

**Town of North Hampton New Hampshire**  
**North Hampton Dog Park Committee**  
Notice of Public Meeting  
6:30 PM Thursday, January 16, 2020  
Mary B. Herbert Conference Room; 233 Atlantic Avenue

**DRAFT**

**Call to order**

Pat McLean called to order the meeting of the Dog Park Committee at 6:35pm

**Attendees:** Pat Mclean, Casey Dupuis, Paige Libbey, Alexa Haley, Michael Trotta, John Dover, Anne Nettleton

**Not Present:** Meredith Vallee, Amanda Jonovski, Ronni Martin, Philip Thayer, Jalisa Bush

**Approval of minutes from 12.5.2019:**

- Minutes were reviewed. No changes were to be made.  
Motion to approve the minutes; made by John. Seconded by Anne  
The committee unanimously agreed to approve.

**AGENDA**

Community Activities:

- Follow up – Christmas Parade (Saturday 12/7)
- North Hampton Library “Harnessing History” State Dog Lecture (Thursday 4/23 6pm)
- Future Library Involvement/Collaboration Events

2019 Recap

Social Media Update

- Feature Friday
- Town Community Newsletter (Library)
- Survey

Land Update

## **Minutes:**

Pat shared that Amanda would like to take a temporary hiatus from the committee until the spring due to work and personal commitments.

## **Community Activities:**

### ***Follow up – Christmas Parade (Saturday 12/7)***

The committee shared feedback from the Town of Hampton Christmas Parade. Lots of positive feedback all around from the community throughout this event. Great brand awareness and participation from members of the committee. Many agreed that it was a great opportunity to gain exposure to multiple towns and were unanimously in favor of wanting to participate again next year.

### ***North Hampton Library “Harnessing History” State Dog Lecture (Thursday 4/23 6pm)***

A date has been set for the “Harnessing History” event which will take place at the town library.

*Event description extracted from previous minutes:*

Paige stated that Susan Grant from the library had reached out again and is planning a lecture in the spring that she has invited us to be involved in. The lecture will be given by speaker Bob Cottrell about the New Hampshire State Dog and its history, description from their website as follows:

*“Harnessing History: On the trail of New Hampshire’s State Dog, the Chinook*

*This program looks at how dog sledding developed in New Hampshire and how the Chinook played a major role in this story. Explaining how man and his relationship with dogs won out over machines on several famous polar expeditions, Bob Cottrell covers the history of Arthur Walden and his Chinooks, the State Dog of New Hampshire.*

*Bob Cottrell*

*Bob Cottrell holds an MA from the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture in Delaware. The founding director of the Remick Country Doctor Museum in Tamworth, he is now the Curator of the Henney History Room at the Conway Public Library, a Board member at the Conway Historical Society, and President ex-officio of the Tamworth Historical Society. He serves as an independent history and museum consultant.”*

Now that a date has been set, Anne will reach out to her neighbor who has one of these dogs (a Chinook) to see if he and his dog would be willing to attend.

### ***Future Library Involvement/Collaboration Events***

The committee discussed the turnouts at different events over the past year and concluded that the Tick Talk had the lowest attendance. The group concluded that events/activities targeting an adult audience where dogs were not allowed were the least attended.

The committee discussed the idea of not necessarily doing the Tick Talk again, but instead switching up the

material to something more appealing. Events/activities more involving kids or in the summer were discussed. Ideas such as reading to dogs, or kids working on their summer reading to dogs were well received and favored by the committee. The committee discussed involving some of their own well-behaved/calm dogs.

John shared a new idea for a collaboration event with the library- a presentation/session discussing “How to approach dogs that are not your own; how to approach/greet dogs that you do not know”. The committee loved this idea and discussed bringing some of our own well-behaved dogs as examples to demonstrate of how to approach them.

- We would need someone to articulate how to do this (a speaker/presenter); someone to show the correct/responsible way to approach unfamiliar dogs.
- The committee suggested asking committee member Roni if she would be comfortable demonstrating this. Roni manages her own pet service business and interacts with unfamiliar dogs all the time.

Alexa shared that she had helped organize and recently sat in on a “Reactive Dog Training Class” at the NHSPCA. Paige shared that she has a friend who works at My Dog’s Mind, a dog training organization. Alexa volunteered to reach out to the SPCA trainer, and Paige will reach out to her friend to see if either would be interested in collaborating in any way.

Pat will propose the ideas of “summer reading with dogs” and a presentation of “how to approach dogs you do not know” to Susan to gauge her interest.

## **2019 Year-End Recap**

The committee reflected on their efforts and progress over the past year. It was decided that at the next meeting, the committee will draft a “Strategic Plan” highlighting out efforts as a committee thus far (over the past year) and where we plan to go from here, specifically what we hope to accomplish in 2020.

Most valuable event – Christmas Parade

Reasoning: most attended event, greatest exposure

Least valuable – Tick Talk

Reasoning: least attended of all events, will plan to curve subject matter for future similar events

Ideas to include in strategic plan:

- Recap of events in 2019
  - o Pat will review minutes from the past year and will draft a list of all events we participated in and will bring the list to the next meeting.
- Merchandise sold, donations received, general financial position – of both the committee and 501(c)(3)
  - o Alexa will review financials from the past year and will report key data to the next meeting.

