

**ANIMAL AND DOG PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Thursday, February 10, 2022

8:00 am – 9:00 am

**IN-PERSON LOCATION**

**Room 208 @ City Hall**

**VIRTUAL MEETING LINK**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88325839036?pwd=dWx3M1hCYXdjUTdEMGtsSjl3Ui8wZz09>

**Meeting ID: 883 2583 9036**

**Passcode: 108580**

**APPROVED Minutes**

<b>Attendees</b>		
<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>In-Person</b>	<b>Virtual (Reason)</b>
Tom Lopez, Board of Aldermen (Alternate)		
Patricia Klee, Board of Aldermen	X	
Kathy Abel, Community Member	X	
Amber Morgan, Community Member (Chair)	X	
Megan Villacis, Community Member	X	
Bob Langis, Animal Control Officer	X	
Becky Longval, Nashua Humane Society		X (medical)
<b>Staff</b>	<b>In-Person</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
Deb Chisholm, Waterways Manager	X	
Julie Chizmas, Transportation & Long-Range Planner	X	
Noah Telerski, Mayor's Office	X	

The regular meeting of the Animal and Dog Park Advisory Committee was held in Room 208 at City Hall and via Zoom teleconference. The Zoom meeting link was provided on the meeting agenda and on the City's website.

Roll call attendance was taken and committee members participating via Zoom stated their presence, the reason for not attending the meeting in person, and whether there was anyone in the room with them during the meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

**1. Approval of the [November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)**

- Motion: Bob Langis
- Second: Amber Morgan
  - Discussion: None
- Yea: Unanimous by roll call vote
- Nay: None

**2. Dog Park Non-Profit**

Amber updated the committee on the effort to form a non-profit organization to raise funds for, manage and operate a free downtown public dog park located in the Millyard. She is working with the NH Center for Non-Profits to make sure the non-profit is being set up correctly and all the appropriate boxes are checked. She is still looking for one more person who loves dogs and has fundraising experience to join the board. She is also actively checking on grants and other funding opportunities. The first fundraising task is to raise the money needed for a final design of a dog park, as recommended in the Millyard Dog Park Feasibility Study.

**Next steps:**

- Continue working with NH Center for Non-Profits (Amber/board members)
- Recruit one more board member (Amber)

**3. Dog Waste Clean-up Campaign**

Julie informed the group that the new Parks and Recreation superintendent starts on February 14<sup>th</sup> and she anticipates he will be joining the ADPAC at the March meeting.

Alderwoman Klee reported that the Shattuck Street Tot Lot continues to be a problem with respect to dog waste. She said it is even worse when a dog is let in while the kids are there. Some dog owners swear and are very disrespectful. The neighbors are beside themselves. Removing the fence has been considered but is not a good solution because there are streets along two sides of the park and that would pose a safety risk to the young children. Cameras will be pursued next though they may not be a deterrent for the occasional violator due to the difficulty of enforcement. However, they may be helpful with repeat offenders if you can catch them. Bob said bringing in repeat offenders on an at-large summons will be eye-opener, especially now that there's no \$25 cap on the fine. The violator's name will be in paper and police log.

Becky asked if there is a way to lock the gate during off hours. Alderwoman Klee said that would require dedicated staff to lock and unlock it daily. Bob can monitor the situation but in the summer time, it's very busy and would be difficult. The Police Department patrols and educates people but they can't always do that at the same time every day. There are a handful of people who are the repeat violators. When the PD is called, the violators are often gone by the time they get there. Amber asked if there were any concerned neighbors who might help with a door-to-door educational campaign. She also asked whether it was possible to get a list of registered dog owners from the City Clerk to use for targeted outreach. Alderwoman Klee said she would do the door-to-door outreach herself. She added that it isn't just people from the

neighborhood that are causing issue – there are dogs from other neighborhoods, too. Getting the neighborhood to take ownership of the Tot Lot is key and education never hurts.

Becky asked if we could look at the issue another way. Instead of trying to keep dogs out of the park, could we fence in a "relief area"? We can educate people but that won't solve the problem of people not having an area for their dogs to relieve themselves. Alderwoman Klee said she didn't have a problem with that idea and suggested an area on the Laton Street side. A deep fence would be needed to prevent digging dogs from escaping onto a neighboring property or into the street. Becky said they've had success using cinder blocks along and under fencing that goes down about 2 feet to proactively prevent digging.

