



**CITY OF GREAT FALLS
COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT**

Item: The Animal Foundation of Great Falls Memorandum of Understanding

Initiated By: Park & Recreation Department

Prepared By: Patty Rearden, Deputy Park and Recreation Director

Presented By: Marty Basta, Park & Recreation Director

Action Requested: Approve Memorandum of Understanding

Suggested Motion:

1. Commissioner moves:

“I move that the City Commission approve/deny the Memorandum of Understanding with The Animal Foundation of Great Falls.”

2. Mayor calls for a second, discussion, inquiries from the public, and calls the vote.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Commission approve the Memorandum of Understanding with The Animal Foundation of Great Falls.

Background:

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a general framework for the operation of the Dog Park through a public-private partnership to construct, manage, and maintain the Dog Park. The term of the MOU is for 10 years beginning September 1, 2008 and ending August 31, 2018. The MOU automatically renews for another 10 years unless either party provides written notice of its intention not to renew the MOU on or before February 1, 2018.

At the December 4, 2007 City Commission Work Session, the City Commission heard a presentation from The Animal Foundation on the site location and construction plans for the Dog Park, as well as the proposed agreement between the Park and Recreation Department and The Animal Foundation on operation of the Dog Park.

The City Commission approved the location of the Dog Park at the December 4, 2007 City Commission Meeting. Several park and City property parcels were reviewed for public accessibility, proximity to Rivers Edge Trail, existing infrastructure, topography and possible conflicts with other uses in the area before deciding on the location. The Park and Recreation

Board approved the location for the Great Falls Dog Park at its November 19, 2007 Board Meeting.

The Animal Foundation of Great Falls formed in 2002 with the mission of raising funds to build a new animal shelter and Dog Park in Great Falls. Beginning in June of 2004, Animal Foundation representatives and City staff met over a three month period to review potential sites and determine the most appropriate location for a Dog Park. At least five City and Park property parcels were reviewed for size, location, proximity to River's Edge trail, accessibility, existing infrastructure, visibility, topography, zoning and possible conflicts with other uses in the area. In August of 2004, the site location committee determined that the City owned land adjacent to River Drive North between 6th and 9th Streets North best met the location criteria and was recommended as the site for the Dog Park.

In September of 2007, the Dog Park Committee of the Great Falls Animal Foundation began meeting with City of Great Falls Park and Recreation staff to develop conceptual design plans, operation and maintenance plans, and cost estimates for the proposed site. The Dog Park is a City park open to the public. The Great Falls Animal Foundation agreed to fund construction of the Dog Park and the City of Great Falls Park and Recreation Department agreed to provide ongoing maintenance with operational assistance from The Animal Foundation. The development committee met bi-monthly to further refine the plans.

The Dog Park is now complete and is projected to open in spring of 2009, as soon as the turf is filled in and in usable condition. The Dog Park was open August 6-13, 2008 for a "Preview Week" and was received enthusiastically by the Great Falls community.

Concurrences:

The Park & Recreation Board recommended approval by the City Commission of the lease at their regular meeting on September 8, 2008.

Alternatives:

If the Memorandum of Understanding with The Animal Foundation of Great Falls is not approved, the responsibility for maintenance and future improvements will lie entirely with the City and the Park and Recreation Department.

Attachments/Exhibits:

1. The Animal Foundation of Great Falls Memorandum of Understanding.
(Not available online; on file in City Clerk's Office.)