Questions for all committee members to contemplate for next meeting:

- What should we plan to do this year? What goals do we want to accomplish? What will be the best use of our time?

## **Social Media Update**

### *Feature Friday*

- The social media sub-committee shared their new “Feature Friday” idea (thank you Alexa!). The idea is for supporters to send us a photo of their dog with a short write-up about the dog and we share one on Facebook + Instagram every Friday. This has been done for 2 weeks now and both have received a great response. They asked for all committee members to send a photo + write-up of their dog to [northhamptondogpark@gmail.com](mailto:northhamptondogpark@gmail.com).

### *Survey*

- The social media sub-committee had the idea to create a free, online survey to gain insight on how community members feel in regards to our mission. The committee discussed potential questions to include.
- Casey will draft a survey and run it by Paige and Alexa for review. They will have it ready for the community newsletter deadline of January 24<sup>th</sup>.

### *Town Community Newsletter (Library)*

- The committee discussed what should be included in the upcoming community newsletter. The committee agreed for Paige, Alexa and Casey to draft a response that includes our mission/search for land reiterated, our new Feature Friday social media promotion, and a link for the online survey.

## **Land Update**

- Alexa found an area of land for sale on 70 Lovering Road when she was out for a run recently. From the street, there appears to only be an abandoned foundation of a house – no other structures on the property. She shared that from in-person observation and the online listing she determined that the area is somewhat secluded, partially cleared land, accessible from the road, and already has an established water supply/septic system.
- Paige looked up the area as well – 2.5 acres, fairly flat, no wetlands besides slightly in the back. It is partially cleared because a house was originally built on the remaining foundation, but much more can be cleared if needed.
- According to the online listing/tax history, the plot of land has been on and off the market for quite some time. In 2018, the price was cut by more than half. The current listing price is \$195K.
- In both Paige and Alexa’s opinion, the area is large enough that there could be at least a 50-foot buffer on the side of each neighbor, and would definitely be large enough to build both a dog park and parking area.

Casey pulled up the plot of land on Google Earth for all to look at – it appears there was a large house built

on the foundation a few years ago which mysteriously disappears in recent photos.

Anne will use her resources as a realtor to look into the history of the land and determine who owns it.

The committee discussed how to go about investigating this further.

The committee discussed the following ideas on how to proceed/pursue this land:

- Going to the town/select board to see if they would actually be willing to purchase this land in full, or any potential vacant land, for use of a dog park
- Going to the town/select board to see if they would be willing to put the purchase of this land for use of a dog park on the ballot as a Warrant Article
  - o John made a very important point that in order to have it on the warrant article we have to have a specific timeline and cost estimate in order to present it to the public. We can't just vote for it and then not have it happen. If it gets to that point, we're responsible for pursuing it. If we aren't able to raise the necessary funds, that's not okay and it would look poorly on the Town.
  - o Paige also mentioned that from a resident's perspective, if there was a warrant article regarding building a dog park, many tax payers/residents may think that if it is voted on that the town should pay for both the land and the park.
  - o The committee debated details surrounding having land on the warrant article as well as the details that we have already agreed to with the select board.
- Getting in contact with the land owner to see if they would be willing to donate the plot of land to the town in return for a hefty tax write off, before mentioning anything regarding a financial purchase/negotiation
- Going to the town to discuss/clarify what the protocol would be if we were to involve the sale of private land- if the town would support this and if so, what the process would be

Alexa mentioned the need to do our due diligence/homework on the area before reaching out to anyone. That way we can personally determine if it is actually worth our time to pursue and if it meets our established criteria.

Factors the committee discussed looking into include:

- The ratio of cleared land to wooded (Ex. how many trees would need to be taken down, how big is the perimeter of land already cleared)
- The state of the existing foundation and how much area this covers
- How accessible it is from the road

The group discussed that when we were first established as a committee, our expectations aligned with having land donated. Now two years later, as we have not received any viable land inquiries and the town does not have any available land for us to use, we are looking into other options such as private land. Pursuing the purchase of private land is a whole new ballpark compared to using public, town-owned land.

The committee discussed that there are still many ambiguous moving parts that are hard to estimate and are all contingent on the specific plot of land.

The committee discussed our base-line criteria of what we have agreed upon as a committee from the start:

- Fenced in area
- Double gate
- Two areas – one for big dogs and one for small dogs
- Gravel to be used for the actual park and the parking area
- A flat, preferably pre-cleared piece of land with road access

Pat mentioned that there is a new Town Administrator for North Hampton. Pat volunteered to reach out to the new Town Administrator about the next steps in the process and how we should involve the select board. She will seek their advice on what our next step should be – whether we should first reach out to the land owner or the select board.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:53pm; made by John. Seconded by Paige.

The committee unanimously agreed to adjourn.

**The Next Meeting Will Take Place on Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm.**