

Town of North Hampton New Hampshire
North Hampton Dog Park Committee
Notice of Public Meeting
6:30 PM Thursday, November 7, 2019
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 6:30 pm.

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

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

Approval of minutes from 10.10.19:

- Changes to minutes:
- Update date listed on "Approval of minutes from..." from August meeting date to September meeting date
- Remove beginning section titled "New Business", as this was not discussed during the meeting.

Motion to approve the revised minutes; made by Amanda. Seconded by Michael.

The committee unanimously agreed to approve, contingent on the revisions listed.

AGENDA

Community Activities:

- Recap/Feedback: Scarecrow Festival
- Community Oven (Monday 11/11)
- Christmas Parade (Saturday 12/7)

Land Update:

- Temporary Land Offer

Library in the future – Tabled until next meeting

Merchandise Update (T-shirt/Bandanas):

- Sales & Accounting

USPS Postal Box

Community Activities

COMMUNITY OVEN FUNDRAISER – 11/11 (Monday, Veteran’s Day)

- The event will take place from 5-9pm on Monday, November 11th, 2019
- The committee reviewed the remaining raffle items as well as a few new additions. The committee discussed grouping some of the smaller, individual items together to make more desirable raffle baskets.
 - o Amanda made a motion for Paige, Alexa and Casey to make the final decision on the selection of raffle items/groupings. Pat seconded. The committee unanimously agreed.
- Amanda designed a flyer and online graphic to advertise the event.
 - o Casey distributed printed copies of the flyers to committee members.
 - o Pat shared that she printed out and hung up flyers around town.
- The committee discussed the logistics of the event and how we will be set up.
 - o The Community Oven will donate a portion of the proceeds for every pizza purchased from 5-9pm on the day of the event, including takeout orders.
 - o Prior to event, Pat will pick up \$50 in change; mostly \$5s and \$1s
 - o There will be two tables, set up in an L-design: raffle items on one side, merchandise for sale on the other
 - o Amanda and Casey will provide the jars/buckets for raffle tickets to be placed in
 - o We will keep the raffle ticket prices the same as last year:
 - \$2 for 1 ticket
 - \$5 for 3 tickets
 - \$10 for 7 tickets
 - o We now accept credit cards through our PayPal card reader
 - Credit Cards can now be used to purchase both merchandise and raffle tickets
 - Paige, Alexa and Casey all have this set up on their phones and will be managing all card transactions.
- The committee discussed having something special for Veteran’s
 - o Amanda will design a sign for the event stating “1 free raffle ticket for every Veteran”

Shifts

4:30-7 (Setup)	5:30-7:30	7:00-9:30 (Breakdown)
Alexa	Amanda	Paige
Pat	Anne	Casey
Roni		John
		Michael

SCARECROW FESTIVAL (Recap/Feedback)

There were three parts to this event:

- Vendor Reception the night before at Centennial Hall – Alexa and Paige attended
- Main Festival Event at North Hampton School – Alexa, Paige and Casey attended
- Dog Costume Contest at the North Hampton Band Stand after the festival concluded – various committee members attended

Vendor Reception Feedback:

- Many connections + good networking opportunity
- Good idea to stay involved with NHBA
- Positive response from our involvement, very well received within the business community

Main Festival Event Feedback:

- Having 3 people at the table worked very well for this event
 - o One person to help the kids with the craft activity, one person to talk to the parents about our mission, one person to take pictures of interactions at the event, help with merchandise sales and greet additional people that approach the table.
- Dog toy event was very well received – will definitely do this again with a bit more preparation of cutting t-shirt strips ahead of time + finding t-shirts in more color options.
- The NHBA sent us a survey asking for feedback on how we perceived the event went, and asked for recommendations for next year. The group discussed and had the following comments/suggestions:
 - o Performances: Enjoyed the “Thriller” performance, kept it with the Halloween/Fall event theme, but strongly felt the violinist performance was not the most appropriate.
 - o Target Audience: Very targeted towards children; would have liked to see something that would draw in adults/another age demographic. Ex: beer truck
 - o No real food options – would have liked to see a food truck like there was at the Old Home Days event
 - o Location: The location behind the North Hampton School was hidden – no one “passing by” would have been able to know it was going on and some patrons mentioned they had trouble finding the festival. We suggested hosting it next year at the band stand.
 - No dogs were allowed on school property, and it was difficult to have the dog costume contest at a different location and get people to drive somewhere else for that part of the event. Several patrons mentioned they had brought their dogs and had to leave them in the car, and did not end up staying long at the event as a result. Would have been nice to have it all in one place, where people could bring their dogs all day.

- Timing: very early in the morning, many people do errands/have sports games in the morning. Started to pick up later on, would be nice to make an afternoon event.

