

ANIMAL AND DOG PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, April 2, 2021

8:00 am – 9:00 am

Meeting held via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84355790611?pwd=Ukd6MjVEdHI1ZWtXOG91NFlnRnRsZz09>

Meeting ID: 843 5579 0611

Passcode: 955378

APPROVED Minutes

Attendees	
Committee Members	
Tom Lopez, Board of Aldermen	
Patricia Klee, Board of Aldermen Alternate	x
Kathy Abel, Community Member	
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
Noah Telerski, 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 [March 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)

- Motion: Alderwoman Klee
- Second: June Lemen
 - Discussion: None
- Yea: Unanimous by roll call vote
- Nay: None
- Abstained: None

2. Animal Regulations: Proposed Revisions to [§93-14](#)

Proposed language per March 5th ADPAC Meeting:

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 **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.

Issue: We already have an Animals at Large rule.

Julie shared this issue with Bob and Becky and proposed new language specific to dogs. She also highlighted other sections of Chapter 93 that mentioned penalties for dog offenses, including §93-6 Impoundment, §93-8 Dog Waste, and §93-13 Noises From Animals as a Nuisance. Bob wrote back with the following comments:

Comments from Bob:

- Under 93:6: We might want to change the language stating that dogs, cats and ferrets may be "destroyed in the least painful manner possible" to something a little less threatening. Could replace with **"shall become the property of the holding facility and disposed of in the best interest of the public and animal."** This allows for the facility to decide on adoption or other resolutions.
- Originally thought the changes to 93-14 were to make the dog violations more in line with other city ordinances. Capping the dog related fines to \$25 was ineffective. **This should apply to ALL dog offenses under chapter 93.** It shouldn't matter if it's a dog at large or waste & other nuisances - a dog offense is a dog offense. The proposed changes were supposed to allow the judges to use their discretion. I have no problem with 1st offense being \$25, 2nd offense \$50. Third and subsequent offenses should be left up to the courts **without a 12 month window.** If an owner has no lengthy history (ex: a year or longer), the prosecutor and the judge will see it and the fine will likely be the minimum.
- It should also be noted that a "fine" is a court action and can be fought in court as any other violation, parking ticket, speeding ticket etc.
- Regarding the impound fee at the Humane Society in the proposed new language, I would change that paragraph to: A reasonable boarding and care fee will be paid in full to the holding

facility prior to releasing the animal to its owner or keeper. The reason being IF an animal is picked up and impounded that the shelter can't handle – like a horse, hog, etc., - whoever houses the animal should be protected.

Becky noted that Bob brought this up as an animals at large issue because there is a big discrepancy between how dog at large cases were handled versus other animals at large. Amber commented that dogs at large should be fined at the same amount as other animals and suggested asking Legal for assistance.

Regarding Bob's comments on §93-6, June asked if we typically destroy animals after 7 days. Becky said that sometimes they have to, typically with sick or injured strays. They are bound by law to keep for 7 days and are only allowed to provide minimal medical care to stabilize life, not provide pain relief, which is inhumane. They need to be able to euthanize humanely.

Further discussion ensued, with Becky saying we should incorporate all animals, all violations in a new fine structure. Alderwoman Klee asked if we should just add dogs to the list of animals in §93-2(A) and if so, what happens with §93-5? Amber thought yes, they should be added to the list and then §93-5 can be removed. Alderwoman Klee also suggested we go to Legal for guidance on this. Becky will review the whole Animals chapter with Bob.

Next Steps:

- Julie, Becky and Bob will meet via Zoom and go over whole rule.

3. Dog Waste Clean-up Campaign

Amber reported there was a 90 – 95% reduction of waste after cleaning up the Tolles Street Community Gardens and Salem Street Tot Lot, which have trash cans and Mutt Mitt bag stations. She noted that one community clean-up day really made a difference. It's important to get the trash barrels put back as soon as possible after the winter. While there are still issues with bagged poop being left on the ground, she would rather pick up waste that has been bagged than waste that has not. Alderwoman Klee agreed, noting that moving the existing trash can to a more accessible location helped. She added that they also cleaned up the Shattuck Street Tot Lot.

Amber informed the group that June had started working on an AARP grant application for community beautification. She proposes applying for \$11,000 to pay for 20 waste stations - bags only, not dispensers – plus marketing. She used the Mine Falls bag numbers provided by DPW to estimate the number of bags needed per year. The turnaround time for this grant is quick with funding decisions made by June. Amber will Community Development to make sure we can accept the funds. Next steps include how to get stations installed and where. We have feedback from the survey indicating that volunteers will check the bags and refill as needed.

Julie explained that she recently reached out to DPW and Economic Development about installing stations with bag dispensers (no waste baskets) on Main Street by attaching them to existing structures, such as waste bins and sign posts. The response from DPW was "*we do not want these bags placed along Main Street in the public right-of-way. We currently have severe problems in our parks with these bags being dumped and/or hung from trees, fences bushes etc. And we don't have the resources to pick up this type of trash every day.*"

Unfortunately, we know firsthand what a problem dog waste is throughout the City, but this will create additional issues."

