

Craig, Sondra

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Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 2:24 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Written Comment For Meeting

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To whom it may concern,

Good afternoon. I was just writing this email in hopes to make another voice heard for tonight's meeting on the homeless population and Houska Park . I would like to voice my opinion opposing the use of Houska park to house the homeless again. I am an avid dog park goer at the Houska dog park. I go every single day, rain or shine. I own 4 dogs and I use the park to socialize and exercise my animals. This is the only decent park in La Crosse that dogs and owners can enjoy the room and freedoms the park provides. There are so many older folks and disabled citizens that use the park to exercise their dogs because they can not physically walk their dogs too. We had to stop going to the dog park while "tent city" was in operation last time. There were used needles, trash everywhere, and people would come into the park just to beg for money and cigarettes, or just to annoy the dogs. I did not feel safe at all. Every single person I have talked to at the dog park does not want the homeless population back down there. I am sure the boat owners and the boathouses do not want these people there either.

If the city allows the homeless to come back to Houska, I am also wondering if there would be a possibility of creating a new dog park in South La Crosse? There are so many spaces that are unused to make a new dog park. I myself would even volunteer for free to help clean and maintain a new space. I already try to do that at Houska dog park already. The one place I recommend a new park is beside/ behind the Hillview Assisted living/ Nursing home, and in front of Chad Erickson Memorial Park , where I know the city owns a large piece of land . Or use the piece of land between Caribou Coffee and O'Riley Auto Parts that is too awkward of an oblong strip to do anything else with anyways. I am sure there are so many more options to be able to create a safe and accessible dog park that people would be happy to use and maintain.

I hope us Dog Park Goers are heard just as much in these times of the unknown for Housksa Park . We love our animals , and find so much joy and peace being able to see them run free and socialize. Having a dog park for my dogs means everything to me. It sounds funny, but its true. It makes them happier to be able to get out, to run safely, to make friends, and for myself to socialize with other dog parents as well, as I am a stay at home mother.

I do wish the homeless the best of luck, and hope to find them a place that they can find shelter and help, but this is NOT Houska Park. They need a place that is staffed, patrolled, and managed. Maybe even indoors, like the old Kmart or something like that.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. I truly appreciate the work you do.

Thank you

Sara Tesnow