Dog Costume Contest Feedback:

- 5 eligible dog participants
- Many humans attended as spectators, but would have liked to see more dogs participate
- Committee discussed that it would have had a better turnout if the costume contest had taken place at the same location as the festival, and if the main festival took place in a dog friendly location. Additionally, if the event took place a bit later in the day.

The committee unanimously agreed that we would be very interested in participating again next year and look forward to seeing how the NHBA takes our feedback into consideration.

CHRISTMAS PARADE – 12/7 (Saturday)

- Pat began the discussion by reminding everyone of when it is appropriate to be referred to as “Friends of the North Hampton Dog Park” vs. “North Hampton Dog Park Committee”.
 - Pat also mentioned that it would be okay to use the “committee” banner in the parade, because will not be fundraising – just walking to raise awareness.
- The group discussed the announcement to be read aloud in the parade.
 - Casey shared the following cheesy ideas:
 - Happy Paw-lidays
 - Peace, love and belly rubs
 - Deck the halls with bones and chew toys
 - Santa paws is coming to town
 - Bark! The herald angels sing
 - Feliz naughty-dog
 - The best way to spread Christmas cheer is barking loud for all to hear
 - Wishing you cold noses and warm wishes this holiday season
 - May your holidays be full of wags and wiggles
 - May your days be furry and bright
 - Wishing you peace, joy and lots of chew toys this holiday season
 - Baby it’s cold outside – so don’t forget to make sure your animals are bundled up and warm when they’re outside!
 - Unleash your joy this holiday season, and your dog in our future off-leash dog park!
 - Move over Rudolf – Santa has some new helpers this year!
- Paige combined the ideas above to make the following statement:
 - *“Santa Paws is coming to town, and with some new helpers this year! The Friends of the North Hampton Dog Park have been busy, but their furry friends are ready to help Santa this Christmas. Happy Paw-lidays from the Friends of the North Hampton Dog Park, may your days be furry and bright!”*
 - The committee was unanimously in favor of using this for our parade announcement.

- The committee discussed handing out candy or other items to engage parade go-ers. The idea of handing out dog treats was then mentioned; however the group came to the conclusion that dog treats could be mistaken for human food and someone could accidentally ingest it. It was then decided that because we are bringing our dogs it would be in our best interest not to hand out anything, to be able to maintain appropriate attention on our dogs.
- Amanda revisited the idea for a banner and asked the committee's opinion on size.
 - o An outdoor banners around the size of the banner we currently have runs about \$100
 - o Pat and Amanda mentioned that it might look messy if we had people hand-sign a nice banner. The group appreciated this perspective and agreed that it may not be in our best interest after all.
 - o Discussion for this idea has been tabled until we have confirmed land or are on the warrant article and/or need a way to physically show that we have supporters.

TEMPORARY DOG PARK

- Scott Baker (hereby referred to as "landowner") owns the town depot land and posted on the North Hampton Talks "unofficial" town Facebook page proposing the idea of turning it into a temporary, weekend-only dog park. Several committee members saw the post and were able to get in contact with him.
- Pat, Paige and Amanda met with the landowner over the weekend to discuss details of the extremely generous offer.
- Pat first shared a bit of background information she learned:
 - o The landowner first heard about our mission after attending the same Department of Transportation meeting that Pat had attended on our behalf. With the information he learned at the meeting and his genuine passion for dogs, he started to think off of the idea and wanted to find a way to help.
- Pat handed out a sheet listing the following topics that were discussed at their meeting:
 - o Fencing cost and installation + 2 gates (approx. 4,200 square feet)
 - o Insurance for property owner: \$1,000/year (non-negotiable)
 - o Plowing for parking/maintenance (mowing and pickup of waste)
 - o Signage (two signs for rules)
 - o Bags and disposal of waste
 - o Public vs private (idea of restricting it to North Hampton residents only)
 - o Time of day and weather permitting
 - o Enforcing rules (a member would need to be in charge of a padlock on the gate which would need to be opened at the start of each weekend and locked before the end of each weekend)

- Escrow fund to pay owner for bringing back lawn when permanent space is found
- Memorandum of understanding with property owner

Additional details discussed during the meeting:

- No potential to be permanent - temporary because it is personal land/the location of an office.
- If there are incidents of excessive noise, violence, unpicked up poop, public excessively trying to access during the week, etc. the property owner would reserve the right to revoke the land back at any time.
- The reasoning for the park being open only on weekends is because the landowner has an office on the same plot of land which is open M-F. The landowner ideally would not like to have additional people parking in the lot during this time or have dogs barking during the day when he is working with clients.

