

Park and Recreation  
Green Dog Subcommittee  
Town Hall, Room 408  
Wednesday, June 19, 2019 8:00 a.m.

**Subcommittee Members Present:** John Bain, Daniel Lyons, Jim Lyons, Nancy O'Connor, Michael Hackel, Nancy Madden and Laurie Lasky

**Subcommittee Members Absent:** Sue Levy and Rob Daves

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

**Welcome/Call Meeting to Order**

J. Bain opened the meeting.

**Review Public Hearing Comments**

A. Cassie stated that the overarching themes that came out of the public hearing were trash and permit compliance. M. Hackel stated that he thinks that we don't have enough trash receptacles and they are in the middle of park or entrances. He thinks it would be fascinating to see if we could get barrels with wheels and a top; this would make it easy to dispose of the pizza boxes and dog feces. This would allow for the workers to roll them to the entrances. E. Gallentine stated that in terms of trash it's completely a volume problem- people will fold something and prevent use of receptacle. She stated we have had over 320 to collect town wide and we cannot get to all of those locations. E. Gallentine stated that the vehicles do not drive into the parks because of emissions, safety, damage to parks and efficiency. J. Carroll stated that people are permitted for an activity and they are not permitted to have dinner, he thinks there should be a "pack-in, pack-out" mentality. He thinks you should be responsible to bring in trash bags and take the trash out with you. Laurie Lasky stated that it comes down to a cultural thing/building a culture. She stated that this should be one of the responsibilities for the coaches to model behavior that we want to pass on to the children. She stated that is how you build a culture. E. Gallentine stated that part of this is on the town, we have not implemented that and not made it clear. She stated we are starting this Athletic Fields Needs Assessment and Master Plan, and that we are doing a strategic Plan update and looking at our field use allocation policy. With that comes the opportunity to look at permitting language and talk about what is reasonable to expect in terms of trash they will bring out with them.

E. Gallentine stated that maybe it's a campaign, "Keep your parks clean and green." N. O'Connor stated that you are building a brand new culture with Big Bellies. She stated that people have always eaten in the parks. Parents and kids are so busy. N. O'Connor discussed Boston changing their pick up to 6 am. It is culture you build, it's on the permit and if the trash doesn't fit please take it with you. E. Gallentine stated that more and more people are using the parks for larger social events. M. Hackel stated it the parents ordering the pizza not the coaches. He stated if it was not for the public meeting, he would have never thought about the trash and all the other things that got bright up at that meeting. M. Hackel stated that we need to create a community awareness program "Green and Clean". He stated that our branding should be "Green and Clean".

M. Hackel stated that perhaps someone could go at the beginning of game and reinforce the policy. N. O'Connor thinks we put it on the permit language and on the emails when the permits go out but it needs to be reinforced. She stated that the administrators of each program need to extend it down to the participants. M. Hackel stated that in Newton every game you get a text for permit holders. He thinks you can get a text from Brookline with the "green and clean expectation", along with and 3 bullet points and the permit holder then confirms. E. Gallentine stated that we are currently working with the Recreation Department with new software, she stated that we are trying to increase the functionality.

A. Cassie stated that another comment that came out of the public hearing is follow-up accountability for trash left behind by a permit holder. N. O'Connor stated that an idea would be to provide a picture when you are leaving. E. Gallentine stated that we need to do a better job with follow up; we have been more responsive. She stated that we need to do a better job with documentation of conditions and communication. E. Gallentine does think route optimization for trash pickup, how we are dealing with litter, documenting conditions and a campaign around "clean and green" is something that as a division we should take on big picture. It does involves green Dog but everyone else too. D. Lyons stated that he believes the league gets permits for the fields for the season, but it doesn't get communicated down to the coaches. He stated this "Green and Clean" has to be communicated to the players, coaches and parents.

A. Cassie stated that at the last public meeting someone brought up the issue of dog related incidents and possibly incorporating that information into some type of electronic portal. E. Gallentine thinks we should create a format for which we want all enforcement associated with dogs in the park reported to the Parks Department. She stated it is information that could be presented annually to the Park and Recreation Commission. It could be posted online with the minutes or presentation. This would make the information accessible, but allowing the information to be collected annually to a format that is understandable.

A. Cassie discussed the comments from the public hearing regarding dogs being leashed up while workers are in the fields. N. O'Connor and L. Lasky both stated that overlapping is going to happen. The workers do the best they can to limit interference with the Green Dog times. The

subcommittee stated that we need to encourage people to sign up to receive notifications, maybe it is something that can be done in the brochure. E. Gallentine stated that putting out the field closure times is very labor intensive.

The idea of pop up registration events was discussed amongst the subcommittee. L. Lasky stated that it's a fabulous idea but you have to provide rabies vaccination. She stated that you can receive payment and then that customer receives an email that states "As soon as we review documentation we will send out your tag". There will be an exchange of funds. L. Lasky thinks it's worth a pilot program. M. Hackel stated that it's on them to deliver the registration; explain to them that your application is pending on receiving rabies certificate. A. Cassie described that with the current system it would have to be a renewal. He is on board, but more is needed before we can try it.

