



"...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life."

**PARKS, RECREATION & FACILITIES
MANAGEMENT**

Dean R. Gazza, Director

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TO: Parks & Recreation Committee

FROM: Dean R. Gazza, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management

DATE: 7/11/2016

RE: Action Item: Request Approval of Resolution #7-R-16 Submitted by Alderperson Meltzer and Alderperson Reed on 6-1-16.

Alderperson Meltzer and Alderperson Reed submitted Resolution #7-R-16 on June 1, 2016 to allow dogs in parks under full control of a collared leash by the owner at all times. This resolution was referred to staff to come back to the Parks and Recreation Committee on July 11, 2016.

The Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management Department believes there are two reasonable options for the Parks and Recreation Committee to consider:

1. No change to the current ordinance.
2. Modifying the ordinance with the following restrictions:
 - No person shall bring animals onto park property, with the exception of leashed dogs on roads or paved or gravel trails. Dogs are not allowed on playgrounds, athletic fields, picnic areas, the skateboard parks, lawns or in park shelters.
 - All persons shall secure their dog on a leash eight feet or shorter in length and maintain their dog under control, meaning connected to a leash held by a person at all times.
 - Dogs are not to run at large. It shall be unlawful for any person, who is the owner of, or in possession of, or charged with the care of a dog, to permit same to run at large within any city park.
 - Dogs must display current rabies tag and current registration tags.
 - All dog waste must be immediately picked up and disposed of by the dog handler.
 - This shall not apply to a service animal, as defined under the American for Disabilities Act, that under control by the use of a harness or other restraint and are accompanying blind, deaf or mobility impaired persons, as provided under Wis. Stats. § 174.056.

Please find additional letters from both the Police and Health Departments regarding this resolution.

Please feel free to contact myself, Dean Gazza at 832-5572 with any questions.



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Date: June 22, 2016
To: Joe Martin-Chair, Parks and Recreation Committee
From: Kurt Eggebrecht, Health Officer

In response to your committee's request I have put into writing four issues that I also discussed at the October 9th, 2013 Park and Recreation committee meeting regarding the topic of allowing dogs in City parks. The context of my remarks that night are true today and was intended to bring awareness of health related issues for the committee's consideration as they make their policy decision of whether to allow dogs in City parks.

I should share that I am a dog lover and have owned dogs in the past and recognized that pet owners often gain physically and emotionally from dog ownership. Generally dog handlers benefit from more walking as a result of having a dog.

I. First, I had made the committee aware that based on State Food Codes dogs are not allowed in licensed premises of Food and Beverage establishments. The rationale for this specific food code is to prevent the spread of illness that could occur during the preparation and serving of food. Animals carry disease –causing organisms and can transmit pathogens to humans through direct and/or indirect contamination of food and food contact surfaces. Animals shed hair and may deposit liquid or fecal waste, creating the need for vigilance and more frequent and rigorous cleaning efforts. Currently as agents of the State we license food establishments at Reid, Meade, Erb, and Memorial parks.

II. Next I spoke about other considerations including predatory behavior often referred to as predatory drift. This occurs when a larger dog views a smaller dog as prey. Playful interaction can turn dangerous if the smaller dog starts to act like prey, such as yelping, struggling or attempting to flee. The yelping can result from something as simple as accidentally being stepped on by a bigger dog- or it could be a genuine fear response. This is the reason why in dog parks you have a separate space for large dogs and small dogs. Even when leashed, a large dog can overpower its handler.

III. Third I spoke of other unintended consequences. Dog bites and rabies control. On or off leash a dog can cause a bite or scratch to another pet or human, requiring medical attention. The dog handler could leave the scene which may result in the victim undergoing rabies post –exposure prophylaxis. The biting dog, if found would be ordered quarantined. Rabies from dogs are rare in the United States.

IV. I then shared that although dogs can pass germs to people, you are not likely to get sick from touching or owning dogs. To best protect yourself from getting sick, thoroughly wash your hands with running water and soap after contact with dogs, dog saliva, or dog feces. Dogs can carry a variety of germs that can make people sick. Some of these germs are common and some are rare. For example, puppies and some adult dogs may pass the bacterium campylobacter in their feces. This germ can cause diarrhea in people. Some people are more likely than others to get sick from dogs. A person's age and health status may affect his or her immune system, increasing the chances of getting sick. People who are more likely to get diseases from dogs include infants, children younger than 5 years old, organ transplant patients, people with HIV/AIDS, and people being treated for cancer.

Lastly I shared with the committee that in preparation of the meeting I became aware of how our State parks address this issue of allowing dogs on State property. I expressed that I believe the guidelines that they have in place minimize the four areas I have discussed. Some state parks allow dogs in certain areas and don't allow in other areas. Pets are not allowed in buildings, picnic areas, playgrounds, and marked nature trails, including cross country ski trails when groomed for skiing. The Wisconsin Department of natural resources website states that all dogs must be on a leash no longer than 8 feet at all times. This is consistent with the City's recently passed leash requirements. Pets must be under control at all times. Loose pets may be seized and are subject to local laws pertaining to stray animals. Pet owners are responsible for proper removal and disposal of their pets' waste products. Waste should be disposed of in dumpsters or trash receptacles.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

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To: Director Dean Gazza
From: Chief Todd Thomas
Date: June 10, 2016
Subject: Dogs in Parks Ordinance

The issue of Dogs in Parks is one people are passionate about, but as government officials we need to not become involved in emotions and make courageous decisions that are in the best interest of the public.

We do not believe there needs to be a change in the ordinance. There are many public health and safety issues with having dogs off a leash, or on a leash, in a park. I grew up with dogs in Appleton and never had a problem exercising or walking my dog in my neighborhood. We agree most dog owners are responsible, but all you need to do is walk some of the trails where dogs are allowed to see that not all of them are. Citizens are also not supposed to litter in the parks and pick up after themselves but walk through any park and you will see noncompliance.

When we discussed alcohol in the parks we looked at what our surrounding jurisdictions did to get consistency. **Grand Chute** requires a leash of 6 feet or less, and that the dogs must stay within six feet of any bike or walking trail in a park. **Little Chute** requires an eight foot leash, but must be on a road or trail and are not allowed on playgrounds, athletic fields, picnic areas, lawns or in park shelters.

As mentioned by one of the advocates for allowing dogs in the park **Madison** has On-Leash and Off-Leash areas. But Madison don't just allow dogs in parks; they are only allowed in very limited circumstances. In Madison, to have dogs off-leash requires a permit, and only in eight specific parks, and in areas not used by others; in essence "dog parks" in a regular park. They also have specific requirements for establishing an off-leash dog park area such as a minimum of one acre, parking available nearby, site conflict with other use, conflict with pedestrian or bike travel, etc..

City of Madison Dog On-Leash Areas link below;

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/facilities/dogParks.cfm?typeId=2>

City of Madison Dog Off – Leash Areas link below;

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/facilities/dogparks.cfm?typeId=1>

The Police Department would not be in favor of a change in the ordinance. If the council decides they need to make a change we think our city insurance carrier is consulted and we would recommend language similar to what we see in the ordinances in Grand Chute and Little Chute.

Sincerely,

Chief Todd Thomas