



**Addendum**  
**Minnetonka Park Board**  
**Meeting of February 7, 2024**

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**ITEM 7A – Purgatory Park Master Plan – Preliminary Strategies Regarding Dogs**

- **Feedback received after the distribution of the park board packet**

**Feedback received after the distribution of the park board packet**

**Name**

Pamela Morris

**Full Address**

16301 Adeline Lane

Minnetonka, mn 55391

usa

**Phone**

**Email**

**Meeting date**

February 7, 2024

**Agenda item**

Purgatory Park Master Plan -- Dogs

**Comment**

I am a 25-year resident of Minnetonka. I often share with people how impressed and grateful I am for living in this municipality. My interactions with the city have without exception been professional, responsive and satisfactory. Furthermore, I greatly appreciate the beautiful parks I am able to enjoy with my dog. I am unable to attend this February 7, 2024 meeting of the Minnetonka Park Board but feel strongly that dogs should continue to be able to be off-leash in the non-trail (including woods) areas of Minnetonka parks. One of my greatest joys -- on an almost daily basis -- is going to Purgatory Park with my dog. I have NEVER had any issue with any dogs or dog owners. I have found dogs to be under the control of their owners and have never witnessed any interaction between those on the designated trails vs. the off-leash (or non-formal trail) areas. I personally always clean up after my dog and he has been trained to be extremely obedient. I find others that use Purgatory Park the same. As with all public areas, the actions of a few can spoil things for the many. I would expect you are hearing from the few. Being unable to attend this meeting, I am not privy to the issues at hand. However, I assume this is an issue of enforcement of park rules. As such, I would be willing to participate or organize a committee to develop workable solutions which would allow the open-area policy to remain -- including, if necessary, volunteers to remind park visitors of the rules and/or issue citations. Is a signed petition necessary? Please consider the population as a whole as opposed to the voices of the few. Sincerely, Pamela Morris

Thank you,  
**City of Minnetonka, MN**

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**Name**

Kim Tobin

**Full Address**

4535 Eastwood Road

Minnetonka, MN 55345

United States

**Phone**

**Email**

**Meeting date**

February 7

**Agenda item**

Purgatory Creek Park

**Comment**

One of the things that I enjoy of a living in Minnetonka is purgatory park. I walked my dog there every single day. It keeps me active as a 64+ year old woman. I feel safe in the park. And I choose to continue to live in Minnetonka and pay significant taxes because of purgatory Park. Every day I see many people there with their dogs. Dog owners use the Park. I see Dog owners being respectful, staying on the unpaved paths Enjoying the nature of the park. Even if I'm in the off leash area, and someone is approaching without a dog to put my dog on a leash. I'm very very cognizant if there are children around or if someone is going to be jogging by to keep my dog close to me. Dog owners use this park more than anyone else. Please do not take this wonderful freedom away from us and our beloved companions.

Thank you,  
**City of Minnetonka, MN**

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**From:** Eric Cepek <>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 1, 2024 3:27 PM  
**To:** Matt Kumka <[mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov)>; Korey Beyersdorf <[kbeyersdorf@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:kbeyersdorf@minnetonkamn.gov)>; Ella DiLorenzo <[edilorenzo@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:edilorenzo@minnetonkamn.gov)>; David Ingraham <[dingraham@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:dingraham@minnetonkamn.gov)>; Ben Jacobs <[bjacobs@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:bjacobs@minnetonkamn.gov)>; Katie Semersky <[ksemersky@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:ksemersky@minnetonkamn.gov)>; Christopher Walick <[cwalick@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:cwalick@minnetonkamn.gov)>  
**Subject:** Purgatory Master Plan

Hello all,

As long-time Minnetonka residents, our family uses Purgatory in different ways on a daily basis. This use extends the gamut of hiking, running, kids nature learnings, foraging, meditation and enjoying time with our dog. Throughout our almost two decades of experience, we have had nothing but good community interaction with or without our dogs at the park. As far as I can tell, this could possibly be the most used park in the city that doesn't have a sports field. There is a reason for this; people are happy with the park and the current policies are working. While there is always an opportunity to put up more signs, garbage cans and enforcement of off-leash for the "maintained" paths, nothing else needs to be done as this is widely used by the people of Minnetonka.

