

PARK AND RECREATION SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, January 14, 2020
6:00p.m., City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor of Historic Building

PRESENT: Rebecca Kuhle, Ray Werner, Matt Garrett, Hobie Wood, Jennifer Tigges, Robin Kennicker

ABSENT: Robert McCoy

STAFF PRESENT: Marie Ware, Steve Fehsal, Dan Kroger, and Kristen Dietz

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING PROPOSAL TO ALLOW PETS IN MOST CITY PARKS:

Jerky Schmidt
206 Southgate

Yes - In favor of having pets in parks I am looking forward to the day when I can walk my leashed dog in City Parks.

Sue Hass
960 Matthew John Drive

Yes/No – but only certain parks. Pet owner, grateful for city putting out bags for pets. The community does not clean up after themselves. Not a lot of options available for pets to go to but irresponsible pet owners' ruin it for all pet owners. The parks need to be selective. Kids can be harmed, and things need to be enforced. It is a big task to enforce. Water fountains, bag stations, other areas need to have careful consideration.

Mary Storm
960 Mayfair Ct

No – against. Was attacked by a dog. She had damage done to her calf. She had a serious injury causing a blood clot and had danger of going to lungs. She had medical bills with treatment. Animals are unpredictable. She is fearful. City parks serve people and not pets. Pet owners are not always responsible. Develop another dog park instead of mixing the two. Do not invite dogs to a recreational environment for people even if they are on a leash.

Kathy Hartman
535 Candlewick Ct

No – against. I am not a pet owner, but I agree with Mary (above). Pets are unpredictable. I live in a nice area. Pets run next to owners without leashes. There are larger dogs that scare people in this area. My son lives in downtown Des Moines and the apartment has different floors of the apartment building in which animals are allowed to go to – it is restricted areas. Pets are currently allowed in AY McDonald Park,

Bergfeld Recreation Area, Port of Dubuque Marina and Pyatigorsk Park. There are a lot of companies and businesses that allow pets currently, as well as hotels. Pet owners need to utilize these places instead of animal non-occupied areas. Where is the compromise?

Christiana Schmitt
1377 Wood Street

Yes – for. She believes in a change. She wants to see dogs in Eagle Point Park and other City areas. Her dog is currently training to be a therapy dog. Dubuque would be taking a step in the right direction for both lifetime residents and newcomers to Dubuque. This is the only major city in Iowa that does not allow dogs in City parks. She went to college here and is employed here currently. She likes to go to Eagle Point Park but wants to be able to take her dog there. She asks that we do not blame animals that poop on the grass – it is natural for them. Most owners want to clean up after their pet. As long as the bags are available the owners will use them. We can train the owners. Dogs are family and no family member should be left behind.

Jim (James) Meder
2283 Hoyt Street

Yes/No. People need a lot of separate places from animals. There are people that do not want. There should be zones available for pets. Pet owners should be treated as equal. There is going to be too much feces. Dogs are warriors. Is there a leash length law? I would suggest 6 feet. Some areas to walk along solid surface for example Eagle Point Park where you can enjoy the river but surrender to people walking by. As far as water the owners should provide wherever they go.

Jordon Von Mulert
855 Valentine Drive

Yes – for. I came from Illinois – I would like to tell my different experience. It was 130 a.m. when a bomb went off in the park across the street. I tried to help the police find the blast, but nothing was found. It was around 430 a.m. when a dog owner/walker (our friend) went out to walk their dog. It was that dog owner that found the body of someone who had blown themselves up. It is not just the benefits for the dogs, but dog owners are the first and last people in the parks. This was also a park that was attached to a playground and if the dog walker did not find this then the children would of. Keep that in consideration.

Richard Kirkendall
1725 Alta Place

Yes – for. Five years ago, I stood in the same spot to allow dogs in parks. Commission requested to have pets on leashes in parks and the City Council shot it down. Multiple City Council people and Mayor said we need more time to see if dogs and coexist in public spaces. There has been an additional research done over the past five years and

dogs have been allowed in several places like AY McDonald, Farmer's Market and such and if we take the data, it will not show finding of dog attacks in AY McDonald that now allows it. Ay McDonald is still a beautiful park. It has not been overly contaminated with dog feces. Children are not getting diseases. No dog apocalypse. Every other city allows dogs and people to coexist peacefully. Dog owners are healthier as a result. That should be enough. We go to City Council and no one can say we have not had enough time. We had many votes. We have had a lot of people shoot this down. But majority have consistently said yes to allow pets in parks. I understand what it means to be part of Commission, I was on it originally to get pets in parks. It's not about dog feces or people getting bit. It's about having a good story and the fear will do the rest. Instead of relying solely on data I will leave you with this, I loved my dog his name was Toby. I found him in Texas, and he was with me every day. He was with my friends and family when I was deployed to Afghanistan and he went to Germany with me. I came back to Dubuque with him and we would go on adventures. We would go out to Mines of Spain, Bergfeld Pond and a few other areas. We could not go to Allison Henderson, Flora, Valentine Park and to suggest Eagle Point Park was a bad idea. NO pets allow. I hope for change. He has since passed away. Any dog owner will tell you; it hurts when your friend passes away especially when the city you live in labels dogs as dangerous and dirty – but life does go on. Five years down the road. Though I have lost him, I am blessed. I have a new dog. Nothing warms my heart like my two-year-old playing with the dog. My child gets excited. He wants his child to be able to take his dog to the park. Let my whole family go to the park.

