

## Animal adoption centre, dog run could feature in East Coast Park



*SINGAPORE – East Coast Park could become a haven for animal lovers, potential adopters of pets and those seeking interactions with dogs, cats or rabbits, if discussions between Kembangan-Chai Chee grassroots organisation and the Ministry of National Development bear fruit.*

**BY NEO CHAI CHIN - DECEMBER 14**

SINGAPORE – East Coast Park could become a haven for animal lovers, potential adopters of pets and those seeking interactions with dogs, cats or rabbits, if discussions between Kembangan-Chai Chee grassroots organisation and the Ministry of National Development bear fruit.

Talks are ongoing on an animal adoption centre and a dog run for East Coast Park, Member of Parliament for Marine Parade Group Representation Constituency Tan Chuan-Jin and chief executive of the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) Louis Ng revealed today (Dec 14).

The idea is to “build a common space for people to co-exist with animals in our midst”, said Mr Tan who, together with Minister of State for National Development Desmond Lee and other volunteers, helped to raise S\$10,000 at ACRES’ charity carwash at The Grandstand in Bukit Timah.

Discussions are also taking place with the Cat Welfare Society (CWS) on extending the Love Cats pilot project in Chong Pang, where residents are allowed to keep one cat per flat, to the Marine Parade area, said Mr Tan.

Mr Ng, a volunteer in Mr Tan’s Kembangan-Chai Chee ward, said the idea was mooted about two months ago and details on the timeframe, site and size of the proposed centre are not available yet. Having an adoption centre in a popular park, however, could increase adoption rates and provide a venue for animal welfare groups to gather and reach out to the wider community, he said.

Animal welfare groups urge aspiring pet owners to adopt instead of buy, but animal shelters are often not in popular areas, said Mr Ng. “A lot of people are saying, let’s focus more on adoption, let’s pass some legislation. But I think rather than always legislating, let’s make this a community norm, so people will always know every weekend in East Coast Park, there are dogs, cats, rabbits (up) for adoption. It becomes very mainstream and very part-and-parcel of our lives in Singapore.”

Having enclosed areas in the centre, where animals are free to move about, can also help change people’s minds about keeping animals in cages, he said.

The CWS and House Rabbit Society of Singapore are aware of the idea and have submitted designs for the centre. CWS chief executive Joanne Ng said the centre would enhance adoption efforts and increase interaction opportunities with cats – at its adoption drives currently, the cats are mainly in cages.

CWS’ proposal was of a space the size of a one-room flat big enough for about 10 cats and three humans, with glass or acrylic walls. The see-through panels would allow people outside the room to see how each cat socialises with humans, she said.

Action for Singapore Dogs president Ricky Yeo supported the idea of the adoption centre and its accessible location. Aside from the dog run, the centre should have rooms to hold discussions with potential adopters, as well as a holding area for the animals, he suggested.

ASD, Animal Lovers League and Save Our Street Dogs would still be shooting for a joint national adoption centre – which the groups proposed to the MND earlier this year – to house all their animals and provide space for more, he added.

[Click here to read the full article on TODAYonline](#)