



Friends of Greater Lansing Dog Parks

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2006 Year in Review

2006 has been a year of patient diligence for our all-volunteer, non-profit organization established to create a public, off-leash dog park for the greater Lansing area. Our accomplishments in retrospect are:

January 2006 – Our year started on a high note as we joyfully announced a \$50,000 pledge by Howard Soldan II to open Lansing's first public off-leash dog park. The new dog park will be called, in honor of Mr. Soldan's parents, the Howard and Erna Soldan Dog Park. Mr. Soldan pledged \$5,000 each year for the next ten years. The City of Lansing's Parks & Recreation Commission recommended approval of our request to advance our organization \$45,000 toward opening the dog park – the advance to be paid by the Soldan 10-year pledge. At our January 23rd General Membership Meeting we elected officers for the coming year including: Ellen Sullivan, President; Cindy Ballard, Vice President; Laura Harwin, Secretary and Dana French, Treasurer. The members at the meeting also made several changes to our organizational by-laws including: updating the language in our mission statement and goals; change of membership year to calendar year (instead of June-May); clarification of language in officer responsibilities; board membership of committee chair is discretionary, based on role and need; and timing for notification of board meetings and provision of agenda. In late January, we met with representatives of the Ann Arbor Canine Club, at their request, to share our expertise on mobilizing the Ann Arbor dog-loving community to create an off-leash dog park for the greater Ann Arbor area.

February/March 2006 – We petitioned the Ingham County Parks & Recreation Commission, at their initial budget committee meeting, for additional funds to help open the dog park. At our third annual Strategic Planning Session on March 4th, we began detailed discussions regarding a PR plan for announcing and opening the park; Site planning; Park management (including rules, park access, and parking policies); Phase 2 fundraising for the Capital Campaign; and developing an Education plan (Getting Ready for the Dog Park). We also developed a month-by-month plan to achieve our organizational goals. We again submitted our application to the 2006 Capital Area United Way Community Campaign and the Combined Federal and State Campaign to receive donations. Our hard work paid off by being accepted by both the 2006 Federal and State Employees Combined Campaign for the United Way.

April 2006 - At our April General Membership Meeting we were very excited to kick off our educational program of getting ready for the dog park with Linda Nichols of Canine Coaches LLC, a professional trainer, as our program presenter. Linda talked about the importance of recall training for your dog - coming when called on the first cue - and strategies for success. We presented our request to the full Ingham County Parks & Recreation Commission for approximately \$5700 to fund opening the dog park. On Tuesday, April 25 a group of loyal FGLDP members joined approximately 200 others who attended the City of Lansing's second public hearing. The meeting was to hear what local citizens want in (or out) of the 2006-2007 budget proposed by Mayor Bernero. President Ellen Sullivan asked the council members and mayoral representatives to retain the \$45,000 allocation from park millage funds toward the establishment of a public off-leash dog park.

May 2006 – May was a month chock full of events and activities. On May 5th we held the first of our two very successful Dog Paddles on the beach at Hawk Island County Park (right next door to the future site of our dog park). The award-winning Pooch Precision Team made its 2006 debut appearance at the Victorian Days Parade on Saturday, May 6 in Grand Ledge. Our organization had its booth at the Be Kind to Animals Adopt-a-thon and Family Pet Show on Saturday May 6 at the Ingham County Animal Control Shelter in Mason. Lansing's Parks and Recreation Dept., with leadership from Letts Community Center, held a sunny and profitable Happy Tails Dog Walk and Fundraiser for our organization on May 13th. On May 15th Lansing City Council gave final approval for their 2006-2007 budget, including \$45,000 for the dog park from park millage funds. At their May 22nd meeting, the Ingham County Parks & Recreation Commission gave final approval for their 2007 budget which included a \$5700 grant to the dog park; the budget next went to the county commissioners for their approval.

June/July/August 2006 - The Pooch Precision Team along with FGLDP dogs and their owners marched in Lansing's July 4th Parade and once again were crowd pleasers. With the final funding pieces in place, we await Lansing Parks & Recreation Department to solicit bids for perimeter fencing of the new dog park.

September 2006 – The first of our Practice and Play Sessions was held on September 6th at Elm Park. The Practice and Play was very well attended, and was overseen by Bea VanKampen, BS, LVT, Animal Manners Plus. Friday, September 15th we had a romp on the beach on a mild evening at our second Dog Paddle Swim of the year at Hawk Island County Park. We saw many of our members and made new friends at our booth at the CAHS Walk for the Animals on Sept. 16th in Fitzgerald Park. Recognition of the Soldan Family and Howard Soldan II's \$50,000 park naming rights pledge was held on Monday, Sept. 18 at the Lansing City Council Meeting with presentation of a giant “bone” check to the Mayor and City Council Members.

October 2006 – Habitat for Humanity in partnership with the Capital Area Humane Society and Ingham County Animal Control hosted its first-ever Bark and Build Extravaganza on October 15 and we were there to help support the event. In place of a general membership meeting we held our Second Practice and Play Session on October 23rd at the future site of the dog park, assisted by Carol Hein Creger, Training Director, Canine Training Center. Carol offered valuable feedback on behavior of our dogs. It was a cool but fun evening on Oct. 28th as we gathered at the Spotted Dog Café for the second annual Trick or Treat with Your Dog in Downtown Lansing event. The Ingham County Commissioners gave their final approval to the 2007 budget which included a \$5700 grant for the dog park. The Lansing Parks & Recreation Department solicited bids for architectural planners to handle the final mapping and site planning details for the dog park.

November, 2006– We had a table—thanks to our friends at the Spotted Dog Café—and sold cute holiday pet collars at the Silver Bells in the City 2006 celebration in downtown Lansing on November 17th. The holiday pet collars were donated by Marcia Charette, Owner of Fetch Pet Care. The Lansing Parks & Recreation Department awarded a contract to Landscape Architects and Planners, Inc. for the dog park design and planning.

December 2006– On December 9th we held our third Practice and Play Session at the future site of the dog park, ably supervised by Alex Chodakowski, Owner/Trainer, Busy Paws Dog Training and member of our organization. Once again we sent out our tongue-in-cheek *Letter from the Dog* as our Year End Appeal to all our members and supporters.

Friends of Greater Lansing Dog Parks 2006 Organizational Accomplishments

| <u>2006 GOALS</u> | <u>2006 ACTUAL</u> |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Memberships - 300 | 241 Memberships and 283 Individuals |
| Fundraising - \$25,000 | \$20,000 |
| Total Fundraising To Date | Over \$92,000 raised/pledged to date! |