



Docket Item #2

Special Use Permit #2013-0057

426 East Monroe Avenue - Simpson Dog Park Lighting

Application	General Data	
Consideration of a Special Use Permit request to install lighting and to install light poles taller than 15 feet at an existing dog park.	Planning Commission Hearing:	October 1, 2013
	City Council Hearing:	October 19, 2013
Address: 426 East Monroe Avenue	Zone:	POS / Public Open Space and Community Recreation zone
Applicant: City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities	Small Area Plan:	Potomac West

Staff Recommendation: APPROVAL subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the recommended permit conditions found in Section III of this report.

Staff Reviewers: Nathan Randall nathan.randall@alexandriava.gov

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, OCTOBER 1, 2013: On a motion by Commissioner Macek, seconded by Vice Chair Dunn, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis and asked staff to explore alternative light pole locations outside the fence or closer to the dog park periphery.

Speakers:

Sandy Modell, 400 East Custis Avenue, spoke in support of the request and asked for the light poles to be located outside of the dog park fence to prevent potential pet injuries.

Deborah Critchley, 401 Underhill Place, also spoke in support of the request and asked for light poles to be located outside of the dog park fence.



SUP #2013-0057
426 E. Monroe Ave.

10/1/2013 N



I. DISCUSSION

The applicant, the City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, requests Special Use Permit approval to install lighting and to install light poles taller than 15 feet at an existing dog park at 426 East Monroe Avenue.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is the southern portion of the City-owned Simpson Park property on which an existing dog park is located. The park property has approximately 560 feet of frontage on East Monroe Avenue, 530 feet of frontage on Duncan Avenue, 600 feet of depth at its deepest point, and a total lot area of approximately 399,500 square feet (9.2 acres). Other uses on the property include a lighted baseball field used by T.C. Williams High School, a lighted basketball court, bathroom facilities, and parking.



The property is surrounded by a mix of commercial, institutional and residential uses. Residential townhouses are located to the north across the baseball field from the dog park. Additional athletic fields on land formerly occupied by Potomac Yard are located to the east. Residential apartments on Potomac Yard Landbay L, a coffee roasting company, and an office building are located to the south. The Alexandria YMCA building is located to the west.

BACKGROUND

The existing baseball field and basketball court lights have been located at the park for many years and appear to pre-date the introduction, in 1992, of an SUP requirement for the installation of lighting in the POS zone. None of these existing lights shine into the dog park.

An informal group of Simpson dog park advocates submitted the request for dog park lighting to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) through the Park and Recreation Commission Citizens Request project process. The Park and Recreation Commission has recommended that the project be pursued.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to install lighting at the existing dog park so that the facility may be available for nighttime use. Three light poles, each measuring 23 feet in height, will be installed around the dog park area. The lights will become available for use each day at 6 a.m. and will automatically shut off at 10 p.m. each night.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The property is located in the POS / Public Open Space and Community Recreation zone. Pursuant to Section 6-105(G) of the Zoning Ordinance, the addition of lights to any area in the POS zone that allows for nighttime use requires Special Use Permit approval. In addition, Section 6-106(A) allows structures above 15 feet in height in the POS zone only with Special Use Permit approval.

The proposed use is consistent with the Potomac West Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for park and community recreation uses.

PARKING

The Zoning Ordinance does not specify a parking requirement for dog parks. The existing 79 parking spaces at Simpson Park, which are located in two parking areas (one along the western property line and the other at the southwest corner of the property), will remain unchanged under this proposal.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff supports the request to add lights at the existing dog park at Simpson Park. The addition of lights will allow the park to be used later into the evening, which offers dog owners in the neighborhood greater flexibility in scheduling time to exercise their pets, particularly during winter months. The height of the poles is reasonable and lower than the lighting found at many tennis courts.

The installation of lights should not have a negative impact on the surrounding area for several reasons. Most of the nearby residential properties are located to the north across the Simpson Park property, which already includes fields lit for nighttime use, from the dog park. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) will use modern lighting technology that significantly limits the potential for spill-over lighting by shielding and targeting the lighting to the area of the dog park. Similar technology has been installed at other parks in the City, including Miracle Field near the Lee Center and Ben Brenman Park. The applicant has submitted a photometric analysis showing that lighting from the new poles will not reach neighboring properties and will be indistinguishable from the existing street lights in front of the dog park along East Monroe Avenue.

Staff has recommended two conditions of approval in this report given that the request pertains to the installation of light poles. Condition #1 limits the operation of the lights to the hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., as listed in the application. RPCA will meet this condition by automatically timing the lights to shut off at 10 p.m. and to turn on at 6 a.m. Although no problems are expected from the use, staff has also included standard one-year review language in Condition #2 that it includes in virtually all SUP requests.

Subject to the conditions contained in Section III of this report, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit request.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. Dog park lighting shall be shut-off between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. daily. (P&Z)
2. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the Special Use Permit one year after approval, and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the Director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as the result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions, or (c) the Director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z)

STAFF: Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Nathan Randall, Urban Planner.

