

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, July 10, 2012

4:30 p.m., City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

PRESENT: Bob Blocker, Chuck Harris, Paul Hoffmann, Ken Klinge and Dave Schlueter

OTHERS: Staff present: Marie Ware, Pat Prevenas and Jolene Rettenberger. Twenty-two (22) people present in the chambers for public comment(s).

ADMINISTER
OATH OF OFFICE
AND SIGN PAPER
FOR RE-
APPOINTED
COMMISSIONER
BOB BLOCKER:

At the start of our meeting (4:35 p.m.), Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware shared the Oath of Office paperwork with Paul Hoffmann to administer to our re-appointed commissioner, Bob Blocker. We welcome Bob Blocker to his extended term on the Park and Recreation Commission.

MINUTES
APPROVED;
VOTE:

It was moved by Blocker, seconded by Harris, to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2012, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC
COMMENT
(limited to three
minutes per
person):

Prior to the start of public comments, Commissioner Hoffmann reminded the public speakers to address the commission by stating their name and address, as well as writing down that information for minutes. A time limit of three minutes per person was granted.

Kate Lydon, 123 Bluff Street. Moved to Dubuque three years ago. She is surprised and disappointed that no dogs are allowed in the parks. She addressed the chambers asking how many people were here to support dogs in the parks in which several people raised their hands. She has 1,677 signed supporters who are in favor of having dogs in the parks. She will continue to gather more supporters.

Nancy Winning, 2380 Trygg Drive. Has lived in Dubuque for four years. Has also lived in five states and eight cities. Dubuque is the only place that no dogs (leashed) are allowed in the parks. She is not aware of any problems with dogs in the park in the past. She sees dogs along the river walk and doesn't see any problems with people and/or dog waste. She wants to go to the park with her dog and sit and read a book. She commented on how the parks are not full with people during the week. Stated when she was at Murphy Park the other day, no one was at the park.

Robin McFarland, 390 Alpine Street. Moved to Dubuque last year (business owner). She travels a lot. She has not come across a place to walk her dog. She feels that having a discussion about limiting pets in the parks would be a mistake, especially for the tourists. This is not a good way to do business. In her opinion, responsible people will enjoy this; no enormous increases with problems.

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Terry Leibold, 2530 Millstone Drive. Has worked for the City of Dubuque as a park ranger and park employee for the past twenty-eight years. He has been a dog owner for thirteen years. In his opinion, NO dogs in parks due to safety reasons. It's not a good idea to mix people and dogs. No clean-up. Dogs are already allowed in certain places in Dubuque already, plus there will be an additional Pet Park opening along South Locust in the near future. His wife is very much afraid of dogs and will stand/walk behind him. He sees people carrying leashes in their hands and the dogs freely walking/running through the park. He would have no problem in getting petition signatures showing the amount of people who are not in favor of having pets in the parks. How do you think the IBM employees would feel about eating their lunch at Washington Park and having a dog do their duty while eating lunch? If we honor this, we should have certain rules and specific areas with dogs on leashes (not retractable leashes, 6' leashes). Have a 3-strike rule in effect – if you get caught twice, the third time you are banned. Terry also stated that as he served as a park ranger, if tourists came into the park with their dog, he talked with the pet owner to let them know about no pets in the parks, but as long as they were there, he didn't see any harm in the dog being allowed to come into the park and then back to their vehicle.

James Menson, 890 Rush Street. James stated that he is a responsible pet owner. He has a trained dog. He feels that the rules assume that people at the park are not responsible. His trained dog will always be on a leash. He considers his dog as a member of his family. Are people going to be responsible for their dog? There should be penalties if they are not responsible. He wants to be able to take his dog with his family to the park, but for the time being, he has to decide if taking the family members or his dog only (limited on where they can all go). Dubuque is a fast growing city. We need a system in place to monitor this.

