

Wyoming Valley group wants to create a dog park

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WILKES-BARRE - Since fall, Valerie Boler has been on a mission: She wants to build a space in Wilkes-Barre where her dogs can run without a leash. She wants a dog park.

After a Leadership Wilkes-Barre project group completed a dog park in West Pittston, she has been inspired to complete a similar project in Wilkes-Barre.

Ms. Boler said the West Pittston park is a great place to take her four dogs, but she finds it is too far from her Miners Mills home for regular visits. A dog park in the city will c
"It seems like people have really enjoyed the one in West Pittston," Ms. Boler said. "I'll go everywhere with the dogs, but I just can't do it on a daily basis."

She and 19 others formed the Wyoming Valley Dog Owners, a group to build a leash-free dog park in Wilkes-Barre without cost to taxpayers. She is serving as the president of the group. The Wyoming Valley Dog Owners marched in the Wilkes-Barre St. Patrick's Day Parade, set up a booth at the Cherry Blossom Festival and bagged groceries at Gerrity's and Schiel's markets, all to get visibility and support for their idea.

Members are raising money to register the group as a nonprofit organization, which will help with the construction and upkeep of the proposed dog park.

Mayor Tom Leighton is behind the idea. The group has been working with the city to plan and complete the park, said Bridget Giunta, administrative coordin ator for the city.

Ms. Giunta knows firsthand what it takes to put up a dog park. She was part of the Leadership Wilkes-Barre Woof! Pack, the group that built the West Pittston park. She has been guiding Ms. Boler and the group to the appropriate city authorities to get the project completed.

Ms. Giunta said the group has worked with Butch Frati, Wilkes-Barre's director of operations, to find a spot in the city. The group decided on a plot in Hollenback Park.

West Pittston Mayor Bill Goldsworthy has seen nothing but a positive reaction to the dog park in West Pittston. The only trouble has been emptying trash cans. Since it opened last year, people from Lake Winola to Clarks Summit to Wilkes-Barre have visited the park with their dogs.

"We are planting some more trees for the dogs. It is really a gathering place for dog lovers," he said. "It has been pretty much issue free. ... It is a great thing to have for the dogs."

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