

OUR OPINION: DOG PARK PLAN
August 22

W-B gives pets new leash on life

TL Opinion

DOGGONE IT, we think Wilkes-Barre has a good idea, one worth barking about, one with a bite. For many, it will bring new meaning to a dog day afternoon.

The city's decision to allow an unused section of Hollenback Park to be transformed into a dog park is a progressive plan that will strengthen relations between City Hall and residents. Dogs are part of city life, and the Leighton administration's decision to allow the Wyoming Valley Dog Owners Group to establish the dog park on North Washington Street recognizes that. The plan is a simple one in keeping with a growing trend throughout the country. A grassy tract adjacent to Hollenback's playground will be fenced off by the dog owners into two sections, one for large dogs and the other for smaller pooches.

Trash cans, a rack for disposable doggie bags, benches and a water spigot will be placed to ensure the area stays clean. Then the pets will be able to roam leash-free, allowing owners to provide their best friends with needed exercise in a controlled environment.

The facility also might reduce the number of pets on the River Common on River Street, where dog droppings on the concrete promenade are not an uncommon sight this summer.

The first dog park we're aware of was built 30 years ago in Berkeley, Calif. Today there are about 600 dog parks in the United States, including one in West Pittston that was built in 2008 as a class project by a Leadership Wilkes-Barre group.

As borough Mayor Bill Goldsworthy noted when that facility opened 15 months ago, the park's success depends upon owners following a few simple rules: cleaning up after pets, keeping a close eye on them and making sure the animals are vaccinated and licensed.

While a major hurdle has been crossed, the Wyoming Valley Dog Owners Group's efforts are far from over. The group, through a series of fundraisers and donations, hopes to fund up to \$30,000 in improvements at no cost to taxpayers.

Excuse our puns, but we're glad the project didn't get dogged down in government bureaucracy. It's reassuring that an older city like Wilkes-Barre can learn new tricks.

Go, fetch!

To learn more about the project, its fundraisers and events, visit www.wyomingvalleydogowners.com.