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Pickering going to the dogs

City and working group consult public on possible off-leash park

By Kristen Calis
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PICKERING — When Nicole Scarlett move to Pickering from Calgary, she was shocked to find her new home lacked an off-leash dog park, and saw it forced otherwise law-abiding citizens to break municipal bylaws for dogs to get proper exercise.

"And that's not a good position to be in," she said.

So she's been working hard for the past couple of years to get one in Pickering. In July 2006 Ms. Scarlett was a founding member of the first volunteer working group to establish a leash-free park in Pickering. Now that four areas have been established after much research, the working group and the City are collecting public feedback for a report to council in June. At that meeting council could approve the proposed dog park for a six-month trial period.

The potential sites selected are: Pine Grove; Diana, Princess of Wales Park; Wharf Street; and Valley Farm Road. Ms. Scarlett explained the working group volunteers will help establish park rules, repair damaged areas, organize regular clean-ups, monitor the area to help enforce the rules and educate users and non-users.

"Every park has rules," she said. "That's what makes them enjoyable for every-

Off-leash dog parks

Why the group thinks Pickering needs a leash-free area.

Popularity: Dogs are a growing segment of the community, including working dogs and dogs simply for companionship.

Exercise: Daily exercise is the foundation of good behaviour and socialization.

Compliance: A lack of leash-free areas forces law-abiding citizens to break municipal laws.

Comparability: Pickering is one of few municipalities without leash-free areas today. Toronto has more than 32, Mississauga has more than seven and Ajax has two.

Economic benefit: Leash-free areas are attractive to potential new residents and tourists.

Leash-free area characteristics:

- * enclosed with fencing at least 1.2 metres high
- * at least 0.2 hectares in size
- * separate from other public use areas
- * maintained by volunteers and municipal staff
- * accessible
- * governed by rules

one."

At the meeting, resident Gerald Desroches, whose yard backs onto Diana, Princess of Wales Park, shared

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WALKING FOR SICK KIDS



Photo by Sheena Ouder Kirk

PICKERING — Approximately 20 children participated in the annual Bridges Kinder Connection pre-school walkathon for the Hospital for Sick Children with, left to right, Brayden Lindstone and Logan Zavitz leading the way.

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