

Woman collecting signatures for leash-free park

By MELANIE HENNESSEY
The Champion

A local woman is petitioning the Town to establish a leash-free dog park in Milton.

South Milton resident Sheri Lewis told The Champion she has collected more than 200 signatures over the course of three weeks and is hoping to present them to town council soon.

"There is a big need for the park in town," she said.

She noted that most of the new homes in Milton have small yards, making proper exercise a concern for dog owners living in these areas.

She pointed out that dog parks also provide benefits for people as well, since they can talk and meet other residents while their dogs are exercising.

"We could kind of unite the new Milton with the old Milton," she said.

Ms Lewis said she was inspired to start the petition because she's currently driving 30 minutes a couple of times a week to

take her dog to a leash-free park in Oakville.

"People don't have the time or inclination to drive a half hour after commuting and making dinner," she said.

She added that when she goes to Oakville to the park, she often spends money there buying food and snacks.

"We'd rather people stay in town and spend their money here," she said.

She said she's already had three or four people volunteer to help out with her cause and she's planning to hold a volunteer committee meeting August 26.

Town Director of Community Services Jennifer Reynolds said the Town is planning for a leash-free dog park and a potential location for one has been identified in the new development area on Fourth Line.

But she said those plans are still a couple of years away, and local residents she's spoken with are wanting the Town to move more quickly.

"It's a bit challenging because of the way

our existing parks have already developed," she said.

She said staff has been researching what the requirements are for leash-free parks and how other municipalities that have them have approached the situation.

Ms Reynolds said she thinks the Town would like to meet with those interested in a leash-free park and discuss the best approach.

In the meantime, Ms Lewis said a Web site is in the works that'll be a place for leash-free park supporters to log on and be added to her mailing database. Those who sign up would then be sent updates or even asked for help with the initiative.

While Ms Lewis said she isn't collecting any more names on the petition right now, she said those who are interested in helping out can still contact her at Wellsfamily903@hotmail.com.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessy@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Sheri Lewis, with Connor, shows the petitions supporting a leash-free park.



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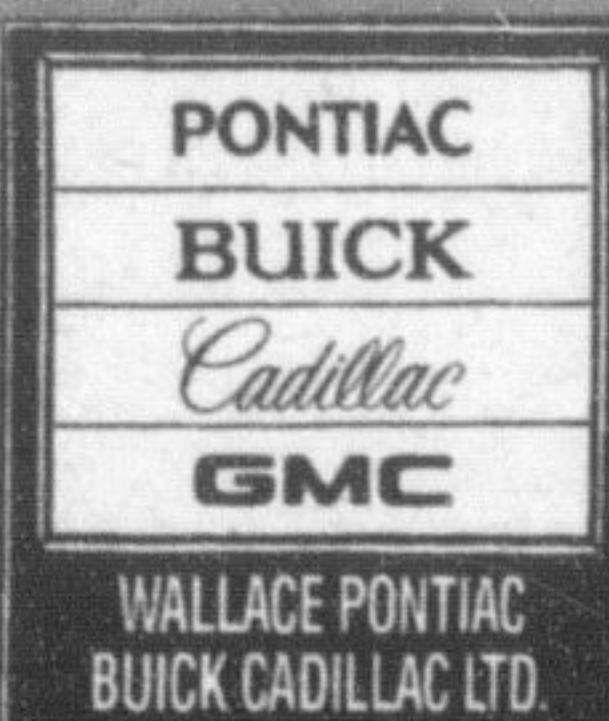
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