

9 January 2023

Mary Medeiros - City Clerk, City Clerk Services
City of Oshawa 5th Floor, Rundle Tower, City Hall
50 Centre St. S.
Oshawa ON L1H 3Z7

Dear Ms. Medeiros,

I am writing to put forward a request to consider re-naming the Harmony Valley Off-Leash Dog Park to the Clare Ford Off-Leash Dog Park. (Please note, I did look for a nomination form for the process on the City's website but was unable to locate one. This letter is in lieu of and if there is a special form, I would be happy to complete it.)

Clare Ford's involvement with the park began in late 2004/early 2005 as a member of the focus group looking at the future of the Harmony Valley and Cedar Valley properties. Her primary focus was originally Cedar Valley, but she quickly recognized how important an off-leash dog park would be for the City of Oshawa and became a staunch supporter of ODAWG's request to establish Harmony Valley as an off-leash dog park very early in the process. Clare has been the first and only Chair of the dog park user group known as ODAWG (Oshawa Durham Area Walkers Group) since the establishment of the off-leash park. Clare had a vision for the park and has doggedly followed it through. With Clare as the lead, ODAWG met with Counsellors and made presentations to City Hall. It was Clare's insightful persuasiveness and tenacity which eventually swayed the politicians who at the time appeared to feel that a dog park was a "non-entity". (Who knew then how popular it would become?)

Once the City granted the use of the south 25 acres of Harmony Valley as an off-leash park, Clare began working with Jamie Bronsema from the Parks Department as part of a small group observing a variety of off-leash parks throughout the greater Toronto area looking at different models for the off-leash dog park at Harmony Valley. The group developed Vision, Mission Statement and set of etiquette guidelines for park use. Clare has organized the ODAWG administrative meetings (4 or 5 a year depending on conditions at the park) with City of Oshawa Parks representatives over the past 16 years, always looking for the betterment of the park for those who walk there and environmentally. Even today she still believes that the entire 75 acres of the Harmony Valley Park would be best purposed as an off-leash area and will put forward the case at every opportunity.

Every April since 2007 she has been part of the Spring "Pitch-In"/Community Clean-Up at the park and organizing membership drives to help provide ODAWG with funds to pay for poop bags and dispensers to encourage Sloop and Scoop at the park. Clare has been an integral part of the group organizing the production of an ODAWG Days Calendar as an additional fundraiser to support the park for the past 13 years, finding the sponsors and advertisers that make the venture profitable. Once the calendar was ready to be sold, Clare would spend countless hours at the park, selling the calendars to park users, no matter the weather.

Clare's long-time connection to Scouts Canada and her capacity as the organizer of the Scoutrees program in Oshawa saw the planting of trees on park property for a number of years which will be a benefit to the fauna and ecology of the park for years to come.

Over the years, Clare has happily responded to any on-line or in person enquiries. When other groups, from within the city and beyond, have had questions about establishing dog parks, Clare was there to answer questions and help provide input or suggestions. She has also helped organize various dog-related events to help provide educational events for local dog owners at the park and as part of the ODAWG Annual General Meeting which is always open to the general public.

Clare Ford was integral to the establishment of the Off-Leash Dog Park and has played a major role in its on-going success and I feel that re-naming the park for her would be a commendable way to recognize her work and dedication to the park. If there are questions or anything else required of me to see this come to fruition, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Debi (Debra) Foster

M.F.I.P.A. Sec. 14(1)

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Oshawa, ON L1K 1W7