

# Sun City Independent

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## RCSC, dog owners working on issues

By Rusty Bradshaw

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Sun City pet owners were up in arms when it appeared they could lose the community's dog park, purchased by Recreation Centers of Sun City two years ago.

The RCSC board told Duffeland Park users the facility could be closed and revamped for a different use if issues of harassment, bullying and privacy were not resolved. RCSC officials told users in a letter about a number of complaints and incident reports, including one RCSC employee receiving a death threat. Those issues were detailed again in an Oct. 10 town hall meeting.

"There is sympathy by some board members to eliminate the park and some sympathy by others to make improvements," said Jim Brasher, RCSC board president during the town hall meeting. "Before we invest any more into it, we want to see if it will be a reasonable gathering place.

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However, board members are trying to work with the park users to implement some of the suggestions garnered during the town hall. He said one suggestion was to form a dog park club to work as a liaison and sounding board for concerns at the park.

"We want to work together to fix these problems," he said.

Mr. Brasher was called for further comment, but he did not respond by press time.

Homeowner Jerry Sylvester, who lives adjacent to the park, has complained about noise, smell and park users standing on mounds looking into his backyard. But Mr. Brasher said other complaints and incidents included park users taking aggressive actions against other users and RCSC staff. He also said there has been use of profanity and a general lack of respect toward RCSC employees.

RCSC officials received a variance\* from Maricopa County to construct a 10-foot wall to separate the park from the adjacent residences. But

board member Bill Pearson said that will not likely happen.

"My push has been to raise the wall," he said. "The first goal was to get the cost then meet with neighbors."

He said cost estimates ranged between \$100,000 and \$200,000. That made the project too costly.

Park users got wind the impetus for the wall was a petition signed by adjacent homeowners. Board member Ron Jesse said the petition did drive the wall research. Resident Noel Kasper, who lives adjacent to the dog park, said he did not sign the petition and knows of two other homeowners there who did not.

"I would like to see it because it predates the wall," he said.

RCSC officials said at the Oct. 10 and Oct. 13 member/directors exchanges when Mr. Kasper broached the subject again that they could not locate the petition.

"It was not a formal petition," said Jan Ek, RCSC general manager. "It was brought to the board at the office."

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However, Mr. Pearson confirmed the document's existence in an Oct. 16 interview.

"It has about six-seven names on it," he said.

Mr. Pearson also said a petition has been circulated by dog park users with what he estimated to be up to 200 signatures.

Other suggestions from residents during the town hall included eliminating the mounds in the park, moving the tables and benches to the northeast section of the park away from residences, owners using antibark devices, offering dog training classes and restoring RCSC monitors.

When RCSC took control of the park there were monitors stationed there. But they were removed at the request of the park users who insisted they wanted to self-monitor.

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