

Minette Saulog

From: Katharine Watson <katharine.s.watson@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 6:41 PM
To: Lily Fee; Jessica Swiontek; Natalie Synhavsky; Kristen Peterson; Yaacoub Hark; Minette Saulog
Subject: Dog Park Discussion

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Hello Parks & Environmental Commissioners!

I understand there's a vocal group of residents advocating for a dog park in St. Anthony, but I think it's important to reflect on why similar proposals haven't moved forward in the past. St. Anthony has a relatively small footprint, which makes it difficult to site a dog park that provides a sufficient buffer from nearby residences.

If the PEC were to recommend a dog park, I'd like to understand how surrounding property owners would be notified and how their input would be considered. The impact of increased noise and traffic on those neighbors deserves careful consideration.

As a dog owner myself, a dog park is not an amenity I would utilize, and I suspect it would draw a sizable portion of its users from outside St. Anthony.

Instead, I'd like to see the PEC focus on an issue that affects **all** residents: **our tree canopy**. Since moving to St. Anthony in 2019, we've seen the visible impacts of trees lost to Emerald Ash Borer, storm damage, and age/rot. These losses have significantly impacted the aesthetics and environmental health of our neighborhoods.

I encourage the PEC and the City to explore what more can be done to increase boulevard tree plantings and to support residents in planting and caring for trees on private property. When I see the proposed \$200k up-front price tag for a dog park, I can't help but think how far that investment could go in enhancing and preserving our urban tree canopy, an asset that benefits every resident and strengthens our community's climate resilience.

Ideas:

- Annual fall and/or spring tree sale - subsidize trees to offer low cost options to residents and species that are well-suited to St. Anthony soil conditions
- Adopt a Boulevard Tree program - residents to sign up to have a city boulevard tree planted in the right of way on their property that they are responsible for watering while it gets established

- Find ways to encourage residents to continue preventative treatments for Emerald Ash Borer
- Invest in education for Public Works staff on proper tree planting and care
- Apply for all available MN DNR (or other) community forestry grants

Thank you for your consideration!

Kat Watson - Skycroft Circle