

On behalf of the Dog Park Committee, I am respectfully reporting on the status of the temporary dog park located at 530 Crandon Park Boulevard. The Park had what we would call a "Soft Opening" in July after the installment of a fence around the area, doggy bag stations, and one park bench in both the small and large dog areas. The use of the park was surprisingly strong despite being opened in the dead of the summer when ambient temperatures are oppressive even at night, families are traveling, and minimal comforts were provided for the dogs or the residents that came with them. As the weeks went by the Village installed a water fountain inside the entry gate, added two more benches on each side and even planted some palm trees recently. There are plans to add picnic benches on each side and 1 more water fountain to provide water for the dogs inside both areas of the park after relocating the existing water fountain.

Prior to opening, the main concerns about having a park centered around the noise from the dogs, the smell that would emanate from the park due to build up of waste, and increased problems with parking and overall congestion in an already busy area. I am pleased to report that none of these concerns seem to be a problem. While the dogs do bark at each other occasionally, there have been no noise complaints from nearby residents in the condos across Crandon Boulevard or the owner of the Sun Trust bank property. In addition, owners have been responsible in picking up after their dogs and are taking a personal interest in the success of the park. We also had an active resident (who does not sit on our committee) interview owners at 575 Crandon and 555 Crandon regarding their concerns and she has not had any complaints voiced to her. There is a slightly increased need for parking in the area but many people are walking to the park from their house and additional golf cart spaces have been installed on Fernwood. There have been some negative letters in the Islander but many more positive ones and many of the concerns raised are already being addressed by the Parks and Recreation Department. There is a plan for a hedge to be placed along Crandon to obstruct the view of the fence as well as creating a visual barrier for dogs walking by that are outside the park and more likely to bark. In addition, there will be more vegetation to create some shade within the park. Maintenance plans are in the works and we are well aware of the importance of keeping this area clean and regularly rejuvenated.

The positive outcomes of the Dog Park have been even greater than anticipated. In addition to providing the community with additional green/park space, it has become quickly apparent that this park is not just for dogs but for the people they come with. The interaction among residents in the park and their canine companions has been tremendous. I have never seen an area where people so easily engage with others with the age range starting at young children and advancing to senior citizens. Even though we are only just beginning to get a break in the weather, the quantity of dogs has steadily increased as the weeks have gone by. A Facebook page titled Key Biscayne Dog Park has been spontaneously started by a resident not affiliated

with our committee. There are plans in place to host a Halloween costume party at the park for the owners and their dogs. Its early popularity has demonstrated a clear desire and need within our community for a dog park and broadened the populations that are served by Village facilities.

On behalf of our committee I thank you as a Council for taking the initiative to get this park in place and create yet another community gathering spot that should benefit everyone in perpetuity. We look forward to working with you to address the ongoing concerns of the community as we move towards finding a more permanent solution for our four legged friends.