

February 14, 2026

Mayor and Council

Municipality of Brockton

100 Scott Street, P.O. Box 68

Walkerton, Ontario N0G 2V0

RE: Formal Challenge to Dog Park Placement at Hannah Street and Queen Street North – Requests for Relocation and Municipal Policy Compliance Review

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

As dog lovers and dog owners, we want to first make clear that we believe a dog park is a great addition to our community. However, we are writing to formally challenge the placement of the dog park located across from Lobie's Park at the corner of Hannah Street and Queen Street North in Walkerton. This facility presents significant legal, procedural, safety, and accessibility concerns that warrant immediate review and relocation to a more suitable site.

1. Complete Absence of Meaningful Public Consultation and Notification

The dog park was constructed without any notification to immediately affected residents. The dog park directly abuts two residential properties and is within hearing distance of at least seven homes. Not one of the affected residents was contacted in person, by mail, phone, or email to provide warning that a dog park was being constructed in our immediate area.

A letter was eventually sent to nearby residents to indicate a dog park was being installed; however, this notification was not sent until a month after the dog park was already set up and in use. This approach is unprofessional and indicates that Council did not consider the wellbeing or concerns of residents who would be directly impacted by this facility.

Best practices in municipal park planning consistently emphasize the importance of public consultation for new recreational facilities, particularly those with potential impacts on neighboring properties. Multiple municipalities across Ontario, including Greater Sudbury and the City of Vancouver, have established standards that recommend dog parks maintain a 50 to 100 meter setback from residential properties to mitigate noise concerns. This current location fails to meet this recommended standard.

2. Critical Public Safety and Emergency Access Concerns

Flood Risk and Emergency Vehicle Access

The field where the dog park is situated has been fenced off, eliminating what was previously an open area where emergency vehicles could access properties if needed. Most years, the road around Lobie's Park and campground floods. During high floods, the only access for 12 Queen Street North is through this field, which now contains the dog park.

During the spring 2025 flood, residents of 12 Queen Street North had to call the recreation department to request permission to remove part of the fencing so they could enter or exit their property. Cutting through fencing is not only difficult but dangerous and highly unnecessary, considering there are other viable options for dog park locations that would not compromise emergency access.

Under Ontario's emergency management framework, municipalities have responsibilities under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act to identify areas subject to natural hazards and develop management plans to limit exposure to public health and safety risks. Conservation Authorities, including the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority (SVCA), have regulatory authority under Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act to regulate development in hazard-prone areas for purposes of public safety and natural hazard management.

Placing a fenced recreational facility in a known flood plain that blocks emergency access during flood events directly contradicts these safety objectives and creates unacceptable risks for residents.

Ongoing Safety Issues Affecting Residents

Since the dog park opened, all nearby residents have experienced numerous safety and quality-of-life concerns:

- Dogs have gotten loose and ended up in our backyards
- Dog owners have wandered onto our properties looking for balls or frisbees without asking permission
- People have driven across our properties after miscalculating where the entrance is located
- We have been woken up at night as people use the space past allowable hours
- People have been attacked while riding bikes in the area by dogs that were not on leashes
- There has been a notable increase in litter due to use of the dog park

As the space is unsupervised and by-law enforcement is closed after 4:00 PM on weekdays and closed all weekend, there is no one to call when these incidents occur. This lack of oversight creates ongoing safety and liability concerns.

3. Excessive Noise Impact on Residential Properties

All residents nearby have had to deal with constant barking, sometimes to a point where we cannot enjoy our backyards, morning coffee, or outdoor family meals. This is

precisely why municipal best practices recommend a 50 to 100 meter setback from residential properties for dog parks.

According to Brockton's own Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes from 2019-2020, which cite standards from other municipalities, a setback of 50 to 100 meters from residential properties is recommended "where feasible" to mitigate noise concerns. The current location provides virtually no setback, as the dog park directly abuts residential properties.

We respectfully ask each member of Council to consider: how would you like to have this dog park right next to your property? How would you like to hear constant barking and owners yelling while you're sitting out having your morning coffee or trying to enjoy an outdoor family supper?

4. Non-Compliance with Accessibility Standards

According to your Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes from 2019-2020, municipal standards require that dog parks "meet AODA requirements and best practices for outdoor spaces." The current dog park location fails to meet these requirements.

