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Seneca employee Shane Loudermilk uses a forestry mulcher to clear the land where the city's new dog park is set to open, perhaps as soon as this summer.



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A city of Seneca employee clears land for the city's new dog park at the site of the former Kellett Elementary School.

Moulder: Dog park may open this summer

BY NORM CANNADA
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Local residents and their four-legged best friends could be enjoying a new park together as early as this summer.

Seneca city administrator Scott Moulder told city council and employees during a March planning retreat work is continuing to finish the dog park at the former

Kellett Elementary School property.

"We're anticipating sometime mid-to-late summer to open up," Moulder said at the March 16 planning retreat. "We hope it's getting to a place now where we can



Moulder

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PARK: Two sections planned

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actually start digging out the fencing and laying it out."

Moulder's administrative assistant, Debbie Williams, wrote three grants to help fund the park, two of which were successful — a \$50,000 State Park and Recreation Development Fund (PARF) grant, along with a \$25,000 grant from the PetSafe Bark for Your Park Committee in Knoxville, Tenn. The latter grant was awarded on the basis of online votes. Seneca was one of four cities in the country to get the \$25,000 grant. Another group, Gone to The Dogs, has also raised money for the dog park, initially getting about \$10,000 through a silent auction before Jazz on the Alley last year. The group is continuing to raise money through a legacy brick program where people make donations to have someone's name on a brick, according to Moulder. The total cost for the park is expected to be \$115,000.

Moulder said city employees working

on the park are using a recently purchased forestry mulcher to do the work in-house rather than hiring a firm.

"We bought a brand-new skid steer and a forestry mulcher, and we've been using those," he said at the retreat. "So beautification (city department) has been helping with the trees, cutting those down. We're taking down all the really tall trees ... that are very dangerous. We're trying to work on thinning it out slowly, so that we don't take out more than we need to. You need shade and sun for those dogs. That's going to be roughly, I think, right at an acre and a half to 2-acre park split into two sections — one for small dogs, one for large dogs.

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Scott Moulder
Seneca city administrator

"A lot of thought and research has gone into the layout and design of the property for not only the dogs, but I've also learned from somebody very wise about the dog world it's also for the owners. It's a place for the owners to actually congregate and commune and socialize."