Art Galloon
535 Heritage Drive

No – against. Thank you for serving on this Committee and volunteering your time. I oppose the proposed ordinance and here is why. I come after my good friend, Richard Kirkendahl. When I talk about the ordinance I am talking about the proposed ordinance by the Commission. Health, safety, human rights vs. animal right, cost, and tourism. The ordinance allows every park to become a pet park with a pet on a leash. Look at the current pet rules. “Dogs with a known history of, or who exhibit dangerous behavior are prohibited” , so dogs with a past history are allowed in the parks? The current pet park rules should reflect in the other parks if the proposed ordinance goes through. “Dogs must be healthy, full immunized, de-wormed, and wearing license and rabies tag”. It is a good rule, but it will not be followed because it goes under the owner not the city. Last one, “Enter at your own risk” is listed on the pet park sign. That would be appropriate for the ordinance if this were to pass. For example, proposed ordinance at Eagle Point Park there would need to be sign out front at the toll booth that says, “Enter at your own risk”. Is the person at the toll booth going to check to see if pets are wearing their tags or have had shots? How can the City or Commission guarantee the safety of people or children or senior citizens? Dubuque requests licensing to prevent the spread rabies. Rabies are a constant threat and can be fatal to people. Being up to date on vaccinations are a state law and that is why licenses are mandatory for everyone. But

the ordinance mentions nothing about that. Health and safety to the will of dog owners. That is not right. Dog events are currently available. Wags at the Flags charges animals (\$4) to come in are we going to charge customer and people to go into the parks. Will a similar cost be assessed for dog owners or will the citizens have to pay that fee? That will cover signage, bags, staff and enforcement. The pet park rules mention about the frequent interaction you may encounter when going into the park and how the City of Dubuque is not held liable for these interactions. So, do we now tell park goers that use picnic blankets on the ground that they need to be on-call? That it is possible to lay in poo while laying on a greenspace in a park? If they are bitten, bothered or attacked do we tell them that there is no remedy towards the City and Park and Recreation Commission or anyone who is involved in installing the mechanism to keep dangerous dogs out of Eagle Point Park? Apply that to every park now that dogs are not allowed. Do children and senior citizens who walk along the bluff at Eagle point Park have the same right to the sidewalk as leashed pets do? The ordinance mentions nothing about the human right of way. Human rights are not said to be greater than animal right in every instance. Are any consideration made for Eagle Point Park, Murphy Park or Flora Park for people who want to be free in our parks from urination and defecation and with no mechanism for enforcing. When the first altercation happens between a human and a human with a dog, do dogs have equal rights like humans do? When the first child is bit in the face (yes attacks do happen), will the family of that child have to sign over paperwork going into a park with the sign, Enter at your own risk. Is that what we are going to give the citizens of Dubuque? Dogs have their own parks. Tourism is number one in the Dubuque industry. It is an All-American City without letting animals into our park. Miami Beach is an attraction but they do not take animals to the beach but what attracts people to the beach is not allowing pets on the beach. Alternatives – Rework the proposed ordinance and do not rush the city. Address the biohazard with urine and feces. Propose a fee for service operation and have to pay for signage and staff training. Allow certain parks for animals. Allows no break in period. Irresponsible pet owners will have issues and not others. Pets not allowed does not mean bad park. It is a pet-friendly community without having pets in every park. We are an All-American city without having pets in our parks. Current ordinance does not respect quality life of people who are anti cats/dogs. Enter at your own risk. Thank you for your time.

Kristin Woodward
2319 Manson Road

Yes – in favor. Husband Steve and I have dogs and cats. Here to represent Two By Two character development program has been providing education for over 15 years to every second grader – children need to learn to be kind, respect, and empathic to people, animals and the environment. Tonight, we are discussing to become a Pet-Friendly Community. The Two By Two Board of Directors are willing to promote the education and is currently working with Robin MacFarlane with the Be AWARE campaign. Two By Two is interested in co-branding signage in the parks to promote responsible pet owners.

Bob Fritsch
1264 Mount Loretta Ave

No – against. Park Division Manager previously. Refers to Arts (Art Galloon) references. Keeping pets out of our parks has worked well in the past and it should not be changed. There should be accommodation made for pets. I am a pet owner and I do well for taking care of my pet. When I came back from New Zealand – the best thing living there was what it lacked. It was not overrun by complex relationships like we are talking about getting into here. Neighborhood parks service people first. You change the space by adding pets into parks. After being a Park Manager I know that once you add pets in parks that it no longer is a space for people. Once you add pets you cannot change that.