The dog park as currently constructed lacks the following accessibility features required under Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation):

- Accessible parking spaces in close proximity to the dog park entrance
- Firm and stable pathways providing accessible routes to the entrance
- Accessible gate and entrance features that accommodate persons using mobility aids
- Accessible waste receptacles at appropriate heights with adequate maneuvering space

Under Part IV.1 of Ontario Regulation 191/11, municipalities are required to incorporate accessibility features when constructing new or significantly altering existing public spaces. The Design of Public Spaces Standard specifically applies to outdoor recreational spaces, including dog parks, constructed or significantly altered after January 1, 2016.

Furthermore, there is no indication that the municipality's Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted during planning or design. Section 29 of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 requires municipalities with populations over 10,000 to establish such committees and consult them on accessibility matters. Previous communications about this dog park made no mention of accessibility considerations or committee consultation.

5. Failure to Meet Municipality's Own Documented Standards

According to Brockton's Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes from 2019-2020, research into other municipalities' standards for dog parks established the following requirements:

- Minimum of 2 hectares for an off-leash dog park, OR a minimum of 0.4 hectares for a large off-leash area and a minimum of 0.4 hectares for a small off-leash area
- Where feasible, a 50 to 100 meter setback from residential properties to mitigate noise concerns
- The property should be well drained
- Not located in environmentally sensitive areas
- Have sufficient parking
- Site should meet AODA requirements and best practices for outdoor spaces

The current dog park location fails to meet virtually all of these standards:

Size: The area is small and does not meet the recommended minimum size requirements.

Setback: The dog park directly abuts residential properties with no meaningful setback distance.

Drainage: The site is located in a flood plain that floods most years, requiring emergency fence removal for resident access.

Environmental Sensitivity: The area is rich in wildlife and directly impacts wildlife corridors (discussed below).

Parking: Insufficient parking, especially during winter when the parking lot is not routinely maintained.

AODA: As documented above, the location does not meet AODA requirements.

6. Environmental and Wildlife Impact Concerns

During discussions with municipal staff over the past year, we were informed that other potential locations for the dog park were denied because Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority had concerns that wildlife would be affected. However, our area surrounding Lobbie's Park is a mecca for wildlife.

As just one example, the abundant deer population in our area has historically used this piece of land not only as a crossing but to access the large cedar trees for food when it is scarce during winter months. They are no longer able to do this as the fence is preventing access to those cedars. This location for the dog park severely affects the wildlife in our area.

The Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority has jurisdiction over natural hazards and environmental protection in this area. According to their mandate, they work to protect natural resources including significant wetlands, forests, riverine systems, and wildlife

habitat. If wildlife impact was a concern that eliminated other potential dog park sites, it is inconsistent to approve this location, which demonstrably affects wildlife corridors and habitat.

Your own municipal standards state that dog parks should not be located in environmentally sensitive areas. The impact on deer and other wildlife demonstrates this site's environmental sensitivity.

7. Superior Alternative Locations Available

Multiple other locations were discussed for the dog park in Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes. However, due to a committee that dissolved, those ideas appear to have been left unexplored. There are better locations for a dog park, and most communities place their dog parks in industrial areas so they do not affect tax-paying residents.

We respectfully propose the following alternative locations that would better meet municipal standards:

1. East Ridge Industrial Park (Preferred Option)

This location makes the most sense because:

- It will not affect residential properties
- It is not located in a flood plain
- It would meet the recommended 50-100 meter residential setback
- It would have adequate parking and accessibility features
- It would not impact wildlife corridors

2. Riverbend Park

This location would provide adequate space and reduce residential impact.

3. Municipal Property at 129 Jackson Street

This empty municipal property south of the Riverbend Park entrance could serve as an alternative location with less residential impact.

8. Requested Remedial Actions

In light of the serious concerns outlined above, we respectfully request that the Municipality of Brockton:

1. Immediately conduct an emergency access and flood risk assessment of the current dog park location in consultation with the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, to evaluate the safety implications of fencing that blocks emergency vehicle access during flood events;
2. Conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit of the existing dog park facility to identify all areas of non-compliance with Ontario Regulation 191/11;

3. Consult with the municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee regarding the current location and potential alternatives;
4. Initiate a proper public consultation process to gather input from affected residents regarding relocation options;
5. Prepare a comprehensive report for Council detailing:
 - a. The decision-making process that led to selection of this location;
 - b. Why the municipality's own documented standards (from Recreation Committee Minutes 2019-2020) were not followed;
 - c. What public consultation was conducted and why affected residents were not notified until after construction;
 - d. What accessibility considerations were incorporated and whether the Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted;
 - e. Whether Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority was consulted regarding flood risk, emergency access, and wildlife impact;
 - f. A cost-benefit analysis of relocating the dog park to one of the alternative sites identified above;
6. Develop a timeline for relocating the dog park to a site that meets municipal standards, provides adequate setback from residential properties, is not in a flood plain, does not block emergency access, and complies with AODA requirements;
7. Implement interim measures to address current safety and accessibility concerns, including improved by-law enforcement coverage during evenings and weekends;
8. Establish proper consultation protocols to ensure future recreational facility projects include meaningful public engagement and compliance review from the outset.