As I understand, some of the current topics opposing the current working/structure of the park are:

\* Purgatory should be restored and preserved as a prairie. This land has never been a prairie. Historically, this was swampland where trees were cut down to create a farm. If anything, the

whole park should be brought back to deciduous forest status. Some of the vocal opponents of dogs running off-leash have also commented on how this can impact buckthorn removal efforts. Buckthorn berries are toxic to dogs and they avoid them. All manner of woodland animals run through the park, from deer, to coyotes, bunnies and mice. All are capable of creating spread, so banning dogs off-leash for this reason is not valid.

\* Off leash enforcement. If the city can't enforce current regulations, how would the city be able to regulate rules going forward with off-leash change?

The goal of public land is to allow the population access. It appears the population is using this land and I think this could be used as a case study for others on what works vs. what doesn't.

My family is concerned that the voices of a small minority of park users is having a weighted influence on the decisions for this park. As the park is today, it is considered by dog owners and non-dog owners to be the best resource in the city of Minnetonka. As it stands today, Purgatory Park is an environment that is entirely unique to Minnetonka. Nowhere else is there an area this large for people and pets to run, and that is one of the reasons it is so special.

Please don't screw up a good thing.

Thank you,

Eric Cepek

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On Feb 4, 2024, at 10:00 PM, Helene Mann <

> wrote:

Hello,

I'm a Minnetonka resident and regular user of Purgatory Park. I don't own a dog, and have not been bothered by dogs in the park, but I'd like to share a few thoughts.

Purgatory Park is ideal for hiking, walking and appreciating nature, with a variety of terrain and abundant wildlife. Two recent developments have me concerned that the park might lose its character.

1. Removal of valuable trees (such as cedar). While I understand why it doesn't make sense to protect trees that wouldn't naturally be part of an Oak Savanna, I don't understand why they need to be cut down.
2. The proposed plan to add a fenced dog park. In my opinion, a fenced area will detract from the natural feel of the park – especially with all the trees being removed. And, when a bunch of dogs are fenced in together there is likely to be more barking.

I'd like to see the city enforce the existing rules about dogs in the park (and bikes). An occasional foot patrol with tickets issued could be helpful. If it's not feasible to enforce the existing rules, I'm not sure

how adding a fenced dog park would help. People who like to hike with their dogs probably wouldn't use it – and then we'd be left with an eyesore.

Here's a proposal. Before taking more drastic action, how about increasing communication? Two suggestions: 1. Publish an article in the Minnetonka Memo with the current rules about dogs and a request to follow the rules so off-leash dogs don't need to be banned. Put together flyers with the same message that volunteers could put on car windshields. Then wait a few months to see if the education is helping.

Thank you for considering my thoughts. No need to read them at the meeting.

Helene Mann

Stodola Road

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**Name**

Dane Kromer

**Full Address**

3725 Elmwood Place

Minnetonka, MN 55345

United States

**Phone**

**Email**

**Meeting date**

02/07/2024

**Agenda item**

Purgatory Park Master Planning – Preliminary Strategies Regarding Dogs

**Comment**

During our 25 years living in Minnetonka, we've always had one at least one large dog to care for and typically more than one with over 20 fosters in just the past five years. Our dogs get frequent walks and are always on 6' non-retractable leashes. Dogs do not need to run off-leash to be happy and healthy. We no longer walk our dogs in Minnetonka parks because of safety concerns with off-leash dogs. We are not alone in our fears! The current leash law is unenforceable and unfair to the vast majority of Minnetonka residents. We should all feel safe in our neighborhoods and parks. Please build a permanent fenced dog area for those who feel the need to let their dogs run off-leash. I believe a portion of the area currently occupied by the informal off-leash dog park would best meet this need. Unfortunately, dog issues at Purgatory Park are not unique. If solved there, it will just become worse elsewhere. Too many Minnetonka residents don't use our parks because they have all become "off-leash" dog parks. The current situation is in direct conflict with the POST System Plan mission to provide "... welcoming, comprehensive and balanced system of high quality parks..." The Park Board also needs to recommend

that the city adopt a mandatory 6' leash law throughout Minnetonka. This action would align with most other cities in our area, and would reduce the number of people coming to Minnetonka from neighboring cities to take advantage of our lax leash law. An enclosed dog park at Purgatory in conjunction with a humane and enforceable leash law would no doubt result in an overall increase in park use while also improving habitat in restoration areas.

