

**Park and Recreation
Green Dog Subcommittee
Town Hall, Room 103
Monday, April 29, 2019 6:00 p.m.**

Subcommittee Members Present: John Bain, Daniel Lyons, Jim Carroll, Nancy O'Connor, Nancy Madden, Rob Daves and Laurie Lasky

Subcommittee Members Absent: Michael Hackel, Sue Levy

Staff Present: Jessica Zarni, Administrative Assistant, Alex Cassie, Park Ranger, Erin Gallentine, Parks and Open Space Director

Guests Present: see attached

Welcome/Call Meeting to Order

E. Gallentine opened the meeting, and thanked everyone for coming out. N. O'Connor moved for approval of the December 20, 2018, the February 12, 2019 and the April 4, 2019 Green Dog Subcommittee Minutes. Seconded by J. Bain. All in favor.

E. Gallentine detailed the agenda.

Agenda

Site Visit Recap/Profile Review
Dawn to Dusk Off Leash Areas
Enforcement, Support & Staffing
Communication Model
Program fees and Revenue
Friends of the Green Dog Program
Program Enhancements

A. Cassie listed the existing Green Dog Sites

Site Visits and Park Profiles

Amory Playground 2.29 Acres

1. Biggest problem at this location is confusion with it being a dog park.
2. This field is closed a lot (wet conditions)
3. This field needs enforcement, but not proposing any changes (just trying to get compliance)

Boylston Street Playground .59 acres

1. Mostly Emerson users lately
2. Some issues with field closures, but generally not a lot of noncompliance
3. R. Daves notices after dark there are people there with their dogs.
4. The subcommittee recommends no changes to the green dog program at this location

Brookline Avenue 1.752 acres

1. Edge of Town, number one for non-tag compliance
2. If there are not sports there will be non-compliance
3. This field sees specific dog related damage
4. This location was discussed to contemplate a change in hours, potentially a dawn to 9 hours. The committee needs to be mindful of the damage being done to this field. It was stated that

with Downes offline soon this will be its replacement. This is something to monitor with more enforcement in play. Laurie Lasky wonders if the overuse will then be then transferred to another park or users may choose not sign up. She stated that maybe we have to find another spot that could have 9-1 hours and rotate off so that some parks get a rest cycle.

5. This park is in a flood plain

Coolidge Playground .40 acres

1. Dogs at all hours off leash

2. Dogs in all areas of the park

3. Ignoring the field closure signs

4. J. Carroll had the idea of a ranking and a probationary period. A park is put on notice and could be taken offline for a period of time. N. O'Connor stated that the police need to be on board with this process.

5. E. Gallentine discussed conflict that takes place between dog owners at this location

6. R. Daves wondered if it would be helpful to have a report card, this would show all the information to back up what the Subcommittee has been working on. The Subcommittee will come up with a watch list with parks that have the most issues. The idea to develop a report card and parameters as a recommendation from the subcommittee was discussed. J. Carroll stated if you take a park offline would they respect it? N. O'Connor stated that the Police need to be a part of the equation.

Corey Hill Park .97 Acres

1. A. Cassie does not see or hear about a lot of issues at this park

2. People stay to the hill there, and there are not a lot of reported issues

3. No recommended changes to the Green Dog Program

Emerson Garden .92 acres

1. A. Cassie stated that there are almost no issues at this location

2. The neighborhood is very well organized and has a close forum for communication

3. The field being closed was discussed

Warren Playground 2.30 acres

1. Almost no complaints from Warren

Griggs Park .36 Acres

1. Community Park

2. Issues with dogs going in playground/defecating in playground

3. Temporary fencing at this location was discussed

4. Complaints about dogs off leash all the time, lack of control of dogs.

5. Model as a loop or have it in one area?

6. L. Lasky thinks leadership (liaison)/community in this area might provide potential for a shift

7. N. Madden stated that the path goes through playground and it's not fenced in and she isn't sure what to do about people not understanding where the section of the Green Dog area is. R.

Daves thinks visually it doesn't make sense, he thinks maybe markers (light weight line). This would allow for people to visually understand the parameters of the Green Dog area.

Harry Downes 2.29 acres

1. Similar population to Brookline Avenue

2. It is fenced in

3. Heavily trafficked

4. Issues with compliance, but field closure is the biggest one

5. R. Daves stated that as part of the renovation T. Brady marked a tree for removal and it is signature tree. It is a wonderful oak covering a picnic table and people are very upset it leaving. E. Gallentine stated that this tree was identified as removal through the public process and discussed at length.