Kathryn Hartman, 535 Candlewick Court. Has been a nurse for forty-one years; now retired. During her nursing years, it was her job to go on home visits. She has observed pet owners who love their pets and they treat them like family members. However, pets are unpredictable – their nature is to protect their owners and their territory. There are plenty of non-responsible pet owners. She was raised on a farm. During the last four weeks in her neighborhood, she has had to cleanup dog poop left on her lawn. She has noticed some people carrying a doggie bag to "look good". She commented on what a pleasure it is to take people to the park with having no fear of pets or the smell of pets. She commends the City of Dubuque for limited pets in the parks. Why are we willing to take on the liability?

William Kaiser, 3556 Keymont Drive. Against dogs. He walks everyday for about 1½ hours at Eagle Point Park. Sees a lot of dogs (leashed and

unleashed) in the park before operating park hours, as well as dog waste left behind. He has also witnessed responsible dog owners drop their poop bags on the ground. He has talked with park maintenance employees and they are not in favor of dogs in the parks. Park employee comments have been "if you think it's bad now, I'm afraid to think what it will be like if dogs are allowed." If you're having a family gathering at the park, do you want to listen to dogs barking? We have a lot of wildlife in the parks (ducks/fox/deer/et cetera). It will take one severe dog bite... Parks are for people, not for pets.

Wanda Dossey, 901 Lincoln Avenue. Has been a Dubuque resident for sixteen years. It's a fact of life that we have responsible and irresponsible people in every factor of life. She is in favor of dogs in the parks. She has enrolled in American Kennel Club Obedience classes with her dog. It would be nice for people and their dogs to be able to take in the local sites (tourists) and enjoy the city. The dock dogs bring in an economic boost to the community. More people are traveling with their dogs. Look at the health benefits – keep walking and exercising. Do we have certain rules for motorcycles/motorcyclists that break the laws?

Paula Martens, no address listed. She is a responsible pet owner. When her dog is at their home, the dog is leashed in her own yard. She often stands over her dog while he's in the yard. What makes not other loose dogs from coming into her yard and attacking her dog? What do other cities do? Give it a chance.

Ryan Larson. Has a binder with handwritten petitions he shared with the Park and Recreation Commission. He owns a pit bull. He's a responsible pet owner. There are dog training facilities available in Dubuque. Penalize people if they are not responsible for picking up dog waste.

Jim Kress, 3090 Keokuk Court. Jim shared a typed note with the Park and Recreation Commission. About 1½ hours ago there was a volunteer at the Dubuque Arboretum who shared a story with him. The people were down in the Port of Dubuque (near the flood gates) when a pit bull ran out with his leash tied to a folding chair. The couple was fearful and ran back to their car. This is a safety issue – there are going to be lawsuits galore! We have to protect our children from the dogs. Who will enforce the leash ordinance since the park rangers don't come on duty until 4:00 p.m.? We have a tight budget. Don't allow dogs in the parks due to the safety of our children first. Dubuque received an award for an "All-America City".

John Betko, 1263 Jackson Street. Has lived in Dubuque for fourteen years. An "All-America City" has rights for everyone. He pays dog license tax. How can you say you can't go to any parks? Why is this a problem? Pit bulls...are

they going to kill you, really? Enforce the laws that we have. Can't take your dog anywhere. Give us more options – people will be responsible.

Kim Daykin, 275 Southgate Drive. Kim is a former Park and Recreation Commissioner of 15 years. Is the owner of a Dalmatian. She has been all over the parks areas (Swiss Valley, Mines of Spain, et cetera) and has witnessed that most people do not have their dogs on a leash. Her dog has been attacked by other dogs. Mess all over – you'll step in dog poop. This will be a problem in the parks. People say that their dog is so nice and won't hurt anyone, but her dog will hurt them. Has a suggestion - if we allow dogs in the parks, limit the parks – not in Eagle Point, Murphy or Flora parks (if a tourist, OK as stated by Terry Leibold's comments above). Limit the times and parks for pets. Have an extra park ranger to enforce the rules and impose hefty fines.

Donald Koepke, 434 Emmett Street. New resident to Dubuque; moved two months ago from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Moved to Dubuque due to the low unemployment rate. Surprised with the restrictions we have on dogs in the parks.

