

ANIMAL AND DOG PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, March 5, 2021

8:00 am – 9:00 am

Meeting held via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84355790611?pwd=Ukd6MjVEdHI1ZWtXOG91NFlnanRsZz09>

Meeting ID: 843 5579 0611

Passcode: 955378

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees	
Committee Members	
Tom Lopez, Board of Aldermen	
Patricia Klee, Board of Aldermen Alternate	x
Kathy Abel, Community Member	x
June Lemen, Community Member (Vice-Chair)	x
Amber Logue, Community Member (Chair)	x
Megan Villacis, Community Member	x
Bob Langis, Animal Control Officer	
Becky Longval, Nashua Humane Society	x
Staff	
Deb Chisholm, Waterways Manager	x
Julie Chizmas, Transportation & Long-Range Planner	x
Sarah Marchant, Community Development Director	
Mike Harris, Parks & Recreation Operations Manager	x
Jason Puopolo, Parks & Recreation Superintendent	x
Cecilia Ulibarri, Mayor's Office	x

Prior to beginning the meeting, a "Checklist to Ensure Meetings are Compliant with the Right-to-Know Law During the State of Emergency" was read aloud so all committee members and any members of the public participating virtually via Zoom or by phone were aware of the steps that had been taken for the virtual meeting, including:

- a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone.
- b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.
- c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access.
- d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

Before beginning with the first agenda topic, a minute was taken to welcome the new Parks and Recreation Department Superintendent, Jason Puopolo, to the Committee. Jason introduced himself and is looking forward to working with the Committee. Mike has enjoyed being on the committee and will continue to participate.

1. Approval of the [February 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)

- Motion: Becky Longval
- Second: Amber Logue
- Yea: Alderwoman Klee, Kathy Abel, June Lemen, Amber Logue, Megan Villacis, Becky Longval
- Nay: None
- Abstained: None

2. Animal Regulations

a. Proposed Revisions to [§93-14](#)

Bob is still out on leave but he and Becky coordinated on proposed revisions to the penalty structure for animals at large. Becky does not object to the 12 months but Bob had some concerns about whether it was a calendar 12 months or rolling 12 months. The Committee reviewed the state [RSA](#), which reads: "... the second or subsequent nuisance offense committed within 12 months of the first nuisance offense" and agreed that the revision to the City ordinance should be consistent and use the same language.

The Committee also discussed whether the dates of the offenses can be effectively tracked. Alderwoman Klee stated every call to PD is saved in a log and Becky said it's the same at the Humane Society. There are plenty of records to prove date of first office. The question of who collects the fines was asked and Becky explained that the Humane Society currently collects the fines from a first offence and then the ACO handles it from there. The Humane Society then transfers the money collected back to the City, which is cumbersome. Becky doesn't mind keeping this process for the first offence and then she and the ACO will talk to owner and educate them. After that, we should let the PD and ACO do their job.

Julie confirmed that the new rule should be for "animals at large", not just dogs. And it should only pertain to animals at large, not other offenses.

Julie shared the proposed language that Becky and Bob drafted and based on the discussion, edited it to read:

§93-14 Violations and penalties. [Amended 5-14-1996 by Ord. No. O-96-11; 8-11-1998 by Ord. No. O-98-42; 3-23-1999 by Ord. No. O-98-90; 8-12-2003 by Ord. No. O-03-191]

Any owner found violating any provision of this article shall be guilty of a violation and upon conviction thereof shall be punished as provided in § 1-12 of the City Code, except that violation of an ordinance relating to ~~dogs~~ animals at large shall be punished by a fine of First Offense: \$25.00, Second Offense within a twelve month period of the first offense: \$50.00, Third Offense, within a twelve month period of the first offense: Court action. The Humane Society for Greater Nashua impound fees of \$20.00 (subject to change) per day will be also be incurred in order for the animal to be released.

Next Steps:

- Julie will send the draft language to the Legal Department for review.

- Julie will write a letter of recommendation that includes the similar fee structures from other NH communities and the state

b. Dog Groomer Licensing Discussion

Amber led a discussion on dog groomer licensing, starting by stating that currently, there are no states that require professional dog groomers to be licensed, just the facility. Groomers perform tasks similar to licensed hair dressers and need to know about similar things like skin issues plus additional things like pet behavior. There have been several efforts in this state and other states to get a groomer license requirement in place, but without success. Amber asked if this is something the ADPAC wants to tackle.

