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Tybee to open 2 dog parks

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The Tybee Island City Council apparently resolved a contentious issue Thursday night, choosing to open two new dog parks to replace the one at Memorial Park that council members previously voted to dismantle.

The new parks - to be located at the River's End Campground on the island's north end - will be 8,000 and 2,500 square feet.

The new parks will accommodate large and small dogs, said council member Charlie Brewer, and an "orderly transition" should occur within two weeks.

Thursday's vote came just two days before dog park supporters - perhaps none more stalwart than Tybee resident David Postle - were reluctantly prepared to tear down the current park.

However, an arts festival is planned nearby for Saturday, prompting council members to extend the fast-approaching deadline to tear down the park.

Postle said fellow volunteers might go ahead with the demolition anyway.

"They don't own the fence. We own the fence," Postle said. "If we decide to take it down Saturday, we'll do it."

He said an e-mail poll among supporters will decide when to dismantle the park.

Nevertheless, Postle conceded the new sites for the two dog parks - although not centrally located and offering fewer parking spots - would keep larger dogs from trampling diminutive ones.

The new parks will open off Fort Avenue, near the Tybee Island police station, council member Eddie Crane said.

Before the vote on Thursday, a number of pleas - some for and some against tearing down the existing park - were voiced from the lectern.

One appeal came from former Tybee Mayor Walter Parker, who brought up another canine-related issue on the island: Whether to allow dogs on the beach.

"I don't care how many rules and regulations you have, not everybody is going to pick up those dog droppings," Parker said. He suggested the city solicit the advice of dermatologists before making any decisions on the matter.

"Dogs have stomach problems, just like we humans do," Parker said. "And nobody's going to pick up after a dog that has diarrhea.

"Let's just have a nice dog park somewhere."

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