

CITY OF ALBANY  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT

Agenda date: September 13, 2012

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Penelope Leach, Assistant City Manager/ Community Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Memorial Park Section B

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Parks and Recreation Commission discuss with community potential solutions for maintaining Memorial Park ball field Section B in a manner that will provide multi-use opportunities currently and in the future.

**BACKGROUND**

In May and June of 2011, the PR Commission discussed and recommended to Council the installation of a fence separating Section A and Section B. Council approved the installation of the fence June 6, 2011. The purpose of the fence was to allow concurrent use by those permitted users on Section A and those wanting to use the field on an ad hoc basis in Section B.

At the May 10, 2012 Parks and Recreation (PR) Commission meeting residents requested and Commissioners agreed to discuss with the community the possibility of installing benches inside Section B at Memorial Park ball field.

After the May 2012 PR Commission meeting, staff received additional information from residents regarding concerns pertaining to the condition and use of Section B. Given that the installation of benches may impact the use of the area, a broader discussion regarding current conditions and use of the area was warranted. At the June 14 meeting, the Commission discussed with the community concerns regarding the large number of dogs using the park on a regular basis, parking, noise from owners and barking dogs, and the deterioration of the turf. Dog owners frequenting Section B also spoke of its popularity for use as a place to exercise and socialize dogs and requested amenities for dogs be added to the area such as benches, a watering fountain for dogs, and a double gate.

Staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission agreed to form a working group to meet with the City's Dog ad Hoc Committee to brainstorm and discuss possible solutions for the use and maintenance of Section B. The volunteer working group and the Dog ad Hoc Committee met on August 2, 2012 and August 23, 2012. Recommendations from the group are attached. On the attachment, staff provided additional input, suggestions, and recommendations for each of the Working Group recommendations.

## **DISCUSSION**

Since the fence was installed in July 2011, many residents assumed the sports field was separate from Section B and the hours when dogs were not allowed on the field were not applicable to Section B. However, there has been no action by the PR Commission or City Council that indicates Section B is no longer part of the sports field. The intent of section B was to allow for concurrent use for a variety of activities. Per comments during the PR Commission discussion and the discussion by Council members, the area is to remain available for multi-use to allow City staff the opportunity to schedule programs and events for the community as needed. The area was not to be designated as a “dog park” exclusively.

Although the intent is to keep Section B available for City run programs and activities, as well as those without dogs wanting an open space to play, the area has not recently been used for those purposes. Section B is primarily used by dog owners exercising and socializing their dogs. Staff reseeded the turf earlier this year; however, due to the high volume and frequency of dogs on the turf, the turf is again in very poor condition. Staff is not recommending a surface other than grass at this time.