Alderwoman Klee said that with previous efforts, many dog groups came out and fought the proposed rule, which failed every time. That doesn't mean we shouldn't keep trying, though. Small groomers may not be able to afford licensing and testing costs so that could be a burden. And there are differences between shampooing, cutting nails, and other grooming tasks.

Becky is more interested in seeing vet techs getting licensed. She has heard horrible things about animals dying at groomers but there are also a lot of great groomers. Becky isn't opposed to groomer licensing and thinks it's a great idea but said there will be a struggle to get it passed.

Alderwoman Klee spoke of [HB376 from 2020](#), which would have established a committee to study best practices for companion animal groomers. It passed the house but was Laid on Table by the Senate. The Bill came back this year as [HB92](#) and is currently Retained in Committee by Commerce and Consumer Affairs and is due out of Committee on March 11.

Becky said without rules or licensing, there's no real recourse if something terrible happens. It's very hard to prove neglect of service. It would give the upper leg to dogs that get injured if there were rules and regulations.

Alderwoman Klee added that right now, it's self-regulated. PetCo won't allow muzzling but takes responsibility for any injuries and pays vet bills. We need something but it will be an upward, multiyear battle. We should know within a week what the disposition is of HB92. We should look to other communities that want it to go forward for support. The bill is sponsored by Rep Jim Maggiore (Rockingham) and Rep Amanda Gourgue (Strafford).

Next Steps:

- Alderwoman Klee will keep the ADPAC aware of pending legislation

3. Dog Waste Clean-up Campaign

a. Survey Update

Only 5 new entries in the Survey since the February meeting. Julie had a few questions for Jason regarding DPW waste stations and trash barrels but since time was running short, said she would send an email after the meeting.

b. Spring Clean Up Day

Amber spoke with Paul Shea of the Great American Downtown about their Spring Clean-Up Day which is held each year on the closest Saturday to Earth Day. They usually have about 100 volunteers help clean up the City with the Parks and Recreation department. We can use the survey results to get volunteers to help with dog waste clean-up. Amber recently walked over to the Salem Street community garden lot (across from the Tot Lot) and it was awful. There's a waste station there but it doesn't always have bags. We should repost the survey to get more sites identified and volunteers signed up.

Alderwoman Klee said that lot was cleaned up and a day later, it looked like it hadn't been cleaned. She wants to talk to Parks and Rec to see if anything can be done. Maybe we could put up sign with QR code that people could scan to send an email requesting bag refills.

Cecilia received a constituent call about the old FairPoint communications building on West Pearl Street. There's a green area that is completely covered with dog waste and it smells very badly. People cross the street to avoid it. She asked that it be added to the list of problem sites and whether this is something DPW can handle. It's a pretty significant problem.

Alderwoman Klee said code enforcement can be contact if the property has been abandoned. She added that another location with a significant issue is the Charlotte St School where there's waste right up against the building. Parks and Rec has come out to the Shattuck St Tot Lot and cleaned it up but it's really beyond their job.

Becky asked if we could we put signs up that outline the waste ordinance. Parasites can be a health hazard and there have been lots of worms coming into the shelter. She asked if we could step up enforcement of the ordinance. Amber noted that dog waste is going right into the sewer and rivers and Becky added that animals that live around the rivers are easily susceptible.

Deb commented that people who are leaving the waste don't care if there's a sign. They don't want to be educated so signs won't work. It's a great idea but it isn't going to stop the problem. She suggested we put cameras up in high intensity poop zones. June agreed that if people think they will get caught, they may pick up the waste.

Becky said you need a sign stating the rule and then you can enforce it. Alderwoman Klee said the ACLU would have an issue with cameras. It's a great idea but a nightmare to try to get approved. She agreed with Becky that we need signs to give PD enforcement ability.

June asked if we could get PAL to help with this. The control officer walking around the neighborhood could help make it clear this isn't ok. It can be dangerous to confront people so a police presence would be good.

Alderwoman Klee said we need to get the neighbors involved. The Shattuck Street neighbors would take pictures and call the police. The next step she's considering is to take the gate off the Tot Lot. The PD been incredible and has put this location on their "hot sheet" but they need to know when it's happening. It's a community effort and we need awareness and we need to get people to talk to us and be willing to call police.