Thank you,  
**City of Minnetonka, MN**

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**From:** Shannon < >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 3:16 PM  
**To:** Matt Kumka <[mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov)>; [mwiersum@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:mwiersum@minnetonkamn.gov); Paula Ramaley <[pramaley@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:pramaley@minnetonkamn.gov)>  
**Cc:** rene chiriboga < >  
**Subject:** Purgatory Park Off Leash area - Request to Preserve and Maintain Off-Leash Dog area at Purgatory Park Minnetonka

Shannon Thein  
1709 Pondview Terrace  
Minnetonka, MN 55391

Hi Matt, City Council and Park Members,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. I am writing, as I am unable to attend February 7, 2024 meeting in person, to express my deep concern regarding the potential changes to the off leash dog area in our beloved city.

As a passionate dog owner and resident of Minnetonka, I strongly believe that **preserving** and **maintaining** this off-leash dog area is crucial for the well being of our four-legged friends and the community as a whole. So I am speaking on behalf of both, especially the sporting dogs.

Firstly, I would like to highlight the numerous benefits that the off-leash dog area provides to both dogs and their owners. This designated space allows our furry companions to exercise, socialize and to burn off energy **off leash** in the **only** place in Minnetonka where they are allowed to do so. Regular exercise is essential for dogs' physical health and mental well-being, reducing the risks of anxiety, behavioral issues and obesity. Moreover the off leash area promotes responsible dog ownership by providing the opportunity for training, playing and socializing your dog.

Furthermore, the off-leash dog area plays a significant role in fostering a sense of **community** among dog owners. It serves as meeting point for like-minded individuals who share a common love for dogs and especially sporting dogs. This space encourages social interaction and the exchange of experiences

and knowledge creating a strong support network within the community. Additionally, the off-leash dog area promotes a sense of unity and camaraderie among those that use the valuable location, enhancing the overall livability and social fabric of our city.

I understand that concerns may arise regarding environmental issues, waste management, potential conflicts between dog owners and non dog owners. However, these issues can be properly addressed and currently are addressed with waste disposal stations the leash area requirements. It is crucial to strike a balance between the needs and rights of owners who would like to have their dogs off leash and the concerns of other residents.

In the light of the above, I kindly request that the city council considers the following action:

Maintain, improve and expand the existing off-leash dog area facilities, including necessary repairs, regular maintenance, and upgrades to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all users.

Increase public awareness and education on the off-leash area to ensure its continued success and sustainability.

Create separate spaces for leashed dogs away from the off leashed area to mitigate any conflicts between dogs who are not good off leash or around other dogs. Therefore minimizing complaints and creating a more harmonious environment in the off-leash dog area.

I truly believe that by preserving and maintaining our off-leash dog area, we can enhance the quality of life for both dogs and residents in our city. The positive impact this space has on the physical and mental well-being of our four-legged companions, as well as the sense of community it fosters, cannot be overstated.

I would like to thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I kindly request that you give due attention to this request and take the necessary steps to ensure the preservation of our off-leash dog area. Please feel free to reach out to me if you require and further information or if there is any way I can assist in this endeavor.

