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Selectmen cool to using town land for a dog park

BELMONT — The pause received by advocates for paws at Monday night's Belmont Board of Selectmen's meeting was a setback for those seeking town-owned property to be used as a playground for their canine cronies.

Lisa Clutters, president of the non-profit Happy Trails Dog Park of Belmont, presented the board with a written request for a one-acre or larger parcel of see **DOGS** page 10

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land that could be used by dog owners to exercise and socialize their canine pets in an "off leash" environment. More specifically, Clutters asked the board for a portion of town owned property on Dutile Road.

According to Clutters, her organization would selectively clear some of the trees bordering the perimeter of the land she was requesting in order to make way for fencing the parcel. The group would also create an entrance and parking area for those who bring their dogs to the park.

Happy Trails Dog Park owners would put a dumpster and smaller containers on site for the disposal of canine waste and portable johns for human use.

Selectman Chair Ronald Cormier suggested, in response to the request, that the Dutile Road town-owned property could easily create a bad precedent for the town and that the group might be more suc-

cessful seeking a privately owned location in Belmont for the park. He stressed that it was important for the group to exhaust all of the private possibilities before coming back to the town.

Both of Cormier's colleagues — Reginald Caldwell and John Pike— agreed. As discussion continued, Cormier suggested that the dog park advocates approach the Belknap County Cooperative Extension and the 4H Foundation, both of which either own or control property on and adjacent to the location of the annual Belknap Country Fair on Mile Hill Road.

Pike interjected that the group should also seek input from the town's Planning Board and conservation commission.

Clutters thanked the board for its input and agreed to contact the county extension office and 4H groups for their input.