

# Sunnyside United Dog Society

6/2/11

RE: SUDS 'Letter of Intent' for future Dog Run

Dear Mr. Conley and fellow Community Board Members,

The Sunnyside United Dog Society has been a valued community organization since the late Fall of 2001. In the last decade we have committed ourselves to taking care of Lou Lodati Park on a daily basis, as well as increasing awareness on issues pertaining to responsible pet ownership. We have rescued countless strays (getting each adopted, most within the community, both dogs and cats), raised many thousands of dollars for sick neighborhood pets, organized 'Pick up the Poop' days and marched in the last nine Sunnyside St Patrick's Day Parades.

Our organization has been through a lot in the last decade. After two initial tries, we received approval from Community Board #2 (34-5 vote) in 2006, in favor of a SUDS Dog Run in Lodati Park. We were then granted discretionary funding to help build the dog run, but lost it due to the recession. Queens Borough President Helen Marshall and Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer helped us achieve our dream of not only a building a Sunnyside Dog Run, but fixing up the entire park for all to enjoy, which was always our goal.

Throughout the last decade SUDS has been an important presence in Lodati Park on a daily basis. We understand that the NYC Parks Department is understaffed, and we have done our best to help out by cleaning up the park each day, picking up much of the garbage left behind by others and encouraging fellow citizens to do their part, as the park belongs to all of us. We have been a registered volunteer group with the NYC Parks Department since 2006. SUDS has done an excellent job over the years of 'self policing' our group, whether it be cleaning up, proper training or our '1 bark rule' (after that one bark owners are expected to keep their dogs quiet and everyone obliges).

SUDS has never given up hope, sticking it out as a solid member of the community for nearly a decade. Once the dog run is built we, or course, will maintain and take care of it. SUDS has over 150 community members all looking to volunteer their time to the upkeep of the dog run. There will be schedules for cleaning days, washing of the surface, trash removal and fund raising for the necessities that all dog runs require. SUDS has been an unofficial caretaker of Lodati Park for the better part of a decade, this would not change with the building of a dog run. Many SUDS members own homes, apartments and businesses in the neighborhood, we are heavily invested in the well being of Sunnyside.

SUDS also has a very experienced ally in its corner, NYCDOG (New York Council of Dog Ownership Groups). They are the 'umbrella organization' for all NYC dog runs/off leash areas.

We have been working closely with them since the move to make dog runs/off leash areas official NYC Parks Department and Health Department policy in 2007. They will be there every step of the way with us through the planning, building and operational phases, offering advice, assistance and expertise.

We were notified by the Queens Parks Dept that we would not be able to officially sign an 'operating agreement' until the dog run is actually built, so, this 'letter of intent' is in lieu of that formalized agreement. As can be seen by our long track record, SUDS is here to stay. We are a true friend of the Queens Parks Department and look forward to a strong partnership with them, CB #2 and the general Sunnyside community for years to come.

Kindest Regards,

Rick Duro  
President, SUDS