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Town pauses before approving dog run at Downing

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The Journal News*

YORKTOWN - Officials were set to approve a leash-free dog run in the town's largest park but first will give recreation commissioners what they asked for: a few weeks to scope out alternative locations.

The Town Board instructed the town attorney last week to draft a resolution approving the town's first dog run, which would be Westchester's 10th, at Downing Park. That measure has been set aside for now.

"I want them to advise us, and I want to listen to them," Supervisor Don Peters said. "They said there's a couple more locations they want to check out."

Peters, who backs the idea of a dog park, was on the fence about putting it at Downing Park, which he said was already crowded with other recreation facilities and could lack parking.

But when the Town Board met on Tuesday, Peters called for a vote this week on putting the dog park there. He later said he jumped the gun.

That's fine with dog owner Dave Rocco, one of several residents who have lobbied for years for a leash-free park. They have even offered to raise the money for fencing, benches and trash cans.

"He's definitely for it, there's no question about it," Rocco said of Peters. "It's just that he's got to work with everybody. He's giving the commission a chance to do their job."

One rival site is the 34 acres known as Solomon's Farm that the town bought in 2006 with \$1.25 million in open space funds. While less crowded than Downing Park, the Gomer Street site is surrounded by homes and constrained by wetlands.

Councilman Nick Bianco said the Recreation Commission was split on Downing Park after a recent site visit. Bianco said he thought the Town Board was unanimous in supporting Downing Park. He did not object to giving the commission more time.

"I have no problem putting this off," he said. "I can go either way on this thing."