Alderwoman Klee will pursue a conversation about a fenced area with neighbors, especially the abutting residential property. Parks and Rec also needs to be consulted about the gate, fencing and the whole park in general. This may be a good solution that helps get rid of negative space. Amber said it needs to be called a dog relief area and not a dog park. Julie thought the entrance may need to be separate due to the new rule about dogs in tot lots. Kathy noted this is a behavior issue and some people still may not care. Alderwoman Klee said we've established a rule about dogs in tot lots and increased fines related to dogs. This is another step we can take to help. She and the neighbors are very frustrated. The park was used a lot more after it was cleaned up last year. This topic will be revisited with the new Parks and Rec superintendent once he joins the committee.

Becky asked if we could get a plan of the Shattuck Street lot for the next meeting. Julie brought up the site on the City's GIS website:



Amber said that the Twin Ponds complex off Spit Brook Road has a dog relief area that we could use as a model. Becky added that this would be a great place for an educational/informational board and also to host clinics, dog events, or training sessions.

**Next steps:**

- Speak with abutters about cameras (Alderwoman Klee)
- Conduct a door-to-door educational campaign (Alderwoman Klee)
- Speak with neighbors and Parks and Rec about fencing off a dog relief area (Alderwoman Klee, Julie)

**4. Animal-Related Signage**

As discussed at the previous meeting, we need to work with Parks and Rec and the School district to identify where there is inconsistent signage and fix that first, focusing initially on fenced in parks and sites with biggest issues related to dogs. This topic will be brought back for discussion once the new Parks and Rec super begins.

**Next steps:**

- Outline existing inconsistencies and issues using Bob's notes and meeting minutes for discussion with Parks and Rec and the School District (Julie)

**5. Animal Control Officer and Humane Society Updates**

- **ACO:** Bob reported that the year started with the seizure of over 50 animals. The relocation of the animals to the shelter went smoothly thanks to Becky and her staff.

Bob provided an updated animal call report (summary attached). There is a new category: Paperwork, which covers Abatement Orders, Violation of Abatement Orders, Civil Forfeitures for Unlicensed Dog and Summons. The Check Conditions calls were related to dogs being out in the cold; by the time Bob got there, the dogs were generally back in the house.

Amber informed the committee that the Nashua PD has a new community therapy/tracking dog. Ellie is a black lab that works with Officer Turcotte. Alderwoman Klee said she recently went on a ride along and Ellie is doing really well. She often works on cases involving children and recently assisted in locating a lost resident with Alzheimer's disease.

- **Humane Society:** Becky reported that while this tends to be a slower time of year, they still have a lot of dogs and rabbits. The Humane Society is currently working with Nashua Fire Rescue to initiate an animal handling training for response personnel. Response vehicles are equipped with animal oxygen masks and training would include how to give oxygen, how to approach scared animals, and how to properly hold them for comfort.

The Humane Society is still working hard on their expansion project and the capital campaign to fund it. They are also waiting on a determination regarding the state law that prevents the Humane Society from operating a low cost veterinary clinic. If the law changes, the Shelter plans on building a clinic. The current Safety Net program is booming and that shows the great need for lower cost pet care. People on limited incomes shouldn't have to

pick between their medicine and care for a companion pet. A consultant specializing in fundraising is helping with the capital campaign. The Humane Society still offers community clinics on Tuesdays (spay/neuter) and Wednesdays (vaccines), and did not stop them due to COVID.

Julie asked if NH (or the City) bans the sale of puppy mill dogs in pet stores. Bob explained that licenses are required to breed 50 or more animals in NH. Becky noted that pet stores usually import puppy mill puppies and don't get them from local breeders. Alderwoman Klee said she worked on a bill to stop the importing of puppy mill dogs in the past but the well-funded dog breeding organizations fought hard against it. Becky added that the AKC fights against animal regulations like this as they get income from puppy mills. She also said the Humane Society is working with PetSmart to rehome rescued guinea pigs, which is good PR for rescues.

Becky said there is currently a proposed bill to ban the declawing of cats ([HB1226](#)). The Federation of Humane Societies is not taking position. Vets should be able to determine if a cat should be declawed due to injury or damage – the bill should be reworded to a 'ban on declawing with exception' to allow for medically necessary procedures.

## 6. Other

- Due to her successful campaign for BPW commissioner, June Lemman resigned from the ADPAC effective January 4, 2022.
  - Becky was nominated as Vice-Chair and was unanimously approved by roll call vote.
  - Alderwoman Klee has dog-owning constituent who she thinks would make a good candidate for the vacant community member position and will follow-up with Amber.
- Status of §93-14: Approved by BOA on 11/9/21. Per the City Clerk's website, newly-adopted legislation will appear in the [online version of the Code](#) approximately 45 days after its approval date, which would be 12/24/21. It is currently listed at the top of Chapter 93 under "New Laws" but the rule itself has not yet been updated as of February 10th.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 am by roll call vote

**Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> 8 AM – 9 AM**

*Minutes by: Julie Chizmas*