Yours sincerely,

Shannon Thein

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**Name**

Edwin Hedblom

**Full Address**

4820 FairHills Road West

Minnetonk, MN 55345

USA

**Phone**

**Email**

**Meeting date**

February 7th

**Agenda item**

Purgatory Creek Park

**Comment**

I live in Minnetonka and have used the park (nearly daily) year around since the mid 90's. I use both leashed and off leash areas of the park for my high energy sporting dogs (2). Additionally, I use the park for jogging and cycling. I feel like I know the park about as well as anyone. The biggest opportunity for improvement is to ensure that owners leash their dogs on maintained walking paths. People simply do not know the rules. I know because I've asked owners to leash their dogs and they commonly say they didn't know they had to. The signage is small, sporadically displayed (not at entry points to the park) and unclear about what is considered maintained. Additionally, rules are rarely enforced. I strongly object to a fenced area for dogs. Not every dog owner is there so their dog can play with other dogs – some simply want off leash time where their dog can run, explore, or train without the interference of other dogs. Also, this is not the way dog owners wish to enjoy the park with their dog. Lastly, erecting a fence is completely inconsistent with the efforts to restore the natural prairie. I can't believe anyone really wants to look at a fence. I could live with the following – keeping the area internal to the circular walking trail as off-leash. While all other areas on leash. This includes maintained walking paths and narrow unmaintained trails in the hilly south end of the park. Nobody wants to meet a dog face to face on an 18 inch wide trail in the woods. The first solution should be to focus on signage and enforcement of current rules. This is the least disruptive, most effective. and the least costly solution. See how we enjoy the park at Instagram @rhubarbanddutch Although I am unable to attend the meeting in person, please feel free to reach out I can provide additional insights. Thanks for your consideration.

Thank you,  
**City of Minnetonka, MN**

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**Name**

Kandis Tsuchiya

**Full Address**

5311 Scenic Heights Dr

Minnetonka, MN 55345

United States

**Phone**

**Email**

**Meeting date**

February 7, 2014



**Agenda item**

Purgatory Park

**Comment**

I love taking walks with my dog at Purgatory Park. The walks are my exercise for the day. I completed two years of dog training classes before gradually taking my dog was ready to be off leash. At no time do I feel threatened that a dog is going to bite me or injure me as the other dog owners are very considerate and have control over their dogs. Taking away the ability to walk my dog unleashed removes a unique aspect of living in Minnetonka that I love.

Thank you,  
**City of Minnetonka, MN**

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**From:** Minnetonka Matters <[notifications@engagementhq.com](mailto:notifications@engagementhq.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 9:58 AM  
**To:** Matt Kumka <[mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov)>  
**Subject:** New feedback on Purgatory Park Master Plan

Hi Matt K.

You have received new feedback on the Guestbook on project **Purgatory Park Master Plan** on your site,

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We use the off leash dog park. Our dog is a redbone coonhound who needs the extra space to run off his energy. We have had no problems with dogs being off leash. Please keep off-leash!

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Added by **Jill H**

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**From:** Minnetonka Matters <[notifications@engagementhq.com](mailto:notifications@engagementhq.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 10:10 AM  
**To:** Matt Kumka <[mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov)>  
**Subject:** New feedback on Purgatory Park Master Plan

Hi Matt K.

You have received new feedback on the Guestbook on project **Purgatory Park Master Plan** on your site,

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I support keeping the off leash area as is. This is such a gem in the area, it's great for the dogs and the people to connect and build a community in this way. If the enforcement is a concern, then require a permit to fund as needed or find a way to solve that problem.

Added by **bennlin**

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**From:** Minnetonka Matters <[notifications@engagementhq.com](mailto:notifications@engagementhq.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 11:34 AM  
**To:** Matt Kumka <[mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov)>  
**Subject:** New feedback on Purgatory Park Master Plan

Hi Matt K.

You have received new feedback on the Guestbook on project **Purgatory Park Master Plan** on your site,

Purgatory dog park / off leash park is such an amazing part of Minnetonka. I would HATE to not be able to go and let my dog play with other dogs while I socialize with other dog owners in the park and explore. Please don't take away the off leash dog park.

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Added by **AshleyMarie**

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**From:** Minnetonka Matters <[notifications@engagementhq.com](mailto:notifications@engagementhq.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 12:02 PM  
**To:** Matt Kumka <[mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov)>  
**Subject:** New feedback on Purgatory Park Master Plan

Hi Matt K.

You have received new feedback on the Guestbook on project **Purgatory Park Master Plan** on your site,

The off leash park is an amazing community asset. We are so grateful to have this space in our backyard and open space for our animals. Please do not take away the off leash because a very small few do not follow the rules. I believe we as a community can self enforce the rules.

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Added by **Molly S.**

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