Sandy Kohn, 2194 North Star Drive. Owner of two mixed labs that she takes on walks. Doesn't go to the Pet Park because she sees the dog owners congregating around and the dogs have the run of the place. Eagle Point Park is a great place to go. She has noticed people dropping their dog waste bags on the ground, but they return back to pick them up as they walk back on their route. Give us a fair chance; nothing is 100% in life. Just give us a chance.

ELECT
OFFICERS;
VOTE:

It was moved by Schlueter, seconded by Klinge, to elect Bob Blocker as Chairperson, elect David Schlueter as Vice-Chairperson, and elect Chuck Harris as Secretary. All motions passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS
PRESENT AND
DISCUSS THEIR
INDIVIDUAL
PROPOSALS
REGARDING DOGS
IN PARKS AND
LEISURE
SERVICES AREAS:

At this part of the meeting, Commissioner Blocker took over as Chairperson. Below are statements from our commissioners about their proposals for dogs in the parks:

Commissioner Harris. Proposal is simple, but not. He has heard from people what they are saying. Allow dogs in all parks except for Eagle Point, Dubuque Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, Murphy, Washington, Jackson and Comiskey. Commissioner Harris lives across the street from Comiskey Park and owns two dogs. He feels that it would be too hard to enforce this since our personnel has enough work on their plates. We either do all parks, or no parks. He also added that if there is an issue in the neighborhood about dogs

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in the parks, add that park to the list for no pets allowed at all. Make the fine a minimum of \$750, keep the leash at 6' and cleanup after your pet(s). We need to encourage responsibility.

Commissioner Schlueter. He proposes to look at the ordinance and make changes. Dave distributed copies of his amendments to 10-5B-4 as follows: A) Add the following: exception being the designated Pet Park(s); B) Revise: Leashed dogs and cats allowed in all parks and areas except the following: Eagle Point Park, Marshall Park (Dubuque Arboretum and Botanical Gardens), Louis Murphy Park and the Riverwalk by the Grand Harbor Resort/Grand River Center/Alliant Amphitheater. This will be on a one year trial period, with the City reserving the right to revoke said revision or alter. Leashes or tie outs must not be longer than 6' in length (not extend-a-leads) and owners are responsible for feces cleanup with proper disposal in an appropriate receptacle. Fines for violation of leash or feces are \$200 per violation and will be administered by the park patrol and/or Dubuque Police Department; C) Delete as redundant.

Commissioner Hoffmann. He feels if people take dogs to the park, we should increase the park fees. If fines, add extra park ranger to staff and work longer hours. Have dog owners pay an extra fee (\$35 or \$50) for a tag for the dog to cover the costs. At Eagle Point, Flora and Murphy parks, set time limits – out by 9:00 a.m. He is concerned about the safety of the children. Possibly make an exception on the weekend during the America's River Festival when the Dock Dogs are in town. Send out *News Releases* during the times that pets are allowed in the parks.

Commissioner Klinge. He has received several telephone calls and letters regarding this topic. He spent five nights camping over the July 4th holiday at the Miller Riverview Campground. He doesn't take his dog to the parks because parks are for people. Not too long ago he went for a walk through Murphy Park and introduced himself to park patrons and brought up the issue about dogs in the parks. In doing so, he stated that most people are against the idea especially at Murphy, Flora and Eagle Point parks and the Dubuque Arboretum. Let's have a trial period. He is afraid and would feel terrible if someone gets mauled by a dog(s). He has gone on several walks throughout the city (along Grandview Avenue, Asbury Road and Carter Road) and has come across dog waste and waste bags. Keep it as is.

Commissioner Blocker. Both sides have argued their case. I don't think we can make rules and regulate them. Parks belong to us, the people. Let's compromise – dogs on 6' leashes, but not in the Arboretum. Have a trial period of 1-2 years. Take this to City Council. The thing is responsibility. He feels a fine of \$750 is too high.