Group discussion weighing the benefits and risks associated with the proposed land:

- The committee discussed that if we were to pursue this idea, it could raise awareness and generate buzz to establish something permanent. Getting people involved and aware. Pat mentioned that it could give us all first-hand experience, a “test-run” to see how a dog park would be received in the community.
- Michael mentioned that whether it be a temporary area of land now or another permanent area of land in the future, once a piece of land is secured, we are going to need more manpower to maintain. Would love to have other volunteers help us physically maintain it.
- John mentioned that many people see dog parks, talk about dog parks and think about dog parks – but have not actually ever been to dog parks in person. He said it would be nice for people in this area to visit and see a smaller version of what a permanent dog park would be so they could establish a true opinion based on experience.
- The committee reviewed the discussion regarding “private vs. public”. Pat clarified that in this scenario it technically would not be “private”, rather only allowing access to town residents of North Hampton. The committee questioned how we would enforce this. The committee was unable to come up with an answer.
- The committee brought up safety concern associated with the area being much smaller in square footage when compared to our original plans. The depot land would provide less than 1/5 of the recommended square footage that we would need on the interior of the fencing. The rest of the committee expressed similar concerns, especially with dogs of different sizes and aggression levels; sometime dogs need to have their own space to play or get anxiety in close quarters with other canines.
 - If the smaller space ever directly was the cause of violence/incidents between dogs, it could ruin our chance/reputation for a permanent dog park with ample space.
- The committee discussed the risk of having the park taken away at a moment’s notice if an incident happens that is out of our control- and the sunk costs that would be associated with it.
 - What if we happened to find permanent land sooner than expected while we are in the

process of building the temporary dog park?

- Paige brought up the fact that a year ago we received an offer for a different temporary plot of land; an offer we turned down for the reason that we were not looking for something temporary – it could be taken the wrong way if we were to concede on this temporary land after turning the other land offer down which had very similar conditions.
- The committee discussed that we as members would be responsible for locking and unlocking the park's padlock on a weekly basis. At this time of year, may be difficult to do with the early darkness and cold/snowy weather conditions.
- John asked if the landowner seemed willing to negotiate any of the terms/conditions mentioned. John proposed that if we were able to negotiate down some of the expenses of the park being temporary, it could help the town see a dog park as an asset and show that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. However, even if these factors were able to be negotiated, ceteris paribus – the size of the land is still the same and is still less than ideal.
- The committee discussed the additional resources and expenses associated with a temporary park as opposed to waiting for a permanent location.
 - o Fencing is expensive as it is, especially for quality materials. Additional expenses would include installation, uninstallation (once the temporary park has been disassembled when permanent land has been found), and twice as much fencing (two parks worth, probably can't reuse custom fencing)
 - o Paige shared multiple fencing estimates she received from local organizations.
 - o The committee agreed that the quality of fencing is not something we would ever want to cut costs on – we want the fencing to be as secure as possible to ensure maximum safety.

The committee was ecstatic to see that members of the community share our passion and are starting to share their innovative ideas and different perspectives.

The committee discussed that it could be a wonderful proof of concept, however after much discussion ultimately decided that the liabilities and risks associated with establishing a temporary dog park on this land outweighed the projected benefits.

- The most prominent concern expressed by the committee would be the interior size of park the as it relates to safety. We would like to stay true to our mission to establish a safe public dog park of 1-1.5 acres in size. We determined early in our formation that ½ acre is a minimum requirement for the fenced in area.

Paige made a motion to decline the offer to use the Depot land as a temporary, weekend-only dog park. Amanda seconded. The committee was unanimously in favor of the motion – with one exception of John, who abstained from the vote.

The group discussed our official response to the temporary land offer.

The committee agreed that we would get back to him with an email response before the weekend.

Merchandise Update (Sales + Accounting)

- Alexa has officially volunteered to handle our inventory of merchandise (t-shirts and bandanas) and will manage the accounting associated with these sales.
- Pat picked up all of the bandanas that were dropped off at In-Dog-Neato-2. Unfortunately, none were sold.
- 1 bandana was used as a prize for the Scarecrow Festival dog costume contest

USPS Postal Box

- Paige and Casey are going to the post office on Saturday morning to complete the final step needed to open the mailbox. They will share the official P.O. Box address once confirmed.

Other Business / Social Media

- The group discussed keeping all communications to the public sent from either the official Facebook page or the official email account. Anyone who would like access to either of these accounts, please let either Paige, Casey or Alexa know, and they will share the login credentials.
- Various committee members mentioned having trouble tagging the "Friends of the North Hampton Dog Park" on Facebook. The members that manage the social media accounts will look into this further.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:48pm; made by Amanda. Seconded by John.

The committee unanimously agreed to adjourn.

The Next Meeting Will Take Place on December 5th @ 6:30pm.