

Hannah's Bark Park Advisory
Minutes September 9, 2019

Present: Lynn Simons, Chris Bundy, John Dinse, Anne Heideman, Mark Stuldreher, Sue Gamble

Absent: Margy Reimer

The meeting began at 5:30 pm.

Membership Update: Chris noted four new members since the last meeting. This would be 227 memberships currently. Chris noted there is a usual fluctuation from 218-230 memberships. Membership continues to be steady and at or above expected levels.

Public Comment:

Ms. Pat McGann-Zieomts spoke during the public comment time. She noted her dog, Daisy, had been attacked twice by the same dog in the dog park. She had not exchanged phone numbers with the owner of the other dog. She shared praise for the dog park, the rules that were in place, and the posting of the rules. She wanted restitution for her dog's vet bills and wished the city or dog park would facilitate this. Ms. McGann Zieomts noted another dog park member's dog had been injured and also wanted restitution for vet bills. Ms. McGann Zieomts suggested an additional transition area, away from the water fountain so dogs could enter the park without other dogs greeting the newcomer. She requested a run specifically for difficult dogs who wished exercise but were not able to socially be a part of the dog park because of temperament and behavior. She expressed dismay that she had not been kept in the loop about the actions taken with the other dog owner and requested that she be given a letter noting it was the other dog's initiative in both fights. She believed the absence of such a letter suggested the Board condoned the attack. Chris noted he had responded to her with phone calls and alerted her that the other dog owner had elected to permanently remove their dog from the park.

Old Business

The City will grade the parking lot and extended driveway of the Hannah's Bark Park area on a regular basis. City maintenance and Park Rangers are

often in that area and can provide feedback if large potholes develop in between gradings, but Chris noted that member feedback was also sought if grading could address new areas of decline.

Friends of the Dog Park

FDP updated the Advisory Board about several items. They have received three bids and are currently seeking clarification of the bids for lighting. Chris offered to be of help on addressing bids, and evaluating bids. He agreed that some lighting was better than none.

FDP have been engaged in the Highway clean up project and three times a year, pick up trash on about a six-mile spread on US 127. John Dinse asked if the City would send a message to members to recruit volunteers. Chris asked that the information be sent to him and he would see that it is sent out. The next pick up day is Sunday, September 22, 2019, and training begins at 9:30. This event is undertaken to support our community and to provide some recognition for Hannah's Bark Park.

New Business

A member complained about a belief that marijuana was present in the dog park. It was alleged that marijuana is stashed in trash bins, fence lines and outside areas for pick up. A dog became ill and the belief was the dog had ingested marijuana, although there were no toxicology tests available to confirm this. Chris had dealt with this rumor and responded to the member about the concern. Park Rangers, City Police, and City maintenance workers are periodically at the park. Maintenance workers are there daily. No City staff have noticed marijuana in the area or in the trash. No City staff have observed suspicious transactions or behavior related to marijuana or drug use in or near the park. The Advisory Board noted they had not observed marijuana or suspicious behavior near or in the park. Chris noted the City staff, police and Park Rangers will continue to observe the park for suspicious activity. Members can call the police if they observe marijuana transactions occurring in the park.

Chris noted the Warming Area and the Concession stand is part of the Restroom and that the warming area will likely be up and running this winter. He offered the use of the Concession stand to FDP as one means of fundraising. The group can run the Concession Stand and keep the profits for fundraising. Chris noted there is a cameras present for potential safety

concerns and he thought the Concession Stand might be heavily used in sledding season and a fund raiser for the Friends Group.

The Advisory Board discussed the protocol and procedures the City uses to deal with dog incidents within the park. It was noted the rules and guidelines of the dog park, which are signed by each member, address dog incidents in the park. Members are to seek name and contact information from the other owner, and to report the aggressive incident to the Parks and Recreation department. The Parks and Recreation Department keep a log of reported dog incidents to identify frequent problem dogs or owners. The Department will seek out information from both dog owners, as there is often an inconsistent view of the incident. The City has the right, and has in the past, advised remediation or removal from the park. The Advisory Board is aware of the City's actions in the past of requesting certain members time their activities to be separate from another dog owner, do not use the park, or engage in education on the rules and policies that were not followed.

Specifically, the Advisory Board addressed recent requests for remediation. It was noted that the City staff and Advisory Board do not have authority to seek restitution for a dog owner, and individuals are encouraged to pursue that directly with the dog owner. A Board member raised concern that a separate run for temperamentally unsuited dogs is unlikely to be used by individuals, as often owners do not identify their dogs as "unsuitable" for the dog park. An additional transition area into the park will present the same challenges as the current extra transition area into the park: many dogs like to greet the newcomers and dog owners are not moving their dogs away from the gate. Dogs in the transition area can be kept in there until the greeter dogs lose interest and move on.

Meeting Schedule

It was noted meetings will be scheduled about one year in advance to facilitate regularity of meeting. Chris proposed a schedule which conflicted with the Friends of the Library Board, so this Advisory Board will shift to the first Monday in February, May, August and November. Chris will send specific dates out.

We adjourned at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Simons