

Rec Committee Meeting Monday February 23, 2015, 5:30PM  
Agenda; off leash dog programs in city parks

Attending;

Committee- Melinda Humphrey, Gary Donahue, Matt Bloomer, Chris Siliski  
President David Allaire and Alderman William Notte  
Patricia Facey, Tom Opsahl, Claus Bartenstein, Shelly Lutz, June Louras, Tammy  
Brown, Beth Stack, Becky Mckee, Tracy Busony, Kirk Busony, Cindi Wight (rec),  
Gordon Dritschilo (Herald), Charlie Romeo (attorney)

The purpose of this meeting was to collect feedback and input regarding an off leash  
dog proposal from Patricia Facey, sent to Rec Committee at a January Board  
meeting.

Cindi Wight gave a review of a survey she recently completed of Pine Hill Park users  
regarding dog policy and use of the park(results attached)

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41% responded in favor of policies as is  
59% in favor of off leash in some capacity, with a substantial subset being in favor a  
specific area rather than applicable to the entire park

Patricia Facey recapped the voice and site control program she originally cited from  
Boulder, Colorado (materials attached)

Comments from those skeptical of a voice and site control program included a  
burden now put on the citizen without a dog, may present unpleasant experience to  
park users with children or leashed dogs in their supervision, even a friendly dog  
may be a nuisance.

Alderman Notte thinks a voice/site program will be very hard to implement  
correctly and should require certification of animals to participate which will be  
costly and time consuming.

Alderman Donahue noted concerns of liability, as well as concerns of off leash dogs  
interacting with service dogs in the park

Facey shared some statistics she's collected from Animal Control office Tim Jones,  
In five years, there have been 210 dog bite calls in the city  
Eight of those were in Pine Hill Park for "animal issues"

The public present seemed to equally represent for and against off leash program as  
presented, most were dog owners

President Allaire noted the dog park idea has been around for a long time and  
mentioned that Cindi Wight had shown him and Alderman Humphrey a 6 acre  
parcel of PHP for consideration of a fenced dog park. Wight's proposal was a plot of  
land in between existing trails that would not exclude current users, but add

additional trails within fenced area. No registration would be required, it would be an "at your own risk", additional feature of the park.

Comments from those in favor of the voice/site control program were that a fenced in park was not sufficient and they would be more in favor of a voice/site control program perhaps with implemented schedules or specific trails only.

Cindi Wight noted that although this conversation focused on PHP, if we are considering changing ordinance for off leash dogs in regards to a schedule, we should still consider all of city parks in that decision. In response to a comment, she also noted that even though we may potentially use park losers due to a change in ordinance, we are currently using park users who are trying to avoid off leash dogs.

Alderman Siliski noted that any change to the ordinance to allow an off leash dog schedule should be very consistent in hours and days, logical and easy to follow. He proposed the Rec Committee bring a draft of change in ordinance and a specific plan of how an off leash schedule might be implemented to the committee and then could pursue recommendation to the full Board with potential to be sent to Charter and Ordinance committee.

Cindi Wight confirmed she now feels she has the input and contacts to put together a draft ordinance and plan as Siliski proposed. She will also continue to have conversations with folks interested in championing a fenced dog park in addition to any change in ordinance.

This report is for information only and the topic of "off leash dog program" remains in Rec Committee at this time.