Conclusion

We want to emphasize again that we are dog lovers and dog owners who support having a dog park in our community. This letter is not an objection to dog parks in principle—dog parks are valuable community amenities that serve legitimate recreational needs.

However, the current placement fails to meet the municipality's own documented standards, creates serious safety risks including blocked emergency access during floods, violates AODA requirements, impacts wildlife habitat, and has resulted in ongoing quality-of-life issues for neighboring residents who were never consulted.

The issues raised in this letter represent opportunities for the Municipality of Brockton to demonstrate its commitment to public safety, accessibility, environmental stewardship,

inclusive community planning, and responsive governance. We believe that relocating the dog park to one of the alternative sites identified above will result in a better outcome for all residents, including those who wish to use the dog park facilities.

Given the serious nature of the emergency access concerns, we request an expedited response to this letter within 30 days, outlining Council's intended course of action. We are available to meet with appropriate municipal staff, Conservation Authority representatives, or Council members to discuss these concerns and alternative solutions in greater detail.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise & Tim Brasher

Heather & Ken Stark

Brian & Lisa Nogler

Attachments:

Copy of Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes 2019-2020 (dog park standards)
Documentation of spring 2025 flood event and fence removal request

cc:

Municipal Clerk

Director of Community Services

By-Law Enforcement Officer

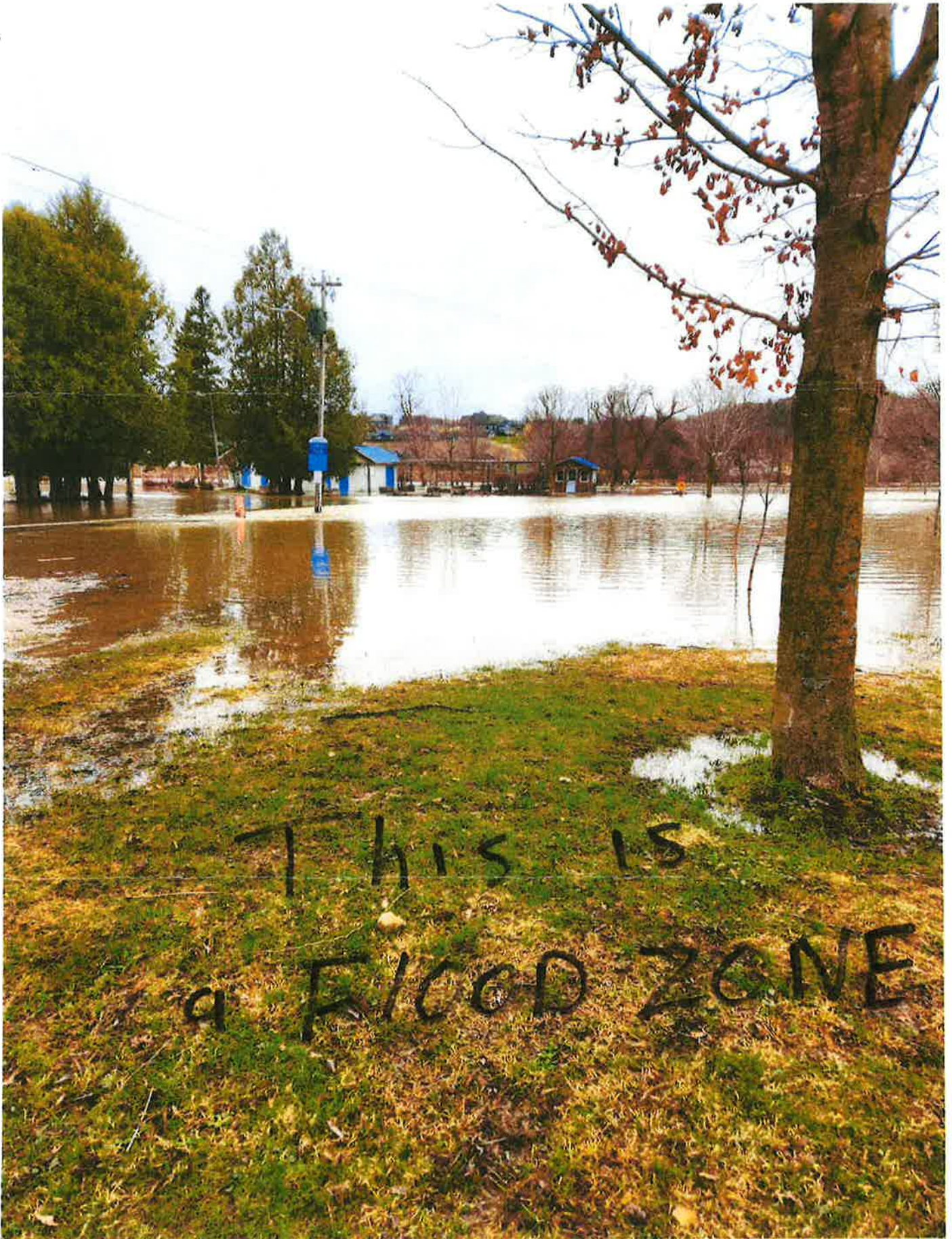
Accessibility Advisory Committee

Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

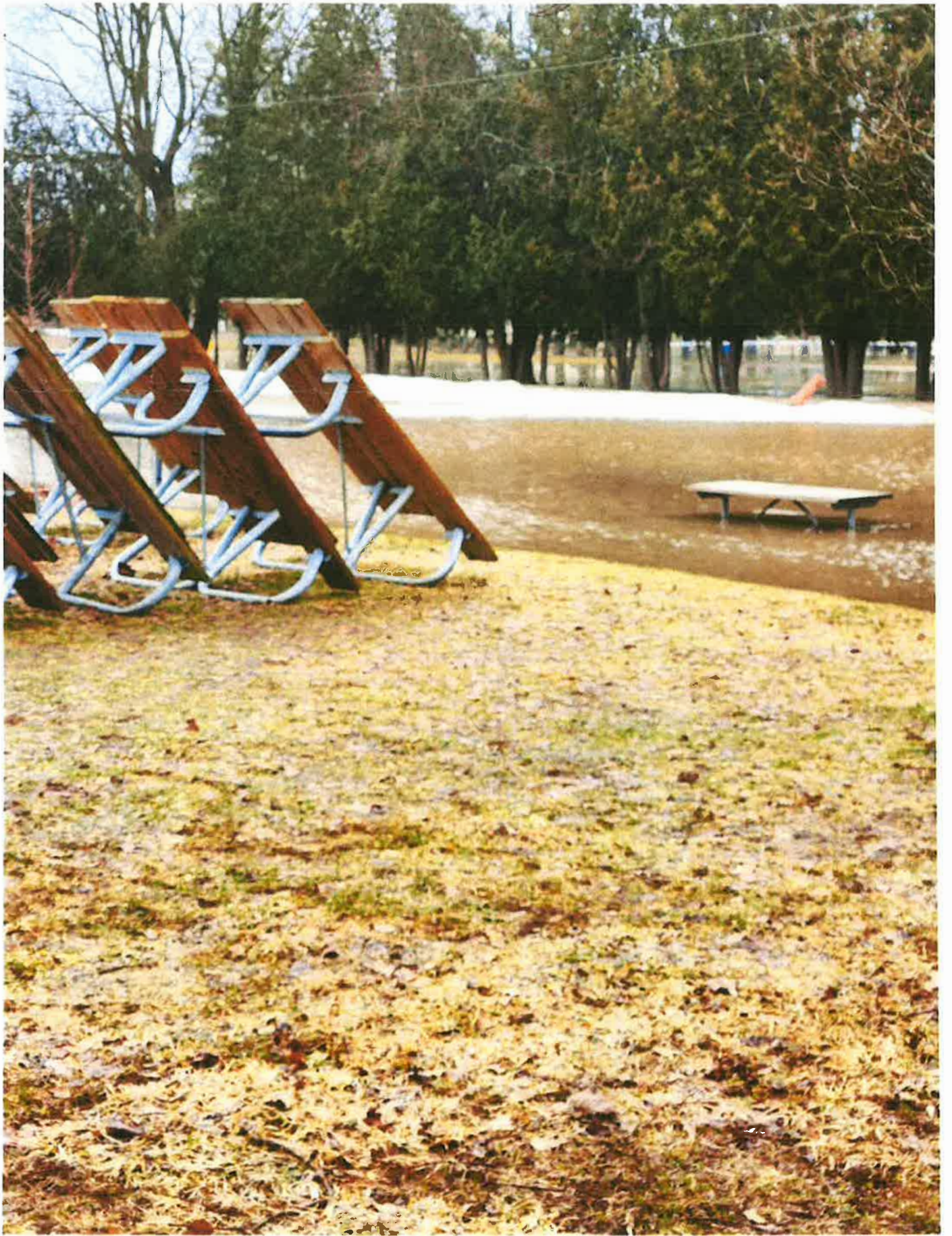


Emergency

could not get through



THIS IS
A FLOOD ZONE



River bend



Soccer Field



6:28

74

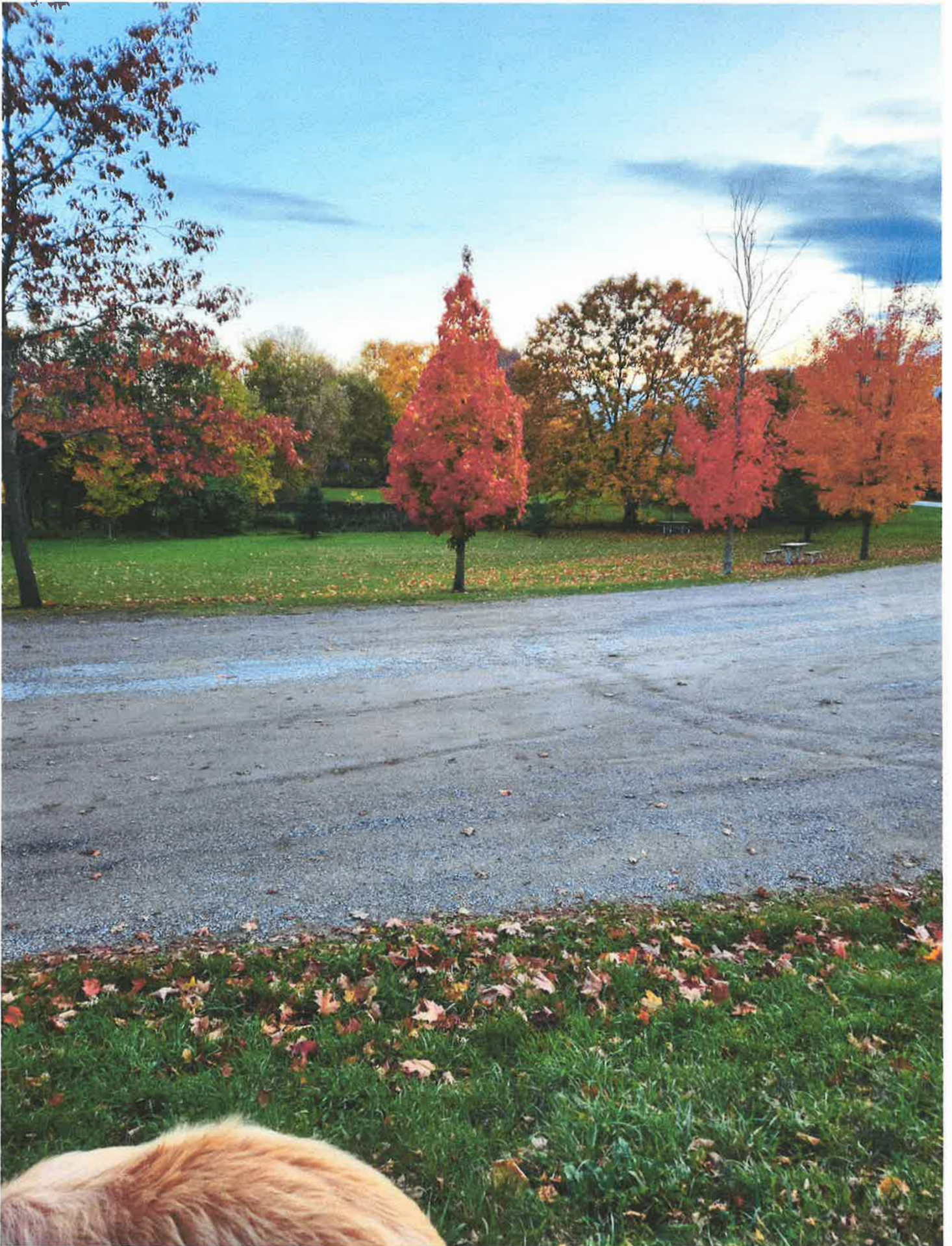
River bend



Heart, Edit, Flash, Share, Delete icons

Navigation icons: back, home, recent apps

Jackson



Taken Sun Mar 8. Had to cut fence from dog park





Taken Wed Mar 11. from my
driveway. Never been this high
ever in 33 years.



Taken Sat Mar 14. Dog Park.
Snow Fence & Dog Park fence slows the
flow of water.



Sat Mar 14 dog park



Sat Mar 14 - Dog Park