

Hannah's Bark Park Advisory
Minutes October 13, 2021

Present: Lynn Simons (Midland), Ryan Longoria (Mt. Pleasant), Phil Biscorner (Mt. Pleasant, MI), Mark Stuldreher (Mt. Pleasant), Amy Barr-Tickle (Mt. Pleasant), Sue Gamble (Mt. Pleasant)

Absent: John Dinse

The meeting began at 5:02, and was held virtually via Zoom. A previously rescheduled meeting had not served notice to the public for public comment. This meeting was scheduled to provide opportunities for public comment. A quorum was present.

Public Comment:

Janet Simon, owner of Silas, a poodle, provided public comment. She noted Silas is not an aggressive dog and provided apologies for the rules that had been broken. She noted she had observed others take large dogs to the small dog side, and bring small dogs to the large dog side, and assumed this was "the norm." She noted others have taken aggressive dogs to the small side to minimize conflict. She noted she was conscientious when Silas was on the small side and planned to leave if a small dog entered the park. She reported she was confronted aggressively about this and threatened to be "expelled" by a dog park member, for being on the small dog park side. She noted she was distressed from this interaction.

Ms. Simon noted the incidents occurred in early August, when she was stranded in Utah by unforeseen weather. She noted she had told her son's dad, Chris, not to take Silas to the dog park, and believed the aggressive complaints were precipitated by his actions with Silas. She shared apologies for his behavior and actions towards others.

Ms. Simon requested the Advisory Board reconsider its decision to end her membership. She added that she attended Hannah's Bark Park often, but had found it stressful when others broke the rules such as having frisbees and playing with toys. She noted, if reconsideration is given, her intent was to go primarily on the weekends, in order to avoid a crowded dog park. She noted she thought going later during the week could also avoid issues. Ms. Simon asserted that the issue that upset her the most was that "Silas was never out

of my sight” and that she had never had an indication of problems. She noted if she saw problems, she would leave the park with Silas.

Ryan thanked her for her public input, and Ms. Simon left the zoom call. The Advisory Board had a discussion and sought information. It was noted she had been a member since September 2020. It was noted that she was not present when aggression occurred, but then reported she was present for one aggression episode.

Mark moved that the Advisory Board reconsider, and reinstate Ms. Simon. Sue seconded the motion and discussion ensued. It was noted dogs act differently with each owner and may have acted differently with the dog walker. It was noted that rules appeared to be broken too frequently in the park and that others also go to the small dog side inappropriately. It was noted that the person who had confronted Ms. Simon and made her feel apprehensive was not one of the complaint makers, but unclear if it was a person within that clique who had made complaints.

During the discussion, Mark withdrew his motion. He made a new motion that Ms. Simon be reinstated for six months to assess some changes, and continued reinstatement would be contingent on no concerning aggression incidents. He suggested she be advised to be cautious who was in the park and to avoid known conflicts with people or dogs. This motion was seconded by Sue. Discussion ensued and then a vote was taken.

Two people voted to support the motion, one voted against, and one member abstained. The two City Liaison members did not vote. There was a discussion if a majority vote was a “majority of members present” or if it was “a majority of Board Members.” Ryan noted he would review the bylaws. It was agreed he would communicate issues via email to Board Members.

The next meeting is December 20, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

We adjourned at 5:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Simons