

Town to hold public meeting for input on dog park improvements

By Rob Paul

All dogs need time to exercise and there's nobody happier than a dog when he's off his leash and able to galivant around an open park. That's why it's becoming more important for areas to provide leash-free parks for dogs to get exercise and interact with other canines.

In Caledon, there's a dog park located in Bolton at Coleraine Drive right next to the Animal Shelter that provides residents with the opportunity to let their pups run wild. It's fenced in and has picnic tables for patrons to take advantage of as the summer begins.

Dog parks like this are free and rely on users to treat them respectfully while also getting a helping hand from volunteers.

The Town of Caledon is involved in ensuring it's up and running daily but is on the cusp of having local volunteers become more involved.

?The leash-free park on Coleraine Drive is owned and maintained by the Town of Caledon with the assistance of a group of volunteers,? said a Town spokesperson. ?The volunteer group is currently in the final stages of becoming an affiliate with the Town to further advocate for leash-free parks. The affiliate program is a process by which organizations can apply for enhanced support from the Town to help the organization's initiatives and/or services to residents.?

For the dog park to remain both safe and clean, the Town has employees maintain them, but reminds of the importance of pet owners taking responsibilities for their and their pets' messes.

?In addition to basic property maintenance such as grass cutting, the Town is responsible for overall supervision of the park, including opening and closing, as well as ensuring the property is well-kept,? the spokesperson said. ?It is important to point out that pet owners are responsible for cleaning up after their own animals while at the park.?

Although there's no specifics on how much use the dog park gets, the Town keeps it open every day to make sure people have time to get their dogs active and is in an ongoing process of developing another dog park at the Caledon East Park.

Wanting to make sure the dog park in Bolton meets the needs of residents, the Town is hoping to get input at an upcoming meeting to get a better idea of what people want out of the park.

?The Town is looking at making improvements to the existing dog park to improve user experience, including a small dog area, better accessibility, and a permanent fenced perimeter,? said the spokesperson. ?There is a public meeting on June 24 at 6 p.m. to share updates of the preliminary design and obtain public feedback.?

With Caledon's population growing rapidly, that means the dog population will too and that's why Mayor Allan Thompson and the rest of the Town Council will continue to look at developing green spaces for residents and their pets going forward.

?Having access to a leash-free dog park is such an important feature in our urban areas,? he said. ?As we grow, we will need to look for other locations that will serve communities across Caledon.?