

Park District Cuts the Ribbon on Dog/People Park

By Carol Frank

It was as if they knew that something exciting was up! The dogs were sniffing each other, wagging their tails and pulling on their leashes as the people who had made the park possible made opening remarks. Park district chairperson Robert Lincoln thanked a host of people who worked hard over the course of several years to bring a dog/people park to Great Neck. From the advisory committee to the park staff to a mostly supportive community, they were all thanked.

The ribbon was cut and the dogs and owners scampered up the steps to an open plateau with two fenced in areas, one for small and one for big dogs, over 30 pounds, under the shade of old growth trees. The dimensions for the small dog area is 76' by 62' or 4,712 sq. ft. and the large dog area is 174' by 62' or 10,788 sq. ft.

It was a bucolic scene and by some miracle it actually was not raining last Tuesday afternoon, a lucky break.

The two adjacent fenced enclosures contain wood chips, a few benches for the humans and a doggie waste disposal station. Plastic poop baggies are provided as a back-up to ensure that there are no excuses for proper clean-up.

In the future, the park district plans to install a water source, but for now, owners are encouraged to bring their own.

In order to get a "pooch pass", a card which must be inserted to open the gate, you will need to be a resident of the park district, fill out an application at Great Neck House and have proof that your pet has current rabies and bordatella vaccinations. Owners will be required to sign a liability form for the protection of the park district. The common sense rules for the park are listed on the website. Some of them are:

Dogs must be at least 4 months old to participate. Don't bring your dog if she is in heat. Humans must not smoke or eat in the dog run, and are limited to 2 dogs per person per visit; dogs that exhibit aggressive behavior and/or incessant barking must be removed immediately. For now, the hours are from 9 a.m. until sunset.

The new park located on Colonial Drive in Thomaston was budgeted to cost \$20,000 and so far is under budget due to the fact that park district employees did most of the installation. Some of the Village of Great Neck's employees were hired



"Getting to Know You." Small dogs greet a big dog at the fence that separates the two play areas at the brand new dog park on Colonial Road.



A special thanks to the staff at the Great Neck Park District who worked so hard to make the dog park inviting and functional. Left to right, Superintendent Neil Marrin, Humberto Albers, Scott Garrigan, Bobby Wanczowski, Frank Vaccaro, and Peter Renick. Not pictured: Gene Bradley, Tommy Warren, Will McGirr, Paul Chaulkis and Kevin Brannigan.

to do the grading. Chairman Lincoln said, "This really was a community project with a lot of cooperation from many people."

On opening day, there was nary a growl. Some dogs acted a little apprehensive, probably because they have never been off leash outside before, but others played

chase immediately and explored every corner of the enclosures. By the end of the play session, even the shy dogs were running around like old timers. The pet owners were busy learning the names of their dog's new playmates and just grinning big grins... in lieu of tail wagging.