

Town approves \$37.5G for dog park design

BY KRISTOPHER J. BROOKS
kristopher.brooks@newsday.com

The Town of North Hempstead is moving forward on its plans to build its first dog park, recently approving a \$37,560 contract with Melville-based Nelson & Pope Engineers to create design plans.

Town parks Commissioner Jill Weber said a separate contractor will build the facility at Michael J. Tully Park in New Hyde Park, which she noted may be just the first of other play spaces for poodles.

“And this doesn’t mean this will be the only place we’ll have a dog park,” Weber said. “This is a start.”

The town has set aside \$250,000 in its 2018 capital plan to fund construction of the park, which officials project will open in the fall.

Weber said recently that the town solicited comments from residents about how the park should look and where it should be housed. Most of the comments favored Tully Park, she said, adding that the town ultimately picked the location because there is plenty of unused space and there are sev-

eral dog owners in the area who already use the park.

In 2016, the town opened dog runs at Tully, Mary J. Davies and North Hempstead Beach parks. Dogs are welcome at all three but must be kept on a leash. In the upcoming park, pets will be able to roam leash-free.

Once the park opens, Weber said the town will seek to create a committee that will help set the rules and organize events for dog owners.

Peggy Heijmen, vice president of Huntington-based non-profit Long Island Dog Owners Group, said North Hempstead officials’ plan to add a dedicated dog section “really puts them at the forefront” because there are few places in Nassau County with a dog park. Though dog owners will enjoy the park, Heijmen said the dogs will benefit the most.

“This allows them to play with another dog,” she said. “It’s great for their mental health, their physical health and it can make them a much nicer pet. It will probably cut down on barking and noise problems in your home and for your neighbors.”



Michael J. Tully Park in New Hyde Park is slated to house North Hempstead’s first off-leash dog park.