With the absence of **Commissioner Evelyn Nadeau**, Commissioner Blocker shared her email with everyone. "Pets on a 6' leash accompanied by someone age 14 or older are allowed in city parks with the exceptions/limitations listed below:

Within the parks where they are allowed, pets may not be in playground areas, in areas where food is consumed such as picnic tables unless the pet belongs to those picnicking, and are not allowed in areas where sporting activities take place, such as athletic fields, skate areas, pools, disc golf courses and the like. All pets must be fully licensed and immunized with current tags, and pet owners are responsible for cleaning up after their animals. The exceptions/limitations are as follows:

Eagle Point Park – not allowed with the exception of the Trolley Line Trail and in the rest of the park only during open hours before 9:00 a.m. and after 9:00 p.m.

Marshall Park – not allowed in the Arboretum.

Fines for pets off leash (other than the Pet Park) up to \$1,000 (I originally stated \$500 and \$300, but since the current Pet Park rules say up to \$750 for not picking up, I upped the ante). Fine for dog waste not picked up at \$750."

With the absence of **Commissioner Karen Lyness**, no report given.

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware also shared with the commissioners to be thinking not only about dogs in parks, but trails, too. We have several trails in Dubuque (N.W. Arterial, North End Neighborhood, Mississippi Riverwalk and the Trolley Line Trail). We need to be specific about trails.

In the conversation about dogs on trails, Commissioner Harris agreed to allow all pets on all trails; Commissioner Schlueter agreed to all trails except for the Mississippi Riverwalk as stated above; Commissioner Hoffmann agreed with Schlueter stating it's not a good mix to have dogs and well-dressed people along the Riverwalk, especially since the Port of Dubuque is a highly used pedestrian area, and Commissioner Blocker shared that both sides to story and we need to compromise.

At this time, a gentleman from the chambers asked about a trial period. If we get one dog bite incident, cancel the trial period. Another person stated that we are taking the freedom away from the people. How do other cities do it? Why can't Dubuque figure it out? A lady shared that there is a website that shows dog bite statistics. Another lady asked if someone gets bit, who is liable

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for the dog bite? This is a legal issue.

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware spoke and stated that we need a recommendation to be given to the City Council. Since there are so many versions, what is your recommendation as a commission? We need time to take this issue to staff for review. Since this would be an ordinance change, we need to get feedback from various departments. Time is needed for discussion.

Commissioner Hoffmann asked about scheduling a Workshop Session. At the Workshop Session, the general public can be in attendance, but will not be able to speak. We need to hear comments and have some feedback from commission members. We need to have a consensus from the Park and Recreation Commission. It will need review with the park patrol, COPS, Health Services, et cetera. I feel a Workshop Session is appropriate.

Commissioner Klinge asked how long the ordinance has been in effect – dates back to 1968. Commissioner Blocker's gut feelings are for this issue to not take place until the next season since we are half-way through the year now. Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware stated that this will take some time.

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware stated that we either need to have a special meeting, put this item on the Park and Recreation Commission August agenda or schedule a Work Session before/after our commission meeting.

Commissioner Blocker shared that we can discuss this at the next meeting. Commissioner Hoffmann suggested to have a Work Session only. Commissioner Schlueter agreed with Hoffmann and said to have the Work Session scheduled soon. It was also stated to have the typed minutes of this meeting available this week so plenty of time is given to read and review the minutes prior to the scheduled Work Session on Tuesday, July 24th at 5:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 2nd floor of the Historic Federal Building (if chambers are available). The meeting notice will be released to the media and again the public is invited to attend, but no public comments will be allowed during the Work Session.

Prior to ending this conversation, a lady in the chambers asked where does the money go to that are from the licensing of our dogs? Why can't we use this money for the different waste stations located in the parks and hiring staff to enforce the rules?

