

North Hampton Dog Park Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2017

Final

1. Call to order

Pat McLean called to order the first meeting of the Dog Park Committee at 6:45pm on November 29, 2017 at the Mary Herbert Room; Lower Floor of Town Offices.

Member Attendees

Correct spelling

Pat Mclean, Michael Trotta, Anne and Chris Nettleton, Paige Libbey, Ronni Martin, Janet Allen, Marlane Bernardo, Philip Thayer, Casey Dupuis, and Cindy Jenkins

Unable to Attend: John Dover, Susan Berry and Jalisa Bush

2. New Business

2.1 Introduction of members

Members were asked to share information about themselves

2.2 Handout of Select Board Charge for the Dog committee.

A copy of the Select Board Charge was given to each member

2.3 Election of officers.

As this was the first meeting of the NHDPC a Chair Person and 2nd Chair are required.

Pat volunteered to chair. Philip made a motion for Pat to Chair. Chris seconded the motion; it was accepted by unanimous vote of above attendees.

Casey volunteered to be Vice Chair. Ronnie made a motion for Casey to 2nd Chair. Michael seconded the motion; it was accepted by unanimous vote of above attendees.

Marlane volunteered to take minutes. Pat made a motion for Marlane to take minutes; it was accepted by all.

2.4 RSA Requirements Communication between members

There is to be no "outside" discussion of committee business. i.e. sending individual emails or having private NHDPC discussions that did not include ALL members. We discussed that there might be times when someone missed a meeting etc. or needed to provide requested follow-up etc. and in those cases individuals could work through Pat (via email) to exchange information. This was acceptable to all attendees.

Meeting minutes

A draft of meeting minutes will be prepared within 5 business days of each meeting. The draft, as well as any updates, corrections or changes, will be sent to Pat McLean. Pat will in turn forward the draft (along with any updates or changes etc.) to Jan F. (NH Town Admin). And also out to all members for review. Please direct any changes, updates or corrections of the draft meeting minutes to Pat M. Meeting minutes will be reviewed at each successive NHDPC meeting. Accepted minutes will be made "final" and will be sent to Jan F. (North Hampton town admin.)

2.5 Is there a feasible location in North Hampton for our dog park?

Philip (who is on the North Hampton Conservation Committee). Indicated that much of the North Hampton conservation land is “wetland” and due to deed restrictions it cannot be used for a dog park.

There was one potential area located near the North Hampton Comm. Gardens that might work.

The community garden is located across from Dearborn Park recreation area on route 111/ Exeter Road, North Hampton, NH (West of Route 1 and just East of I-95).

The area is approx. 100 yards in back of the current gardens. Going back toward 95... the area is about 5 acres. It is fenced along 95 but is currently not “enclosed”.

The current conservation deed would allow use as a dog park. But no structures could be built. i.e. Anything that uses an in ground footing/foundation. No building or construction of a gazebo or benches with in ground footings; no road, no adjacent parking lots. The conservation deed cannot be changed. However a perimeter fence could be installed.

There is no road to the exact location – and no parking. Visitors would need to walk about 100 yards down a trail to the site.

Parking is VERY limited at the community garden (+/- 8 spots). There is sufficient parking across the road at Dearborn Park.

Are there other area dog parks in the general area of North Hampton?

Pierce Island was very popular – currently closed (most likely until 2020) due to Portsmouth wastewater project. Location has a “natural” boundary – i.e. it’s an island. Very popular dog spot.

South Mill Road (downtown Portsmouth) 340 Parrott Ave. South Mill Pond has a fenced in, double gated enclosure. There is a surrounding unfenced off-leash area that borders the west end of the pond.

Kittery, ME (Fort Foster was not discussed by name – but this is a very popular dog spot in Kittery and the one I believe was being mentioned)

Kingston, NH and Nashua NH also have dog parks

Are there other dog-walking options in North Hampton?

Philip shared a great deal of information about the efforts of the North Hampton Conservation Committee and how they have been actively creating and maintaining 8 or 9 trails throughout North Hampton. Several attendees where not aware of these trails.

Philip indicated that **dogs are not excluded** from any of the trail systems. North Hampton does have a Leash Law.

During deer hunting season – some areas are posted as “No Hunting”. Other areas may have hunters in or around them. There are natural predators as well i.e. coyotes.

Links/maps to the North Hampton Conservation areas discussed. <https://www.northhampton-nh.gov/conservation-commission/pages/conservation-maps>

Philip also mentioned the Connors Farm in Exeter NH as another near by area that the public can use and that is dog friendly for walking, hiking, hunting, wildlife watching. <http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/maps/wma/conner-farm.html>

2.6 Reviewed and discussed the benefit of adopting a “Mission Statement”.

The following points were discussed and agreed upon.

Mission Statement for North Hampton NH Dog Park

- To establish a fenced-in, off-leash park where people and their well-behaved dogs can socialize and exercise in a clean, safe environment without endangering people, property or wildlife.
- To view the park as a community project in partnership with the Town of North Hampton, NH,
- To foster an increased sense of community by encouraging social interaction among citizens.

Belief of the committee: We seek to encourage responsible dog ownership through the dog park and interactions with the community. We believe this will be achieved through the public use of a dog park facility. There was a point made as to the use of the word “partnership” in the second point. The vote was unanimous of 7 YES 3 abstain. Partnership was kept as it reflected the idea would require some connection/support from the Town of North Hampton. An example of this would be the possible request for the sharing of the fee’s collected from dog licensing.

A motion was made by Ronnie to Accept the Mission Statement. Casey seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

It was agreed that the Mission statement met requirements of the Select Board Charge defining the benefits of a dog park.

Further to the point of use of North Hampton Town funds in the future: Should the NHDPC need funding from the Town of North Hampton, a Warrant Article would be required.

2.7 Liability definition from the Select Board charge was the next item of discussion.

Safety will be the biggest hurdle. How do we protect the town from liability?

Two major liabilities exist: An aggressive dog. A dog which bites or injures another dog or person and second spread of disease: An un-vaccinated or otherwise infected dog.

Rabies is the only vaccine required in New Hampshire. There are many other communicable diseases; parvo, distemper and hookworms were mentioned as examples. Diseases such as Lyme, heartworm etc. were mentioned.

Veterinarians report which dogs they vaccinate in their office. That info goes to the state/towns and that is how North Hampton knows they have dogs that are not “registered”. The current licensing fee is \$7.00.

Philip motioned that the “Rules of Use” will cover the charge of “Liabilities”. Janet seconded that motion. Unanimously accepted.

3. Minutes from last meeting

No prior minutes

4. Other

Day and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, December 13, 2017 @ 6:30pm, Mary Hubert Room / Lower Level Town Hall Offices

Agenda items

1. Visit the potential site by the community gardens.
2. Bring examples of “dog park rules” to next meeting.
3. Discuss size/area of future dog park

5. Adjournment

Pat motioned for Adjournment at 8:05pm; Seconded by Chris.

Minutes submitted by: Marlane Bernardo

Minutes approved and accepted on December 13, 2017 by attendees of the NHDPC