

DOG MANAGEMENT IN SAN MATEO COUNTY PARKS COMMITTEE

Notes from Meeting

Building 455 County Center, Redwood City
4th Floor, Room 405
October 17, 2016

Members present: Avendano, Brophy, Cooney, Corwin, Emil, Erridge, Hearn, Johnson, Merrilees, Sullivan

Alternates: Abbott, Erb, Gonzalez

Others: Marlene Finley, Director SMC Parks Department, Carla Schoof, Community Engagement, SMC Parks Department, Hannah Ormshaw, SMC Parks Staff, Pat Brown, Facilitator, Brittani Bohike, Water Quality Staff

Neil Merrilees, Committee Chair, opened the meeting at 2:10 pm. After Committee members introduced themselves, Neil turned the meeting over to the facilitator. The Committee then:

- reviewed the Process Map and the proposed agenda
- approved the minutes of the September 19th meeting
- reviewed Fist-Five Consensus Tool
- approved the following Group Agreements – Committee members agreed to:
 - Prepare for meetings by reading meeting materials
 - Speak respectfully during meetings
 - Listen for understanding
 - Allow the facilitator to guide the process

There were no comments from members of the public.

Director's Report

Marlene Finley provided the following information:

- The Park Commission's charge to the Committee - to address the following in regard to dog management in San Mateo County Parks: Criteria, Pilot Parks, Ordinances, Infrastructure, Training, Enforcement and Budget.
- Reported that San Francisco Public Utilities Commission does not allow dogs or pets in the watershed. Crystal Springs Regional Trail is under joint jurisdiction with the County and there may be an opportunity to renegotiate the existing MOU.



- Proposed criteria for the work of this committee – (shared goals upon which the committee members will base their work)
 - Provide a variety of visitor experiences and locations
 - Protect natural and cultural resources and natural process --avoid impacts on sensitive habitat
 - Avoid visitor (use) conflicts and conflicts with adjacent land uses (agriculture)
 - Clear (ex: signage), well designed (ex: Parking) and enforceable
 - History of dog use prior to park acquisition

Additional thoughts that relate to the criteria above:

- Dogs are allowed on connecting trails at Park Boundaries
- Consider current visitor use levels (avoid densely used trails/areas to avoid conflict)
- Is there adequate parking (to accommodate increased need if dogs are allowed)?
- There is an adjacent urban area or subdivision with high demand for dog walking/exercise space
- Is the area already disturbed –(past uses have compromised natural integrity)
- Sufficient budget and staff to manage

Marlene also shared a graphic tool that might be useful in helping Committee members identify the most vulnerable (incompatible area for dog use) to most appropriate locations for dog use. This graphic will be used during the Committee’s deliberation process.

Next Steps:

Committee members discussed the proposed criteria and were asked to think about their priorities and come to the next meeting prepared to adopt criteria to be used in this process.

- Point to example of developing criteria: poster that will identify areas of highest sensitivity (no dogs allowed) to those most suitable for dogs. Invite Committee members to identify examples of each (most and least suitable) and share their criteria.
- Restate belief that the best policy will result from all perspectives being considered and efforts made to address interests and concerns

Chair and Member Report(s)

Neil proposed draft language for a Committee Mission Statement. The following statement was approved by the Committee: *“to provide healthy spaces for humans and canines, to assure positive interactions between dogs and other park users, and protect natural resources in San Mateo County Parks.”* – need to confirm with Neil.

Committee members were invited to identify specific topics/information that they would like to share with the Committee and let Neil and Marlene know so the time can be allocated on the agenda.

Proposal for Community Outreach

Carla Schoof proposed the following two-part outreach strategy:

- **Through the Parks Department:** Website, social media, sharing information with partners—agencies, friends groups, posting at park kiosks, use of Google Docs to compile input
- **Through the Committee:** Ask members to identify specific targets for outreach; provide members with materials for distribution in the community; consider the use of surveys to gather input on specific topics

Committee members approved the two-part strategy.

Presentations/Discussion

Hannah Ormshaw, Parks Department staff member, presented two maps for consideration:

1. SMC Dog Recreation Opportunities and Population Density
2. Dog Recreation Opportunities in San Mateo County (County parks and other jurisdictions)

Committee members had a number of questions and comments and asked that revised maps be brought back to the next meeting.

Agenda for November 21, 2016

- ADA-Service Dog Regulations
- Revised Maps
- Water Quality Considerations
- Public safety

Confirm Agreements/Reporting Out /Appreciations

In summary, the Committee developed a mission statement to guide its work, discussed and approved an outreach plan, discussed criteria with which to evaluate proposed recommendations and received information about current opportunities for dog access and recreation in San Mateo County.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.