**DISCUSS GOLF
OUTING RATES:**

Recreation Division Manager Pat Prevenas distributed a copy of the Bunker Hill Golf Course Outings proposal to all commissioners. Under the current policy, which was adopted in March of 2005, it reads that Golf Outings may be scheduled on weekdays before noon throughout the season, and weekends

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after 1:00 p.m. and any time in September and October. Eighteen hole rates for shotgun start during the above times include the following: 144 player minimum – league fee of \$12.75; 120 player minimum – weekday 9-hole fee of \$12.75; 100 player minimum – weekend 9-hole fee of \$14.25 or less than 100 players – senior fee of \$15. Requests for golf outings have become more numerous since 2005 and there is less competition between the golf courses to attract outings so the reduced rates are unnecessary. We also now have the ability to start outings earlier than 1:00 p.m. on the weekends because of fewer permanent tee times in the mornings which provides us greater scheduling flexibility.

To assist the Pro Shop staff with a less complicated pay rate schedule, it has been suggested that we consider the following for the 2013 season: 120 player minimum – senior fee of \$15 or 80 player minimum – weekday 18 hole fee of \$19. Outings with less than 80 players that do not require a shotgun start will be negotiated individually via the Golf Pro with the approval of the Leisure Services Department staff.

RECREATION
DIVISION
REPORT:

Recreation Division Manager Pat Prevenas shared the following recreation issues:

- ◆ According to the National Golf Foundation, golf rounds are nationally up 15-16% due to the weather; up 18% in the Midwest, but up 20% here at the Bunker Hill Golf Course. This is the best June Bunker Hill Golf Course has had in 11 years – year-to-date through June up 23%.
- ◆ FY12 golf ended with a surplus of \$29,000.
- ◆ An all-time monthly record was set at Flora Pool with 37,000 swimmers. We have had the second highest monthly record at Sutton Pool with 19,900 swimmers. No single, daily records were set.
- ◆ The extreme heat has impacted the attendance to some of our programs (tennis, playground, baseball, softball).
- ◆ Online registration for activities has maintained 50% usage.

PARK DIVISION
REPORT:

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware spoke about the following park issues:

- ◆ We continue to water flower baskets and beds. Many thanks to all employees for all of their hard work in the extreme heat.
- ◆ The Miller Riverview Campground has been busy.
- ◆ Mowing weeds rather than lawns due to the extreme heat and dryness.
- ◆ Some of the flower baskets and beds look better than others. The self-water system with the flowering baskets is working out well.
- ◆ Bids were received for the North End Neighborhood Trail. We received a favorable low bidder below what the engineers estimated.
- ◆ Commissioner Hoffmann asked a question about the status of the house that was up for sale on South Grandview Avenue, outside of Murphy Park. Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware is looking into options related to moving the house or deconstruction. If the house gets demolished, we will have an open lot until plans are in place and money is budgeted as a CIP.
- ◆ Commissioner

continued

Blocker was very pleased as to how well the Miller Riverview Campground is being managed and handled. Blocker had a reservation at the campground during the July 4th holiday. Blocker asked why we do not have a hard-surfaced handicap camping site? According to the campground map, there is a handicap site available and the campground managers keep this area open for any handicap camper that needs it. Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware shared with the commissioners that the project of hard surfacing sites had been placed in the budget. With the new CIP's, they did get some money to hard-surface a few camping sites.

OTHER
BUSINESS:

Commissioner Blocker asked about the status of the Port of Dubuque Marina and when that will become officially open. The new boat slips are beautiful, but there is no fuel, no rest rooms, et cetera. Since we have spent \$5 million+ on the marina, why and/or when will we open? Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware explained to the commissioners that since the City received a \$4 million grant, with the grant monies we cannot exchange money until the grant is completely closed due to the construction. When this becomes an acceptable project through the City Council, then you need to add 30 days for retainage and all things gathered and send to the grantee for final approval. The City of Dubuque has to follow the rules unless we want to pay for the entire project. The marina has docks as a courtesy currently.

ADJOURN;
VOTE:

It was moved by Hoffmann, seconded by Klinge, that the meeting be adjourned at 6:24 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.



Chairperson

Attest



