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PRESS RELEASE

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City Council approves plan to construct dog park

The contentious debate over establishing the city's first dog park ended today with the City Council unanimously approving a plan to construct a nearly \$300,000 facility along the riverfront.

The move is a compromise reached by city administrators, councilmembers and the Shreveport Dog Park Alliance to use a combination of funds from the Red River Waterway Commission and the alliance but restricts the city's financial liability toward design and construction to those funds already allocated for the project.

The Red River Waterway Commission has agreed to provide up to \$280,130 to construct a dog park at a location near the Stoner boat launch. The dog park alliance will contribute up to \$28,013 to pay for planning, design and other expenses.

A major part of the compromise also calls for the council to repeal a resolution that required the Mayor to sign an agreement to accept the waterway commission funding in order to construct a dog park at Charles and Marie Hamels Memorial Park. The Mayor refused to sign that legislation because it obligated the City to fund additional expenses related to the dog park -- which ultimately could have amounted to another \$300,000.

"As bad as this agreement still is, it now contains some significant provisions and protections for the citizens of the City of Shreveport," Mayor Cedric Glover said. "This is language that is 180 degrees different than what the Council passed in 2012 and in the interest of being able to move the City forward, it's language that I can now live with."

The Shreveport Dog Park Alliance sued Mayor Glover, alleging he was failing to do his job by not signing City Council Resolution No. 133 of 2012. The City Council later voiced public support of the group's efforts to force the mayor's hand.

A state judge in May sided with the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, ordering Mayor Glover to comply with the council's mandate to sign the agreement. That decision is being appealed but it is anticipated that the dog park alliance will drop its lawsuit once the Mayor signs the new agreement.

In addition to the hard cap on construction and design costs, today's agreement also contains a provision that would allow the City to share the responsibility to operate and maintain the dog park under a separate contract. The initial estimate to maintain the facility is \$60,000 annually.

CITY OF SHREVEPORT



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