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## Tybee's dog park nears dismantling

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Tybee Island dog lovers could just walk away from the dog park in Memorial Park and let the city disassemble it.

But they won't.

"We decided that fence was worth saving for future use," said Deb Barreiro, the de facto spokeswoman for the volunteers who have helped maintain the dog park for the past two years.

Three weeks ago, the dog park's life came to an end when the Tybee Island City Council voted in the face of stout opposition to force the volunteers to remove it by May 10.

But what will that fence be used for in the future, and where? Tybee officials are trying to figure that out.

"I'm committed to it, and I'm going to find something," said Mayor Pro Tem Wanda Doyle.

Some neighbors objected to the park being moved to a proposed location in Jaycee Park. Another location between the River's End Campground and the Tybee Police Station might be too small, Doyle said.

"We are looking at a couple of more options," she said, but wouldn't divulge where those might be yet.

Putting a dog park in the high-profile Memorial Park on Butler Avenue was a frustration to some and a boon to others. People who went to the park often have said tourists could find the park easily and hotel and vacation rentals marketed it as a feature of the island.

Tybee is a family destination, said Joe Marinelli, president of the Savannah Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, and many families have dogs.

"I think certain people would decide to go to Tybee because they have a dog park," he said. "It just seems like a natural."

Many people with recreational vehicles, like the campground serves, have dogs. That's why campground manager Woody Hemphill would like to see a dog park near his operation.

"It's a wonderful amenity," he said. "It's certainly a marketable amenity."

Doyle found out Monday morning that the campground site with about 3,200 square feet for a park might not be enough. She's looking for at least 8,000 square feet.

Meanwhile, Barreiro isn't committing to a continued fight on behalf of a dog park on Tybee.

"Nobody has talked about an alternative," she said. "I haven't spoken to any of the council members who voted to remove us from Memorial Park. Right now we are focused on taking the fence down at the Tybee dog park, which will be a monumental task."

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