Alderwoman Klee asked what is the issue? Is it bags not being available or bags being left? Amber added she would rather see a bag of poop than poop. She noted the mail mentioned parks and wasn't as focused on Main St. These aren't exactly the same areas – bags are unlikely to be left on fences or in trees on Main Street and she would help make sure that didn't happen. She suggested that if we got a hard no, then perhaps we could work with individual businesses and they can put out dispensers privately. The City allows dogs on Main Street and needs to take correct steps to deal with waste side of it.

Julie mentioned that there's still a need to figure out how to deal with donations and grant funds. It was suggested at previous meetings that the Humane Society could act as a fiscal agent. Amber asked if we could move forward with that plan. Alderwoman Klee asked if the goal was to set up a non-profit and Amber said no, we aren't looking to build a private dog park. We want a public park with its own budget that is part of City budget. But we need to initially raise funds, build the park and then it becomes part of the City.

Becky asked who is fiscal agent for parks in the City and Alderwoman Klee replied there isn't one. If we are using donations to build a park that becomes a city park, then we need to be transparent and show how donations and tax dollars are spent. Amber said that's why we want to go through an experienced Fiscal Agent and that the intent is not to use tax payer dollars at all, if possible. We are building of park through donations given to the City.

Alderwoman Klee noted there are lots of rules and we just need to have Legal involved to make sure we are doing everything right before it becomes a city park. Amber said we want to start the process and this won't be a one and done. The consultants will help us with this and we will have their report in September. We want to get the structure in place to accept funds so we don't end up pushing the project out. Becky added that we need to have a contract in place for fiscal agency that outlines reporting, fees, costs, etc.

Next Steps:

- Amber, June and Julie to work on AARP grant application.
- Julie to follow up with DPW Re: bag dispensers on Main Street.
- Becky, Amber and Julie to work on establishing the Humane Society as a Fiscal Agent for the ADPAC

4. Millyard Dog Park Feasibility Study Update

Julie informed the group that the contract for the Dog Park Feasibility Study was to go before the Finance Committee on April 7th. Alderwoman Klee said she was on the on finance committee and it would be good to provide public comment. Deb said she would also be attending for another contract. Amber asked Julie to send her the join info for the meeting.

5. Animal Shelter and ACO Updates

Bob is still out and cannot access the reporting system. Becky had not updates from shelter. Julie asked if there had been any updates on potentially holding a spring rabies clinic and Becky replied there had not.

6. National Park Service BARK Rangers Program

Amber informed the group about the [National Park Service's BARK Rangers Program](#). In this program, people can come to a National Park with their pup and sign up to be part of program. It provides an educational opportunity about proper trail use, waste management, wildlife. Participants receive a "graduate" certificate. This might be a good thing to do with our dog park – provide a fun awareness program.

Amber also spoke about a town in Vermont that raises funds through an "honorary Mayor" program. The 1st year it was a goat and the 2nd was dog. They raised about \$40,000 between the two "campaigns" through the sale of ballots for \$5, with the funds used for public parks. It was a really fun program that allowed kids to vote. Perhaps we could do this – have a "Downtown Dog Mayor"? Alderwoman Klee suggested we could have a Ward Mayor or Ward Ambassador to get the Aldermen and schools involved. Amber added it doesn't have to be a dog, it can be anything fun and creative. The honorary Mayors take an "oath of office" to stay on leash, pick up poop, go to ribbon cuttings, etc. Becky thought this was a great idea and a fun way to promote and educate. Amber said she'd send the info to Julie.

7. Other

Amber would like to discuss the need to mark sewers for no dumping at the next meeting. She will share the stencils used in Amherst. Nashua's say it on the grates but no one reads those. We need something with higher visibility. Could the Scouts help with painting? Alderwoman Klee said DPW has stickers that are going on grates but Amber replied she hasn't seen any of those in a while. She suggested that the stencils could be painted on freshly paved roads.

Alderwoman Klee reported that they spent hours cleaning up the Shattuck Street Tot Lot and that same night, someone came in with dog and hung bag of poop from playground equipment. She asked DPW to take gate off but they are concerned that would present a false sense of security for parents and didn't recommend that. They could take all fencing down along the roads but leave fencing along the sides by the buildings. This is another topic to add to the agenda for next meeting. Parents are getting desperate. There are trash barrels there so hanging the poop off the playground equipment was just to make a statement. The police patrol but if they don't witness a violation, they can't do anything. Alderwoman Klee is meeting with parents and said cameras are a no possible due to the fear of pedophiles requesting videos of kids playing.

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

Next Scheduled Meeting: Friday, May 7th at 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM via Zoom

Minutes by: Julie Chizmas