Amber asked if we could set up a poop hotline where people could call in and report what and where it's happening. June suggested we could use the Civic Sounding Board Facebook page and say we are looking for people to post incidences. Alderwoman Klee thought that wouldn't be seen as official and people would need to call police. We could make a plea to the community asking people to report, but many of those Facebook sites turn into Nashua shaming. June said this isn't about the City not doing enough. It's that people aren't following the rules. We can say it isn't about shaming and that we are just asking for help. Alderwoman Klee said her constituents call her when there's a problem and then she works to fix it. She suggested we tell people to contact their Ward Alderman.

Becky said we need to make waste stations available to make change. It will be easier for the PD to enforce if they have the rules visible on signs and waste stations available. It will empower them. We need to look at the bigger picture beyond social media.

Amber said we would bring this back at the next meeting for a longer discussion and asked committee members to please bring ideas to share. This will be an on-going battle. Becky said we need a public campaign and Alderwoman Klee added we need DPW involved. She said she would work with Lauren Byers and Lisa Fauteux.

Next Steps:

- Come to next meeting with dog-waste clean-up ideas

4. Millyard Dog Park Feasibility Study

Julie told the Committee that the consulting team of Ironwood-Hoyle, Tanner & Associates had been interviewed the previous day (March 4th) and asked those involved with the interview for their thoughts on the proposal and the team.

Amber thought they were very thorough. They have done a lot of park projects and work in Nashua. They have worked on dog parks in the past. They were well aware of the difficulties in general - environmental, utilities, topography. Overall they think it's a viable site and are passionate about the project. They will take a lot of weight off the Committee's shoulders with a plan for funding, a design concept, and recommended dog park policies and waste management. And they will also do the public outreach, too.

Alderwoman Klee liked their open-mindedness of looking at the whole project. They provided all the details requested plus options, which is very important. They are well aware of the spring flood issues and want to get started so they can observe conditions this spring.

Deb shared that she had initial concerns after reading the proposal because it highlighted lots of park projects but not any dog park projects. But after sitting through the interview and listening to their approach, her fears were completely alleviated. They seem to understand process. Alderwoman Klee agreed with the lack of dog park experience but noted they have lots of municipal park experience and have built areas for dogs within those parks, so they are aware of the needs.

The cost of the proposal was briefly discussed. It's a not to exceed proposal and the funding is secured.

There was no further discussion and Julie asked if there was a motion to enter into contract negotiations with Ironwood – HTA. The motion was made and roll-call vote taken as follows:

- Motion: Alderwoman Klee
- Second: Becky Longval
- Yea: Alderwoman Klee, Kathy Abel, June Lemen, Amber Logue, Megan Villacis, Becky Longval
- Nay: None
- Abstained: None

Next Steps:

- Julie will meet with Sarah Marchant on March 9th to discuss how to proceed with the contract.

5. Animal Shelter and ACO Updates

Bob's return date is still unknown. Becky reported that it's business as usual at the Humane Society. Strays are still coming in.

Spring Rabies Clinic:

It looks like there will not be a spring rabies clinic held at City Hall this year. There are still restrictions in place at the Humane Society and vaccine clinics. The City Hall event is big – about 100 people in close quarters. That could be uncomfortable for staff. The City Hall event has been really great. They opened the City Clerk's office so people could get their pets vaccinated and then licensed in the same trip. Alderwoman Klee said it will be hard on some not having the clinic because shots are expensive, but it's understandable due to COVID.

Becky said something could change. Typically, the City Hall clinic was held in April and if things calm down maybe we can do something in June. They would usually have the clinic confirmed by now but she will double check. Alderwoman Klee asked if we could run a program like the COVID vaccine, set up the clinic and call people to come in one at a time and limit it to a certain number. Becky said she would see what other options there are. The clinic provides an opportunity for rabies education and she's a big proponent of that so if they can find a way to do it, they will - there's a great need in the community.

Next Steps:

- Becky will see what we can do for a spring rabies clinic.

6. Other

Due to a lack of time, the [National Park Service BARK Rangers Program](#) topic will be moved to the next meeting.

Motion made to adjourn (Amber Logue) and seconded (Kathy Lemen). Meeting adjourned at 9:05 am.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Friday, April 2nd at 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM via Zoom

Minutes by: Julie Chizmas