



Inside this week...

Check out our 2008 Fall Home Improvement section!

Mailing Label



Winnisquam Echo

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

SERVING TILTON, NORTHFIELD, BELMONT & SANBORNTON, N.H.

FREE

A2 September 25, 2008

LOCAL NEWS

WINNISQUAM ECHO

Dog park pursuers may look into 4-H land



BY MEGHAN SIEGLER
ECHO@SALMONPRESS.COM

BELMONT — After initially supporting the proposal to build a dog park on town land, the Board of Selectmen said Monday that giving away a parcel of land to a special group might be setting a bad precedent.

Lisa Clutters, resident and founder of the future Happy Tails Dog Park, came back to the board Monday evening to update the selectmen on her search for a good parcel of land. The search was aided by the town's and-use technician, Rick Ball.

"We have the fencing and everything; we're just waiting for the land," Clutters

said.

Clutters said that after walking several sites, a town-owned parcel on Dutile Road would best fit the park's needs.

Board Chair Ronald Cormier said that although he initially supported the idea of donating town land, several citizens had approached him with valid concerns. He said some residents thought the board should not be allowed to give away land to special groups, as it would set a bad precedent.

Furthermore, placing a dog park in a residential/rural zone with surrounding neighbors could pose a problem if noise becomes a factor. Cormier said he didn't want to approve the land and then have neighbors coming to the board to complain.

Rather than approving the land, Cormier suggested a couple of alternatives. The first was that Clutters look into the property along Friend Road, adjacent to the 4-H fairgrounds, which is owned by the 4-H Foundation.

"It struck me as a good fit," Cormier said, noting that the land is wooded and relatively free of houses.

"The dogs can bark 24 hours a day, and nobody's going to hear them."

The board also agreed that drawing traffic to that area would help alleviate some of the illegal dumping that has been a constant headache for the town.

Cormier's second idea was nixed quickly by Clutters, after he suggested talking with The Lodge at Belmont, which owns about 250

acres of land.

"Some people in our group don't approve of dog racing," Clutters said.

Both Clutters and Parks and Recreation Director Janet Breton wanted to know if it would be possible to create the park as part of the Parks and Rec Department's programs. "I can't support that," Cormier said, pointing to the potential liability.

"(Cormier's) first idea is a

great idea," Selectman Jon Pike said. A member of the 4-H Foundation who happened to be at the meeting suggested that Clutters attend Tuesday's meeting to discuss the possibility of using some of the foundation's land.

"Look for some private sources and get back to us," Cormier said.

Clutters said at her first meeting with the board several months ago that she and

the group of dog owners she's working with to create Happy Tails are willing to take care of all funding, but she had hoped that the town could help out with the land.

"If I had a child, I would do everything in my power ... to erect a playground for my child," Clutters said. "This is my child. He deserves a safe place to play."