6. J. Bain discussed the idea of having seasonal closure times for the fields when they are not used be used. N. O'Connor doesn't see any playing field without something going on all the time. E. Gallentine stated that this is something to look at regarding the needs and conditions assessment but that is a U-turn in terms of the Green Dog Program. J. Bain stated that it is important to support E. Gallentine getting more staff, which in return would help with enforcement. R. Daves thinks enforcement will make a difference.

Waldstein Playground 1.20 acres

1. A corner park, there are registration issues
2. Non-compliance with hours
3. Dog running in tennis courts
4. This park became a 9 o'clock cut off for Green Dog because of non-compliance

Larz Anderson 6.45 acres

1. Biggest issues here are people not having tags.

Schick Park .59 acres

1. Off leash hour violations
2. Dogs in all areas of parks
3. Dogs defecating in playground

Robinson .71 acres

1. A. Cassie does not see/hear a lot of issues at this park
2. Not a heavily trafficked park.

Soule Recreation center 1.43 acres

1. Not a lot of users, not a lot of complaints

Little Field 1.17 acres

1. This was an rea discussed as being added to the Green Dog program

Potential Dawn to Dusk Hours-Dedicated enclosed dog run

J. Bain stated that he believes that on order have a proper enclosed dog run the Grass needs to be taken up and a new surface needs to be put down. He stated that in his opinion he doesn't see the reasoning behind cutting up a park for a dog run. N. O'Connor stated that the reason we would do this is because our playing fields/lawn area are getting beaten up. It would be to lighten the load; this would be a pilot we would try on for size. E. Gallentine stated that this is a request we get all the time.

Putterham Woods

1. Taken off table
2. Public Safety Hazard

Brookline Avenue .22 acres

1. Does not work anywhere in the park

Pond Avenue & Chestnut Street .23 acres

1. A lot of people use this parking
2. Parking for Emerald Necklace

Robinson Playground (2 locations) .14 acres & .30 acres

1. Flipping playground was discussed

2. This would be a big change, Robinson is coming up for design review and that would be the time to talk about the desired change in use.

3. M. Hackel liked the idea of a dog run in Robinson

Warren & Eliot Playground .36 acres

1. N' O'Connor thought it looked like a great spot.

Larz Anderson Park (3 locations) .68 acres, another .68 acres and a site on the hill

1. E. Gallentine stated that if we were to do a dog run at Larz, that area closet to Goddard Ave would work. It is lit, close to the road and would be best place to do a pilot. R. Daves stated that it is visually isolated, not surrounded by neighbors and has parking. A. Cassie stated that parking would be an issue on the weekends. D. Lyons agrees that it needs a special material/product to go down. N' O'Connor stated that M. Hackel has visited a few dog parks in surrounding cities/towns and the material on the ground was pea-stone. J. Bain stated that having a material down makes the dog owner feel more obligated to pick up after their dog. It is more visible. E. Gallentine and R. Daves discussed Larz as a pilot, with fencing, for Green Dog Participants only, and as a temporary location while Downes was under construction. N. O'Connor thinks that during this process we need to remind people that the whole Green Dog Program is temporary and can be taken away at any time.

Waldstein playground .22 acres

1. The idea is to supplement what is there now at this location

Boylston Street Playground .18 acres

1. E. Gallentine stated that any time a school is using Old Lincoln this is their playground.

2. The parking is now an issue with the marijuana dispensary

3. Increasing playground and the idea of possibly dedicating a huge chunk of the field to a dog run was discussed.

Schick Park .13 acres

1. Instead of having this enclosed area at the back end, the subcommittee discussed taking the line and bringing it down to the street. This would allow for direct access.