Staff Note: In accordance with Section 11-506(c) of the Zoning Ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a Special Use Permit by City Council or the Special Use Permit shall become void.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services

F-1 No comments

Code Enforcement

F-1 No comments received

Health

F-1 No comments

Police Department

R-1 The Police Department has no objection to this request.



APPLICATION

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2013-00057

PROPERTY LOCATION: 426 E. Monroe Ave

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 044.01-01-17

ZONE: POS

APPLICANT:

Name: City of Alexandria, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities

Address: 1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

PROPOSED USE: Addition of lights to the fenced dog exercise area

☒ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 4-11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

☐ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria staff and Commission Members to visit, inspect, and photograph the building premises, land etc., connected with the application.

☒ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4-1404(D)(7) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

☐ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Director of Planning and Zoning on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

James Spengler, Director, RPCA

Print Name of Applicant or Agent

1108 Jefferson Street

Mailing/Street Address

Alexandria, VA

City and State

22314

Zip Code

Signature

Date

703-746-5502

Telephone #

Fax #

james.spengler@alexandriava.gov

Email address

ACTION-PLANNING COMMISSION: _____ **DATE:** _____

ACTION-CITY COUNCIL: _____ **DATE:** _____

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PROPERTY OWNER'S AUTHORIZATION

As the property owner of N/A, I hereby
(Property Address)
grant the applicant authorization to apply for the _____ use as
(use)
described in this application.

Name _____ Phone _____
Please Print
Address: _____ Email: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

1. Floor Plan and Plot Plan. As a part of this application, the applicant is required to submit a floor plan and plot or site plan with the parking layout of the proposed use. The SUP application checklist lists the requirements of the floor and site plans. The Planning Director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver.

N/A
☐ Required floor plan and plot/site plan attached.

☐ Requesting a waiver. See attached written request.

2. The applicant is the (check one):

☐ Owner
☐ Contract Purchaser
☐ Lessee or
☐ Other: _____ of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant or owner, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

N/A

REVISED

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If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

☐ **Yes.** Provide proof of current City business license

☐ **No.** The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

3. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request **in detail** so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use. The description should fully discuss the nature of the activity. (Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

The proposed permit requests lighting the fenced dog exercise area in Simpson Stadium Park (426 E. Monroe Ave). The site is zoned POS, which requires a special use permit for new park lights.

Currently, the dog area is unlit, despite many dog owners using the park after dark, particularly during late fall and winter months. Many other areas of the park, including the ball fields and basketball court are lit until 10pm, when in use, but the existing lights do not shine onto the dog area. The proposed dog park lights would be user-activated by push button, staying lit for 20 minutes unless pushed again, and automatically turned off at 10pm. As shown in the attached lighting plan, the proposed lighting system includes three lights, each with a maximum height of 23 feet (including the base). A preliminary assessment (attached) of the lights show the highest foot candle reading along the dog area fence line at Monroe Ave. to be 0.3. There would be no spill over 30 feet from this point.

An informal Simpson Dog Park advocates group submitted this project as a request through the Park and Recreation Commission Citizens Request Project process is strongly supported by dog park users (see attached list of signatures). The Park and Recreation Commission recommended the project be pursued.

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USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for (check one):
- ☒ a new use requiring a special use permit,
☐ an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
☐ an expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
☐ other. Please describe: _____
5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:
- A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).
No change from existing use in capacity, but hours will be extended with approval of lights.

- B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).
No change

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:
- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Day: | Hours: |
| <u>Monday - Sunday</u> | <u>6am to 10pm</u> |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use.
- A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.
No change in noise levels. Normal noise associated with dog facilities.

- B. How will the noise be controlled?
N/A

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8. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

N/A

9. Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use.

- A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. office paper, food wrappers)

Will increase amount of dog waste due to longer hours of park use

- B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. # of bags or pounds per day or per week)

additional use will not be enough to generate additional # of bags

- C. How often will trash be collected?

daily

- D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

Trash cans are already provided on site.

10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

[] Yes.

[✓] No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

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11. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

☐ Yes. ☒ No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

12. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of nearby residents, employees and patrons?

ALCOHOL SALES

13.

- A. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, describe existing (if applicable) and proposed alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales.

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PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

14. A. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

N/A Standard spaces
 Compact spaces
 Handicapped accessible spaces.
 Other.

<p>Planning and Zoning Staff Only</p> <p>Required number of spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200A <u> </u></p> <p>Does the application meet the requirement?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

- B. Where is required parking located? (check one)
- ☒ on-site
- ☐ off-site

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located?

On-site parking exists; there is not a city parking standard for dog areas

PLEASE NOTE: Pursuant to Section 8-200 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

- C. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to Section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the Zoning Ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

☐ Parking reduction requested; see attached supplemental form

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

- A. How many loading spaces are available for the use?

