

July 11, 2010

Town of Richmond Hill
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 3P4

Attn: The Mayor and Council for the Town of Richmond Hill

**Re: Off Leash Dog Facility located near.
Yonge Street and Tower Hill Road**

Dear Council,

Further to our meeting with the Mayor July 6th, we have collected over 200 names on a petition objecting to the location of the Dog Park and it's proximity to adjacent properties. Our group, consisting of residents from Moraine Ridge Drive and Jonah Drive are dissatisfied with the current status of, and events leading up to the construction of the facility.

To be totally clear, we are not objecting to the notion this type of facility, but only to the impact we have experienced within our neighbourhood and the circumstances that have lead to its implementation. It is disturbing to our group to have this condition condescendingly referred to by our elected member of Council as a "NIMBY" response. Inquiries into process are responded to with deflection and procrastination, correspondence containing complaints become snubbed as indicated in an article in the Liberal January 14th, 2010. We are holding Council to their obligation to seriously consider our concerns and how they impact our community.

For your reference, the following is a list of many of the issues of contention:

Noise. Constant and unrelenting.

- The park is open from dawn to dusk, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year
- The consistent barking and calling from owners is unbearable
- We have witnessed dog fights and have tolerated extreme profanities shouted by their owners in the presence of our children
- Un-buffered exposure to adjacent residents exists despite claims of containment by staff

Congestion. An otherwise quiet neighbourhood has been inundated with a presumed 1300 dogs and owners per week.

- Excessive street parking and dangerous circumstances with pedestrians exists
- Increased situations of drivers disobeying stop signs and posted speed limits

- Apparent neglect with checks and measures by insinuating traffic calming is self regulated with the onus on drivers to act safely
- Numerous car accidents directly at the proposed cross-walk location have occurred
- Intensified waste implications on the environment (litter)
- Conflicts from the people using the Dog Park spill out into the community
- The designated parking area for the Dog Park at the adjacent plaza on Tower Hill Road becomes the centre for grooming toileting (dog hair and waste) – within the parking area itself and on the adjacent boulevard
- There is no indication that the designated parking area is permanent
- Dogs are often off leash on the nature trail and local side walks and quite often their owners do not stoop and scoop
- Dog fights and risk of conflicts with local residents increase with additional dogs on the nature trail and local sidewalks
- Exposure of the Dog Park to the nature trail

Destruction of Open Space. We *believed* that we had homes in a naturalized setting.

- This “zone” has no contained planning “use” as a Dog Park
- Many species of animals have vanished from the area despite being controlled by the regional conservation authority and its proximity to the Oak Ridges Moraine

People come first. Our group believes that the municipal process to deliver the Dog Park intentionally avoided local resident involvement.

- The location of the Park was not published in the community notice section of the Liberal prior to the construction of the park.
- The only published reference to the Dog Park is in the form of an advertised survey making no mention of location
- No public forum to discuss or address local resident concerns was presented with its location prior to the construction of the park
- Potential alternative sites have not been considered nor investigated publicly
- Site evaluation was flawed by staff discounting the need to meet outlined criteria within specifically designed by Town of Richmond Hill documents
- Increased financial obligations to tax payers with the cost of the park and its extended servicing, maintenance and supervision

~~- Insinuations run rampant that the enjoyment of many dog owners and the K9 club outweigh the rights of only a few residents near the site.~~

- An attempt to mitigate sight lines was to plant numerous saplings that will not create any suitable affect for years

We have heard from many of the Park's supporters that the facility is marvellous and that even with its shortcomings, the Park is needed in Richmond Hill. We are not contesting nor questioning this area of discussion, only how this Park affects our community. Clearly, this implication needs to be addressed. This is not a component of progress. This appears to our group to be a self serving attempt to intentionally cloud process from affected residents. This is from a government who sings of transparency.

Our patience as a group has diminished and we require Council to address our concerns immediately. We do not feel that waiting until the next meeting in September will provide adequate time to act to resolve issues appropriately before the pilot timelines expire. For this reason we are respectfully requesting council to publicly resolve their position on the fate of the Dog Park.

Sincerely,

The Group of Residents from
Moraine Ridge Drive and Jonah Drive

Petition

How would you feel if a dog park used by 1300 dogs per week was set up as close as 50 meters (150ft) from your back yard?

An off-leash dog park in a pilot-project stage has been set up in a residential area between Yonge Street and Tower Hill Road. Nearly 200 dogs and dog owners use the park every day. This dog park project was undertaken without consultation of nearby residents, which sets a very bad precedent.

Although the notion of a dog park is welcomed, constant nearby barking, dog fighting and shouting of commands creates disturbing noise in the community from dawn until dusk.

This petition requests City of Richmond Hill to relocate the proposed off-leash dog park (currently in a pilot-project stage) to a more suitable location away from any residential neighbourhood.

Name

Signature

Phone