Coolidge Playground (3 locations) .19 acres, .07 acres and .49 acres

1. The potential locations were discussed and pointed out

Griggs Park .33 acres

1. The potential location was discussed and pointed out

Knyvet Square .58 acres

1. This was decided against

E. Gallentine asked the Subcommittee if they wanted her to look into fencing off Larz , what it would cost and where it would be set up. N. Madden asked about a temporary space at Boylston. N. O'Connor thinks you have to have multiple locations even as a pilot, if not you are setting it up for failure. J. Bain likes Bolyston/Robinson over Larz. J. Carroll likes the idea of Boylston. E. Gallentine asked the Subcommittee if with Boylston will gates needed to be added all on the sides? J. Bain stated that you would fence the length of the park and the gate would be in the back/or by the bridge. L. Lasky is not sure what would happen if there are fenced in dogs adjacent to an area of dogs running off leash, she thinks we should consult an animal behaviorist. E. Gallentine stated that it would be a fenced in area dawn to dusk and Green Dog hours would be eliminated. N. O'Connor stated that we need to get background information on the programming/permitting at Boylston. E. Gallentine stated that this will involve a meeting with the neighborhood. D. Lyons is in favor of pilots at Boylston, Robinson and Waldstein. He stated

that when the Putterham Woods Mater Plan is complete, that is another location that should be looked at as an area for a potential dog run. N. O'Connor does not think Robinson will get approved by the neighborhood. J. Carroll stated that you need to put one trial up and put a decimal meter reading up. N. O'Connor is in favor of Boylston, Waldstein and Larz. Nancy Madden thinks a trial dog run at Griggs might impact the neighborhood. E. Gallentine stated that we might not be able to do dawn to dusk. L. Lasky discussed an idea of extending the hours so many months a year.

The subcommittee did not come to a consensus on which locations should be trial enclosed dog runs.

Enforcement Program Support and Staffing

Staffing Model

Existing

Full-Time

Park Ranger \$63,412

Seasonal

Park Rangers (5.5) \$87,584

Total \$150,996

Proposed

Full-Time

Code Enf/VisitorSv \$67,535

Park Ranger \$63,412

Fellowship \$37,584

Seasonal

Park Rangers (2) \$30,000

Total \$198,531

FY20

Full-Time

Code Enf/VisitorSv \$67,535

Park Ranger \$63,412

Seasonal

Park Rangers (3.5) \$54,049

Total \$184,996

E. Gallentine will look to go back after fees increase and make a request for the fellowship

Communication Tools

1. Website

- About the Green Dog Program
- Participating parks and off-leash hours
- Registration information and instructions
- Program locations
- AQ
- Field closure calendar

2. Twitter

- Field Updates

3. Email

- Respond to complaints , concerns, registration questions, tag replacements and information requests
- Share program updates, pertinent concerns, or extended field closures/opening details and information

Staff Updates by 1PM weekdays, 7AM weekends:

- ❖ Update Green Dog Field Closure Hotline
- ❖ Update Brookline Recreation 24 Hour Field Closure Line
- ❖ Update Green Dog Program Field Closure Calendar
- ❖ Update Recreation Field Alert Center
- ❖ Update Green Dog Twitter @Brooklinedogs
- ❖ Email key Recreation, Parks & Open Space, and Police staff
- ❖ Inform Brookline Public Safety. E. Gallentine has recently called and thanked the Chief because they have been notifying the officers at roll calls of field closures

Green Dog Program Participants can check:

- ❖ Green Dog Field Closure Hotline
- ❖ Green Dog Program Field Closure Calendar
- ❖ Green Dog Twitter

Green Dog Signage

Examples of current Green Dog Signage were shown and discussed amongst the committee. Proposed new signage was discussed. The language and symbols were simplified. A sticker that stated you may not take your dog off leash in this park unless your dog is currently licensed in Brookline with this color tag will be added to the signage. This color tag would change. N. Madden thinks the hours/off leash hours need to be bigger font than anything else (same size as the Green Dog Hours lettering). The new signage would be 24 by 36. J. Bain likes the symbols. N. Madden thinks having bigger bullet bullets and take out pictures would work better. She thinks “you may not take your dogs off leash language” should be at the top with the police numbers, then enlarge the hours and have bullets with no illustrations. L. Laskey thinks it’s an attempt to be positive but the illustrations are not informative. J. Bain thinks a line going through a symbol is very effective. E. Gallentine thinks we need to recognize that all the rules and regulations will be online, people will sign a code of conduct and agreement when they sign the registration. She thinks we need to make it clear what the hours are, makes it clear there is a program in place and a registration is required. She sated what she is hearing is make the right

hand side bigger (hours), put the “you may not take your dogs off leash language” from the bottom language and move to top top, then 6 bullet points no symbols and the contact information at the bottom.

