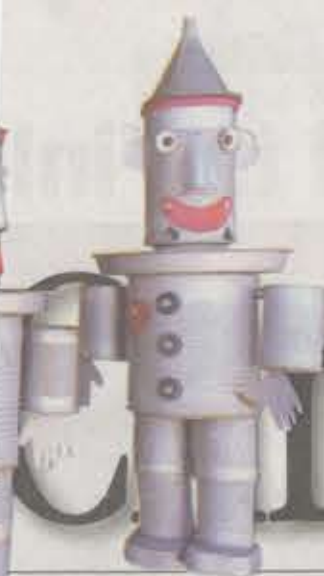


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TWO SECTIONS • 14 PAGES



Volunteers were busy Thursday preparing for the opening of the Two Harbors Dog Park. Supervising were their four-footed companions. (L-R) Brian Borglum and Bella, Heather Jellum and Claudia, and Ian Fritz and Pretzel. Photo by Jim Erickson.

TH skating rink goes to the dogs

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At long last, Two Harbors' dogs will have a place to romp.

Eight months after Two Harbors resident Ian Fritz approached Mayor Randy Bolen with the dream of a designated space for man and woman's best friend, the Friends of the Two Harbors Dog Park will finally see the result of its hard work.

"A dog park is really a standard feature of any urban park system today," Fritz, the director of Friends of the Two Harbors Dog Park, told the News-Chronicle Wednesday. "Dog walking is one of the most common uses of urban space year-round."

The 10,000-square-foot park will be located behind the Lake County Arena on Highway 2 in Two Harbors. The area is used as a skating rink during the winter, so it is already surrounded by sturdy walls. On Thursday morning, dog park enthusiasts installed the necessary equipment for pups, including a double-gate entry system, trash cans, a bag dispenser and a small dog zone.

"This is going to be available to any dog that's licensed and vaccinated," Fritz said, adding that dog licenses can be purchased at Two Harbors City Hall for \$5.

Fritz said there were plenty of supportive citizens — they just needed a leader. When he spoke to Bolen during a Mayor's Commu-

nity Night in October 2013, Bolen told him a number of people had already approached city officials about the prospect of a dog park.

"I had to go get the band back together," Fritz said. "I assembled this little group of people who had attempted, to some degree, to get this thing going."

Over the winter, they plugged along on the project, holding well-attended public meetings, finding an appropriate space and gathering donations for necessary items for the park. Fritz said he hasn't had to apply for any grants or even solicit donations yet.

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"People have approached me wanting to help out and participate," he said.

The temporary park will be open until November, and Fritz said the next big hurdle will be building and maintaining the permanent site. He expects it will be next to the Lake County Arena on the former high school baseball field — he is currently in discussions with Lake View Memorial Hospital to secure a lease on the land.

In the meantime, the park behind the arena at 301 Eighth Ave. will be open daily during the summer, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"Enjoy the dog park, use the facility," Fritz said. "The result is a much better socialized and well-behaved dog population."

Find more information at www.twoharborsdogpark.com.

Tips for taking your pooch to the park

- Dogs must have current rabies and license tags on their collars and up-to-date vaccinations
- Unleash your dog before entering the park
- Dogs who are leashed may feel threatened by unleashed dogs
- Dog owners are responsible for their dogs' actions
- No infants or small children are permitted in the park
- Aggressive dogs are not allowed
- Clean up after your pet