

# NOTES FROM THE MAY 17, 2015 PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON IMPROVING THE COLONNADE OFFLEASH AREA

*Written by Chris Leman*

The Colonnade dog off-leash area public workshop was held on site Sunday, May 17, 2015 from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Tables with literature were set up at the north and south ends of the off-leash area. Participants were directed to the south end, where they were invited to offer suggestions on improving the 1.2 acre off-leash area. Nine volunteers registered their names. The discussion summarized below indicates that some extensive improvements will be needed the discussion.

Need to improve surface. It was agreed that a foremost reason for underuse of this off-leash area is that the gravel surface is difficult and even painful for many, if not most dogs. The gravel, approximately one inch in diameter, was installed when Colonnade opened in 2005 but has never been popular, as even the owners have difficulty walking on it. On an experimental basis, the Park Department maintenance staff has begun covering it with granolithic (a sand-like crushed granite) at the south and north ends (so far covering about ten percent of the off-leash area's surface area), and dog owners find it a definitely improvement. However, the gravel underneath was not removed, and (perhaps because of digging by the dogs) is beginning to return to the surface.

Other needed improvements. Participants suggested the following also as being needed to bring more use and enjoyment of the off-leash area.

- Larger yards (current ones are too small for long runs to fetch balls or sticks)
- Lighting
- Running water
- Small dogs area
- An agility course and other fun things for dogs
- Greater visibility from the street
- More parking
- A sidewalk on the east side of Franklin Ave. E.
- Dog-themed art