners are very attentive to their dogs, especially cleaning up after them.

My family and myself would love to have the park remain unchanged. The green space, natural grasses, wild flowers, trees, birds, frogs, etc. add to the neighborhood. It is absolutely a beautiful, natural environment which I would hate to see changed. And, it limits the amount of maintenance required!

Thank you for the notice of the meeting, which I am attending! I am experiencing zoom problems and not sure I would be able to speak. If possible, could you please forward my comments onto the appropriate person?

Thank you,  
Maureen DePonte



**From:** Clayton, Scott <[SClayton@StamfordCT.gov](mailto:SClayton@StamfordCT.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 13, 2023 3:59 PM  
**To:** McKenna, Erin <[EMcKenna@StamfordCT.gov](mailto:EMcKenna@StamfordCT.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Public Hearing on possible Scofieldtown Park dog area

Hi Erin,

Thanks for including me. Not sure how I can weigh in on this or even if my opinion is appropriate. As the principal at Scofield Middle School, we get a significant amount of dog walker traffic on school grounds during the regular school day. A dog park across the street may reduce the disruption due to the high frequency of dog walkers can cause us during school hours. Staff members have actually been attacked and bitten by loose dogs. On another occasion a loose dog actually got into the building. Happy to talk next week if it helps.

Regards,

Scott Clayton-Principal  
Scofield Magnet Middle School  
@Mr\_SClay

**From:** KAREN WELLIKOFF <[karenwellikoff@gmail.com](mailto:karenwellikoff@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 19, 2023 9:19 PM  
**To:** McKenna, Erin <[EMcKenna@StamfordCT.gov](mailto:EMcKenna@StamfordCT.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: public hearing on possible scofieldtown park dog area

Hi Erin

Thank you for including the link for yesterday's meeting. Scofieldtown Park has maintained in being a passive park for the community. And was done so with the utmost integrity. I believe a dog park adds to that goal while providing a community place for the neighborhood to meet and experience their needs for themselves and their companions. Living here in North Stamford where sidewalks are a rarity, the need to walk safely on the road has become quite a challenge. Especially with speeding cars, but also trucks, buses alike.

I think the input of the meeting had good points on both sides. I will say that most dog owners understand the risks as well as any parent who takes their children to play on playgrounds. I think the biggest concern for a dog owner in a dog park are viruses which occur when there is a shared water source. And, of course, with my involvement with water in the past, my concern is not only shared water but where that water is coming from. Will it be City water at \$300 a foot as Tom Lombardo mentioned, or from a Scofieldtown Park well.

I am curious about gravel vs natural turf. I know Rowayton closes in May to reseed the field, but I will say depending on rain and loss of grass over time my dog has been covered in dust or mud that became more of a decision not to go :)

I look forward to hearing more conversations. I am happy after so many years, you are still at the helm here! Thank you for including me in the conversation. These are my firsthand thoughts; I am sure more will come.

Best  
Karen DeFalco