<p>Planning and Zoning Staff Only</p> <p>Required number of loading spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200 <u> </u></p> <p>Does the application meet the requirement?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

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- B. Where are off-street loading facilities located? No loading to occur
- C. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?
n/a
- D. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?
n/a
16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?
n/a

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? ☐ Yes ☒ No
Do you propose to construct an addition to the building? ☐ Yes ☒ No
How large will the addition be? _____ square feet.
18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be? N/A
_____ sq. ft. (existing) + _____ sq. ft. (addition if any) = _____ sq. ft. (total)
19. The proposed use is located in: (check one)
☐ a stand alone building
☐ a house located in a residential zone
☐ a warehouse
☐ a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: _____
☐ an office building. Please provide name of the building: _____
☐ other. Please describe: _____

End of Application

10/15
14

DOG PARK

Illuminance (Fc)

Average = 1.23

Maximum = 4.0

Minimum = 0.1

Avg/Min Ratio = 12.30

Max/Min Ratio = 40.00

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Akida Rouzi

Subject: FW: Call.Click.Connect. #40420: Planning Commission Inquiries, Dockets Please share this information with the P

A request was just created using **Call.Click.Connect**. The request ID is 40420.

Request Details:

- Name: Sarah Haut
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-967-0426
- Email: hautsl@yahoo.com
- Service Type: Planning Commission Inquiries, Dockets
- Request Description: Please share this information with the Planning Commissioners. Thank you:

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Regarding SUP application 2013-0057

Normally I am writing to you on behalf on the DRCA Land Use Committee. However, I am speaking on behalf of myself as a dog loving resident of the City of Alexandria regarding the application for a Special Use Permit to install lighting in the dog park in Simpson Park.

I greatly appreciate that staff has submitted the application for this permit. Lights in the dog park will help to extend the use of the park in the evenings during the months when there is not as much daylight. I find myself racing home from work in the fall so that I can get my dog to the park while there is still some daylight. My dog tends to play and run more when the weather is cooler, but the time we can spend at the park is very limited during the week due to the lack of daylight. Dogs and dog owners are not the only beneficiaries of lighting in the dog park. A dog that has had a chance to run in the park is well exercised. A well exercised dog is a good dog. Good dogs are quiet and don't disturb the neighbors.

While I look forward to and support a well-lit dog park, I have two concerns about the lighting as proposed:

1. Location of the light poles - based on the SUP application, it appears that the light poles will be installed inside of the dog park. Dogs race around the park and run the risk of crashing into the poles if they are installed inside the park. Also, if the light poles are metal, dog urine will corrode them over time. I request that the city do everything possible to install the poles outside of the park or up against the fence.

2. Timers - the 20 minute timers will be difficult to manage for dog owners if they are standing within the park when the lights go out. They will have to find their way to the "on" switch to reactivate them. Ideally, lights would come on at dusk and turn off automatically at 10 pm.

I think adding lighting to the dog park will increase the use and enjoyment of this wonderful city amenity.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Haut

Del Ray Citizens Association

Established 1954
delraycitizens@yahoo.com

P.O. Box 2233, Alexandria, VA 22301
<http://www.delraycitizen.org>

September 25, 2013

PC Docket Item #: 2

Project: Simpson Dog Park

Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
City Hall, Room 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314

Subject: Docket item #2, SUP 2013-0057 - 426 E. Monroe Ave, Simpson Park SUP Dog Park Lighting

Dear Ms. Hamer,

The Del Ray Citizens Association Land Use Committee and Executive Board discussed this SUP application, a request to install three lights in the Dog Park in Simpson Park.

The City's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Department has filed for a Special Use Permit to install three 23 foot lights to light the dog park. The original plan was to install the light poles within the dog park and to place them on 20 minute timers. However, after discussing the matter with one of the Recreation Department dog training providers, it was determined that this was a less than optimal solution. Light poles installed inside the dog park present a hazard for running dogs and for their humans. Lights on a 20 minute timer would also cause difficulty if dog owners are not within easy reach of the button to activate them when they go out.

A representative from the Recreation Department attended the meeting and indicated that the city was reconsidering the plan as described in the application. The revised plan, which was not part of the application at the time of the LUC meeting, was to place the lights on sensors that turn on at dusk and turn off at 10 PM. In addition, the poles will not be installed inside the dog park.

The Land Use Committee voted to support the SUP application with the conditions set forth in the revised plan (lights on sensors and placed on the edge of the park rather than within it).

The DRCA Executive Board voted to support the Land Use position at its September 16, 2013 meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Danielle Fidler
Co-Chair, Land Use Committee
Second Vice President, DRCA

cc: Planning Commission
Karl Moritz, Deputy Director
Nathan Randall, Staff Reviewer
Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Supervisor
Bill Hendrickson, DRCA President

Celebrating 100 years of the Town of Potomac
1908 - 2008