

Caledon dog owners bring park concerns to town council

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Caledon town council has gone to the dogs.

Caledon Leash-Free Action Committee members spoke to town council during its April 30 meeting about the need for improvements at local dog parks. The committee aims to facilitate safe your-round access to the town's dog parks.

The committee started in February 2016 and has grown to have about 700 members. Crystal Larouche and Egle Boudreau, committee members, outlined concerns about a specific dog park behind a local animal shelter.

"Our top priorities are mostly things that would be expected at any facility," said Larouche.

Among those priorities is the need for a safe, wheelchair accessible path; routine maintenance at the park; and improved shelter and lighting for users.

She said the sloping path at the entrance to the park can be tricky for able-bodied park users when covered by ice in the winter. Elderly or disabled people avoid the park in the winter because of this issue, she said.

"It's kind of use it at your own risk," said Larouche.

Better routine maintenance is needed at the park to alleviate ice in winter and to address standing water that breeds bacteria that can be harmful to dogs. Poop bag dispensers are always empty at the park, too, she said.

"We want this park to be for everyone," said Larouche. "We want this park to be Number One. In the end, it's going to bring people from Brampton, Orangeville, outside to come to Bolton."

Coun. Annette Groves suggested the committee's concerns be brought to municipal staff to investigate what can be done to improve the park.

Coun. Jennifer Innis said such leash-free dog parks are important for the social development of the pets.

"They need to learn how to interact not only with people but, more importantly, with other dogs," said Coun. Innis. "Especially when you have really big dogs."