

**COMMITTEE ON DOG MANAGEMENT IN SAN MATEO COUNTY PARKS**

*Mission: To provide healthy spaces for humans and canines, to promote positive experiences for dogs and other park users and to protect natural resources in San Mateo County Parks*

**Meeting Notes**

December 19, 2016

Building 455 County Center, Redwood City  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, room 405

Present: Faye Brophy, Mike Cooney, Christine Corwin, Darrick Emil, Nic Erridge, Jerry Hearn, Chris Johnson, Jim Sullivan

Excused: Neil Merrilees, Rafael Avendano, Aaron Gonzales

Staff: Marlene Finley, Sarah Birkeland, Carla Schoof, Ramona Arechiga, Brittani Bohlke

Facilitator: Pat Brown

In Neil's absence, Pat called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM and asked all present to introduce themselves. There were no members of the public present.

Pat also reminded the Committee that this would be Mike's last meeting, since his term on the Parks Commission has ended. In addition, this will be Marlene's last meeting due to her retirement at the end of December. Sarah Birkeland, Assistant Director of Parks, will be Acting Director until Marlene's successor has been appointed.

The Committee then reviewed its group agreements, the process map and the proposed agenda for this meeting.

The notes from the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting were approved with one correction, the potential site for a dog friendly overnight park is the former honor camp at Pescadero Creek, not Little Basin.

**Presentation/Committee Discussion**

- **Protecting Sensitive Natural Resources** – Ramona Arechiga, Natural Resource Manager  
Ramona provided the Committee with information about how dogs and people directly and indirectly impact natural resources. She noted that the Parks Department has a dual role in providing opportunities for outdoor recreation while safeguarding the rich biodiversity present in San Mateo County. Mitigation of the inevitable impacts of human and canine access includes restricting/limiting access, educating the public and encouraging good behaviors. Ramona included a Matrix of Criteria that might be useful as this Committee is considering opportunities for dogs to access County parks. She noted that at this time, *there is no requirement for dog guardians to clean up waste* – this may be a high priority area to consider when making policy recommendations to the Parks Commission.

(The complete PowerPoint presentation is available on the Parks Department website:  
[www.smcoparks.org](http://www.smcoparks.org) )

The Committee members had a number of questions for Ramona during and after her presentation.

- **Developing Policy Recommendations** – Peggy Jensen, Deputy County Manager  
Peggy defined policy (a guiding statement to program staff by decision makers to help staff develop implementation plans) and gave the Committee an overview of the typical policy development process. This process includes:
  - a) **initiation** by a request for change
  - b) **research** by those drafting the proposed policy looking for examples of similar policies, exploring how they have worked (or not worked) and considering how they addressed intended changes or had unintended consequences.
  - c) **development of a draft** policy statement (that may include specific criteria for guiding implementation) that is then vetted both with the public and with those charged with implementing the policy
  - d) **draft policy revised based on input** and then
  - e) **presented to the governing body** (in this case the proposal will go to the Parks Commission and finally the Board of Supervisors).
  - f) **adoption by governance body (or returned to drafters for modification)**
  - g) **assigned to appropriate division/department to be implemented**

Peggy noted that in the private sector, they tend to use an evolving design process that sets up a pilot/beta testing cycle so that the original policy can be tested and refined with real data. In contrast, public policy makers tend to work very hard to develop a full-blown policy and then present it for full implementation, omitting the beta testing approach. She suggested that in the Committee's work, it might consider using the pilot/beta testing approach to try out implementation of the new policy and gather feedback and make adjustments (amendments) as needed.

Ideally, policy stays at a high level and provides those charged with implementing the policy with the opportunity to use adaptive management strategies to ensure the best outcomes. Peggy also noted that sometimes, policy can be proposed with a review or sunset provision to allow policy makers the chance to assess the effectiveness of the policy over time.

- **Educational efforts in other jurisdictions** – best practices
  - a) Information about the City of Boulder Voice Sight Program – provided to Jackie Speier's office 2014
  - b) Dogs on Open Space and Mountain Parks – Boulder 2016
  - c) Dog Waste in Santa Barbara
  - d) Marin County Open Space Guidelines
  - e) Marin County Parks Guidelines
  - f) City of Boulder Voice Sight Brochure - video link: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/voice-and-sight>
  - g) Signage – Alston Park – Napa County

### Chair and Member Reports

- Jim Sullivan reminded the Committee that there is a great deal of concern in the community as the result of the recently issued GGRNA decision about dog access guidelines which severely reduced access.

### Follow-up from November Meeting - Community Outreach – Carla Schoof

- Carla provided committee members with printed business cards for use in describing and publicizing the work of the Dog Management Committee.
- Reviewed proposed outreach calendar – A calendar of outreach presentations was distributed. In these presentations the work of the Committee will be described.

Date	Location	Host/Committee Member
12.14.16	MidCoast Community Council	Chris Johnson
1.26.17 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs. 7 – 9 p.m.	North Fair Oaks Community Council	Rafael Avendano
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues. 7 p.m.	Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council	Nic Erridge
TBD	South San Francisco/Daly City/San Mateo	

- Present proposal for sponsoring community workshops – Carla distributed a list of all jurisdictions in the County with the # of dog licenses in each one. This may be one way to determine where community workshops should be scheduled. There will be more discussion on this topic at the January meeting.

### Director's Report

- Marlene asked the Committee to adjust its current meeting time, moved the current start time from 2:00 PM to 2:30. The meeting would end at 4:00 PM. The Committee agreed to this change, which will start in January 2017.
- Items for next agenda – Marlene suggested that the Committee might benefit from a panel presentation – *tales from the field* – from nearby jurisdictions that have implemented dogs in parks policies. There was enthusiasm for this idea.
- Topics for two public forums to be sponsored by the Committee – due to lack of time for discussion, this item will be deferred to the next meeting.

### Confirm Agreements/Reporting out/Appreciations

Facilitator

- Summary of content of discussion – as has been the case for the past three meetings, the Committee is continuing to research and explore options and ideas to help shape its policy recommendations. No substantive decisions were made.
- Share appreciation – Committee members appreciated each other and the clear dedication of members to the work of this group.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM.

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#### Criteria – December 2016

##### **Provide a variety of visitor experiences and locations**

- Consider front and backcountry experiences
- Consider on leash and off leash
- Continue to provide areas where dogs are prohibited
- Consider opportunities
- Throughout the county where there is demand
- Consider opportunities adjacent to urban areas/neighborhoods where there is demand for dog walking
- Consider sensible connection with adjacent properties: both dog-friendly and dog prohibited areas.

##### **Protect natural and cultural resources and natural process --avoid impacts on sensitive habitat**

- Consider the integrity of the habitat – is it disturbed from past uses? Very sensitive?

##### **Avoid visitor (use) conflicts and conflicts with adjacent land uses (agriculture)**

- Consider levels of use, types of uses and size of park/trail
- Consider zoning or uses by day of week and time of day
- Consider adequate parking and facilities for increased demand
- Consider education such as etiquette on multi-use trail and off-leash, voice and sight control training.
- Consider a tag or certification process for people who want to walk their dog off leash
- Consider a permitting process for commercial dog walkers

##### **Clear (ex: signage), well designed (ex: Parking) and enforceable**

- Consider budget and staffing: are they adequate for this additional use?
- Are staff adequately trained to enforce new uses?
- Can we partner with nonprofit organizations and other groups on training and educational signage?

##### **History of dog use prior to park acquisition**

- What types of uses occurred prior to park acquisition/transfer?