

DOG MANAGEMENT IN SAN MATEO COUNTY PARKS COMMITTEE

Building 455 County Center, Redwood City
4th Floor, Room 402

Minutes from Meeting

September 19, 2016

Members present: Faye Brophy, Mike Cooney, Christine Corwin, Darrick Emil, Lyndall Erb (Alternate), Nic Erridge, Jerry Hearn, Chris Johnson, Neil Merrilees, Jim Sullivan

Excused: Rafael Avendano, Aaron Gonzales

Staff: Marlene Finley, Director of SMC Parks Department; Carla Schoof, Community Engagement; Sarah Birkeland, Assistant Director

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM by Co-Chair Neil Merrilees. He welcomed members of the committee and observers and requested self-introductions with members asked to share any strongly held views they bring to this meeting. He noted that committee members had been selected to represent the wide range of perspectives and interests that will need to be considered as a recommendations to update and improve dog management within San Mateo County Parks is developed.

Patricia (Pat) Brown, was introduced as the facilitator for the committee. In this role, she will work with committee members and Park Department staff to develop meeting agendas, ensure full and productive participation in committee discussions and deliberations, and draft meeting notes.

- Pat described the meeting template that has been developed to encourage sharing of information and ideas, opportunities for public input and effective use of the time available.
- She noted that minutes of each meeting will be prepared and reviewed at the following meeting. Minutes will focus on topics discussed, conclusions, actions and next steps.
- She told the committee that all documents they receive will be posted on the Parks website.
- Pat provided a broad overview of Brown Act requirements and suggested that members review the Brown Act PowerPoint presentation in their binder. Committee members should remember that their opinions and ideas related to committee work are not to be shared with each other outside of the meeting. Staff members can communicate with members of the committee, but committee members should go through staff to access other committee members.

Public Comment:

Lisa Stultz of Burlingame thanked the Committee for undertaking its work and noted that as a professional dog walker she is finding that there are simply not enough places to walk dogs in central San Mateo County.

Director's Report

Marlene reviewed the charge to the Committee – ***to advise the Parks Commission as it seeks to update and clarify dog management policies in San Mateo County Parks.*** She also went over the proposed timeline of one year of monthly meetings, with the goal of presenting recommendations to the Parks Commission in September 2017. From September – December 2016 the Committee will gather information, identify factors to be considered in policy recommendations, frame focus areas and develop approaches to gathering community input. January – March 2017, the Committee will discuss issues and interests of County residents, learn about best practices and deliberate on key issues. Starting in April, the Committee will begin to draft recommendations and build consensus. July-August 2017 will be the time to finalize the recommendation(s) and prepare the presentation to the Commission.

Marlene told the committee members that she is hoping they will develop a set of high-level recommendations that consider factors such as criteria for decision-making, costs, educational efforts and enforcement. She cited the work of the Mini-Parks Committee that put together policy guidelines that enable the Department to govern mini-parks in unincorporated areas. And she briefly reviewed the resource material provided to committee members in their binders.

She reviewed the following roles and responsibilities:

- Co-chairs: open and close meetings, serve as liaisons with Parks Commission, receive input from the public and share with the Committee
- Committee members:
 - Appointed to bring to the work of the committee the issues and interests of various segments of the community.
 - Will also be asked to share information from the committee with constituents.
 - Commit to working with others on the Committee to craft the best possible recommendation(s) for the County Parks.
- Staff: support the work of the Committee, provide requested information, maintain website and assist with public outreach.
- Facilitator: ensure an inclusive, fair, effective process where all committee members feel free to contribute to the conversation. In collaboration with the Committee Chair and staff, develop meeting agendas and prepare meeting minutes.

Finally, Marlene addressed the goal of consensus decision making– with voting as fallback if consensus is not achieved. She introduced the Fist to Five tool that will be used to assess levels of consensus as committee members work together.

Co-Chair and Member Reports

- Mike Cooney suggested that Neil Merrilees serve as the chair of this Committee since his own term on the Parks Commission expires in December, before the work of the committee is concluded.
- Neil Merrilees raised the issue of outreach and there was a discussion of where, when and how this committee might reach out for public input. Staff will come to the next meeting with a recommendation on how to proceed.

- As a regular agenda item, members will be invited to share information and input they deem helpful for the Committee.
- Committee members and members of the public can contact the committee – through Parks Department staff or the committee chair. In addition, staff will look into a method to share emails that are sent to the committee via the Parks website.

Presentations/Discussion

Committee members then developed a list of resources and information that will be needed to develop an understanding of the complexities to be considered as they are formulating a recommendation.

- Current policy (see binder)
- Criteria that might be used to consider environmental aspects of a proposed dog area
- Information about the City and County of San Francisco Dog Policy
- Map of all dog-accessible locations in SMC
- History of the current dog policy/ordinance – what was the thinking behind the policy
- Service dogs: what qualifies, ADA regulations
- Maps to show areas being considered and existing spaces that allow dogs
- Benchmark studies of the development and implementation of dog access rules in different environments (urban, rural)
- SFPUC – current policies/approaches to dog access

Confirm meeting schedule

The committee agreed to meet monthly on Monday afternoon, but suggested an earlier start time to ease the commute. The next meeting on October 17th will start at 2PM and end at 3:30 PM.

Meeting dates are: October 17, November 21, December 19, January 23, February 27, March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19, July 17, August 21, September 18 and October 5 (to present the recommendation to the Parks Commission).

Confirm agreements/reporting out

The Committee agreed to describe this meeting as an organizational meeting in which processes, resources, outreach and policy development were discussed.

Items for next agenda

- Review proposed approach to outreach
- Learn Google Docs technique for considering public input
- Review and discuss proposed schedule of resource and information sharing

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 PM by Neil Merrilees.

<http://parks.smcgov.org/dog-management-san-mateo-county-parks-committee>