Green Dog Brochures

Current and potential new green dog brochures were shown and discussed. The new brochure is broken up into the following categories; What is the Green Dog Program, is my dog ready, how to register, before your visit and rules and regulations, Green Dog Parks and off leash hours and frequently asked questions. R. Daves suggested having a QR Code on the brochure. E. Gallentine will send out the new brochure to the Subcommittee for comments.

Program fees and models

Alternate Green Dog program Fee Models

The Green Dog Revenue 2018 was detailed. This consists of resident/non-resident annual fee/total revenue and current cost projection. This Committee needs to come up with a recommendation for a fee increase. She stated that we are currently at 50 dollars for resident and 100 for nonresidents. The Green Dog Projected Revenue 2109 was viewed and discussed. M. Hackel is pushing to increase on the higher end. E. Gallentine stated if you go to high they will risk the ticket, rather than being a part of the program. J. Bain feels comfortable with 80 for Green Dog 20 for registration, 100 a nice even number. N. O’Connor worries about it going to high so fast. She wants to be up front with residents that the fees will be revisited every year. N. Madden stated either you are doing it all at once, or inch it along and give people a heads up. R. Daves wonder how many will drop out and how many will join the program with the enforcement. He could go along with the hundred. D. Lyons stated that 90 would get you closer to cost recovery. N. Madden stated that you need to cover program costs. E. Gallentine thinks people don’t understand how labor intensive this program is. L. Lasky would like to see 80 dollars and state that the fees will be revisited every year. E. Gallentine stated that some of the costs are covered in other parts of her budget, she is absorbing it elsewhere.

D. Lyons is in favor of 100

J. Carroll is in favor of 100

N. Madden is in favor of 100

J. Bain is in favor of 100

R. Daves is in favor of 80

N. O’Connor is in favor of 80

L. Lasky is in favor of 80

E. Gallentine will reach out to poll S. Levy and M. Hackel.

Friends of the Green Dog Program

N. Madden and R. Daves have been developing this concept. It will replace liaisons and is inclusive of everyone. The main take away is veryone is welcome. They are hoping it is something that would survive the individuals. Liaisons started off well but went downhill. R. Daves stated that it will be a standing group, which has a recognition and when there are issues

there is a group that responds that has a political voice. It can enforce and welcome people. They have a draft brochure that would introduce this idea and there would be an informational meeting. This would talk about structure and to work on building a list to have a few people in each park to build a community. They would need a few contacts, but it would be different than the liaisons. R. Daves suggested the subcommittee takes home the draft and submit any input. A potential list serve was discussed, E. Gallentine stated that we can't share emails, but can announce that this program is happening and that there is an event. The goals are to have a social event this year, come up with a logo, provide a unified voice to advocate for improvements and funding, help build good relationships with parks/divisions/police/neighborhoods, welcome and include newcomers in the program, enhance understanding of the Green Dog Requirements and increase compliance.

A potential cleanup day for the Friends of the Green Dog Program was discussed.

Having a Green Dog Table at Brookline Day was discussed.

A. Cassie discussed doing office hours again and promoting this Friend of the Green Dog Program at the same time. N. O'Connor suggested inviting the Brookline Police therapy dog. N. O'Connor stated that there is a section in this draft where the wording sounds like this group wants to do away with the program, but in reality we are working hard to breathe new life into it. She wonders if the middle four sentences should be softened, she does not want to make it feel like we are threatening. R. Daves suggested registering this Friends Group with the Greenspace Alliance.

Purpose of the Friends of the Green Dog Program

- ❖ Provide forum for Program users to communicate with one another and Parks & Open Space Division staff
- ❖ Advocate for Program and Program improvements
- ❖ Build positive relationships with Parks & Open Space Division, Police, park abutters, and other park visitors
- ❖ Welcome and include new Program members
- ❖ Enhance understanding of Green Dog requirements and increase/promote compliance
- ❖ Organize social events or dog-related programming and opportunities

Goals by end of 2019:

- ❖ 25 members
- ❖ Host 2 Friends of the Green Dog Program events (Kickoff + one other)
- ❖ Host one session with Green Dog administration to discuss issues

Public Hearing

Monday, June 3: This hearing will make the public part of the project. E. Gallentine, A. Cassie and J. White will work to put together a draft presentation with materials, assign certain portions to committee members and schedule a morning meeting before June 3rd.