The sliding scale pay was discussed, and that financial assistance options are currently available.

L. Lasky stated that another comment that came up from the Public hearing was the Dawn to dusk hours in the summer months. There was a gentleman who came before the subcommittee to request the hours to begin later in the summer months at Emerson. L. Lasky stated that it's a valid point, a lot of residents live right around that park. E. Gallentine stated that the park is open dawn to dusk. E. Gallentine asked the subcommittee is off-leash different at dawn than on-leash? Is it creating more noise? N. O'Connor stated that contractors/landscaping don't start before 7 am and wonders if we should match the construction hours. A. Cassie stated that this is something that could fall into that cultural shift. Emerson is a tight community, maybe it is not such a rule as a community suggestion. It can be communications amongst users. J. Bain stated that people work early hours and they need to be mindful of these people being able to walk their dogs. M. Hackel thinks it would be great to have a friends group at each of these parks. L. Lasky and E. Gallentine discussed the change in the bylaw. L. Lasky stated that it doesn't state excessive barking, it just says barking. E. Gallentine stated that might have been old language.

### **Fee Structure**

A. Cassie passed out slides to the subcommittee on both program revenue costs and projected ongoing revenue vs different models of fee structures. N. O'Connor stated that feedback from the public meeting relayed the fact that 100 dollars did not seem excessive. The sliding scale/financial aid assistance for this program was discussed. A. Cassie stated that Fees are waived for service dogs. J. Bain stated his concern is 100 dollars is a 100 percent increase. A. Cassie stated that we will get comments back/ objectors. J. Bain stated that he got a comment that a 100 percent increase is a lot to ask in one shot. E. Gallentine stated that after the meeting 100 dollars seemed fine to her. E. Gallentine stated that the program is very labor intensive. L. Lasky thinks we will need a little push on enforcement for those who don't want sign up after the increase. A. Cassie stated that based on the sentiments expressed at the public hearing, people

were fine in the increase, but wondered what else extra they will get from it. A. Cassie discussed prorating the fee only for new sign ups, new movers to Brookline or new dogs.

J. Carroll moved to increase the Green Dog fee to one hundred dollars for residents. Second by J. Bain. All in favor.

J. Bain moved to increase the Green Dog Fee for nonresidents to one hundred and fifty dollars. Seconded by N. O'Connor. All in favor

N. O'Connor moved to increase the fee for residential dog walkers to one hundred and fifty dollars and non-residential dog walkers fee to two hundred and fifty dollars. Seconded by D. Lyons. All in favor.

The Green Dog Guest Day passes will not change in price.

### **Ongoing Site Assessment and Signage**

The signage changes/suggestions that have been made by the subcommittee were shown in a draft illustration. The subcommittee discussed possible changes to the wording "Your dog may not be off-leash in this park unless currently registered in Brookline's Green Dog Program and wearing this color tag". M. Hackel stated that where trying to change a community though simple messaging. E. Gallentine will put together a few options samples of this language and send it out to the subcommittee. M. Hackel and E. Gallentine discussed the two phone numbers on the sign and where their placement should be on said sign. E. Gallentine stated at the last meeting the subcommittee asked that the icons go away and be replaced with some type of bullets. E. Gallentine stated that in this draft illustration there are 6 bullets and wondered if the subcommittee was fine with that language. The subcommittee agreed with the language of the six bullet points. The brochure has been significantly edited. E. Gallentine listed these edits. The subcommittee will take a look at this and make and suggestions/edits.

The subcommittee discussed the current rule of not being able to join the program until the dog is 6 months old.

J. Carroll stated that he wanted to bring up the idea of a visual rating of the condition of the park. He isn't sure what this would look like, but thinks each green dog park could have a colored dot that rated the condition of that park. This colored dot would indicate the condition and rating. This would alert people that a poor rating would mean that you are in danger of losing the Green Dog program at that park. E. Gallentine stated that it's an interesting idea. She stated that we would need to develop criteria, such as physical observations, sampling/reports and profile the color of the dot with a numbered score. She thinks Criteria could be defined in 2020 and implementation in 2021. She stated that an action plan will be needed.

Summary memo: Goals for 2019/Goals for 2020

E. Gallentine reviewed the Green Dog Subcommittee Goals for 2019 and the upcoming goals for 2020

**Next Steps**

She stated that we need to summarize the work as a committee. This would include the formation of committee, all the public meetings that were held, the goals and objectives. She sees this as a summary/ memo/report presented to Park and Recreation with goals and then presented to the Select Board along with the fees. E. Gallentine suggested that Alex and she start the Skelton/content of memos and send it out to the subcommittee members to fill in a specific section. She stated that the subcommittee should plan to go before the Park and recreation in September and the Select board in October.

J. Bain moved to adjourn.

Adjourn