

Village dog park to be called Pepi's Playground

Written by CAROL POMEDAY

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Halloween canine walk and costume party will raise money for fence

The soon-to-be dog park in the Village of Belgium has a name — Pepi's Playground — and fund-raising efforts are under way to make the haven for dogs a reality.

The goal is to have the three-acre park, which is next to the village's wastewater treatment facility, open next year for dogs to be off leashes. Donations are being sought to enclose the area with a fence.

The name was chosen by a citizen committee of the Parks and Recreation Committee to honor the wishes of Julaine Demge, who had a dog name Pepi, and provided land for the dog park.

Pepi's Walk and Halloween Costume Party is planned for Saturday, Oct. 27, in Community Park in Belgium.

The walk, which will be almost one mile, will start and end at Community Park. Registration will be at 9 a.m. with the walk at 10 a.m.

The registration fee is \$10 prior to the event or \$15 the day of the walk. Participants are also encouraged to obtain pledges.

There will be prizes for the best dog costume, biggest dog, smallest dog, best trick and most money raised.

"We will be judging the dog costumes, but dogs that coordinate with their owners will have a better chance at a prize," said Trustee Vickie Boehnlein, who spearheaded efforts to get a dog park in the village.

In addition, there will be a demonstration at 11 a.m. by the Cedarburg K9 Unit, a hunt training demonstration by Salty Dog Farms at 11:30 a.m. and a demonstration by Dawgs in Motion at noon.

Port Photography will take photos of dogs and their owners. There will be food available and a bake sale.

Before the event could be held, the Village Board had to make an exception to its ordinance, which prohibits dogs in village parks except in the dog park. That was done last week.

Currently, the land is being rented by a farmer and there is a corn crop on it. People are asked not to use the field and damage the crop.

Because it is a farm field, the land will have to be graded and grass, trees and shrubs planted.

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"It doesn't have to all be done before it can be used. Dogs are pretty forgiving," Boehnlein said. "Hopefully, people will donate trees and stuff."

The dog park is 220 feet wide by the length of the filtration property. The remaining 8.3 acres will be kept for possible expansion of the filtration plant.

The dog park will not open until it is fenced. The filtration property has a fence, so only three sides will need to be enclosed.

There is water available at the property and a spigot will be installed.

The dog park is part of an 11.3-acre parcel acquired by the village from Demge, who grew up in the village and now lives in Oceanside, Calif.

The property, which was scheduled for foreclosure last year by Ozaukee County for unpaid taxes, was acquired for \$37,000 — \$9,000 in back taxes to the county and \$28,000 in village assessments for improvements in the industrial park.

Demge requested a dog park be created on a portion of the land.

Registration forms for Pepi's Walk are available at Village Hall or by e-mailing belgiumdogpark@gmail.com.