Kim Daykin
275 Southgate Drive

No – against. Dog owner and lived in Dubuque all my life. Near EPP and not a different area. As a dog owner, do not put this ordinance into place. People are not responsible for their pets. Dogs are attacking other dogs. I rescued a dog from the humane society and even with training some dogs still attack. I walked in multiple areas. Except for the city streets pets were not on leashes but my dog was attacked. All dogs are not perfect and there needs to be a few places where we can walk without dogs. At Heritage trail my grandchild is not scared. I am no longer going to the Farmer's Market because the last time that I went, a two-year-old was circled around scared by three dogs. This is what we are dealing when we allow dogs around people. Dogs are a part of family, but they are still animals and they act like animals. Please consider everything. I hope you vote no.

Jess Ochoa
1970 Hale Street

No – against. I know Dubuque parks. Boseman, Montana is where I came from. Environmental lovers and love their dogs. The park I would regularly walk through was a dog friendly park. So, I am living in a city where people love the environment, but people are not picking up after their dogs. I was an AmeriCorps member and we chose one park to pick up dog poo and we picked up over 200 pounds of poo. Lima, Peru the only place to take the pets is parks because they are not allowed anywhere else. There are a lot of trash cans for dog poo. It is simple to pick up dog poo. My children can only play in areas that is fenced off where the playground equipment is. You cannot go to the park and lay on the ground because of poo and urine. This is my own personal experience. I want to ask, have I ever been to a city where dogs are allowed in parks? Do I want our parks to be like that?

Marianne Kirendahl
1215 Valentine

Yes – for. I am a veterinarian. My job is human and animal bond. Dogs are an opportunity to expand our network. In the age of isolation dogs provide us with social opportunities. We can connect with our neighbors. People with dogs are more likely to expand their social networks and their neighbors. Build a lot of social capital, improve overall dynamics. There have been concerns with bites and cleaning up after their pets. Look at the other places that allow people to have pets in parks. Dubuque is the only large city in Iowa in which you cannot walk your dogs in parks. Even Central park in New York City you can even walk your pets in the park. People from other city are confused as to why they cannot walk their pets in our parks. Tourism is huge in Dubuque with river and pets on leashes can be walked and we need to protect these areas but it's one of the few places you can walk your pets. The law was set back in 1969 and since then we need to look at the surrounding communities and be part of the vibrant community. All family members matter. Mentioned history with the law.

Jan Zivojnovich
1600 Amelia Circle

Yes – for. I walk my dog with my child practically every day, I was just down at AY McDonald and I walked around with my doggie bag and I am down there summer and winter. Most people are walking their dogs. It is a great way to get exercise. I am down there a lot probably at least 3-4 times per week year around and I have seen people are very responsible pet owners and they pick up after their dogs and if you happen to see someone without a leash on their dog, the responsible owners tell them to put a leash on the dogs. I would like to walk in Eagle Point Park, and it is in our neighborhood and I do not want to drive out to the Mines of Spain. There is a trail. It is good exercise. There is not a problem. I was here a few years ago saying the same things as well. I was glad they got AY back. There is nothing wrong with that.

Benjamin Carryer
450 Alpine Street

Yes – in favor. It is ridiculous that dogs are not allowed in public spaces. It is foolish not to allow dogs in parks. We pay taxes. I hear a lot of irrelevant and irrational fears. If people are not taking care of their pets that should not affect the ordinance. All this current ordinance does is punish people who are responsible.

Nan Welch
729 Brookview Square

Yes – in favor. I am thinking about history of dogs in my own life. My dog spent time in the basement as a child. My mother did not care for him. He did not get out of the basement much. Until my dad would come home from work. As an adult I now put my dog first before my family. I would not have taken my childhood dog to the park because she would have been scared to death but now with the times I would. With the

millennials I would now. They showed what a furry member can be. It's now for my children and their pets. We would like the chance to walk through parks in Dubuque with my dog and entire family. Robin with her education will come through to help educate the citizens of Dubuque, I work for Two by Two and the education with children will help with that. There are the few people that would ruin it for everyone.

Kimberly Oberbroeckling
2152 Golden Eagle Drive

Yes – in favor. I have been a Dubuquer all my life. No one understands why animals were banned from parks in 1969. Likely no leash laws and we have leash laws now. I have family in Davenport, Ames, no one has had issues with dogs in parks. 2014 Cedar Rapids was named All American City. 100% compliance is ridiculous. There are traffic laws and 100% does not agree but cars are not banned. I grew up in Eagle Point Park area and I would love to take my dog there. When my extended family comes back, all my family members cannot attend because pets are not allowed in parks. I would like to see the ban lifted. Saying there is going to be bites and attacks is fear mongering. We have had pets and parks that are pet friendly (5 years ago) and I have not heard about wide spread issues with dog feces bites and attacks so I would like to see the ordinance pass and allow dogs in the rest of the City parks. Does not seem to be a problem. Some of the areas that they are allow in now are not accessible so it would be nice to have neighborhood parks accessible for those people.

Robin MacFarlane
1640 Aspen Meadow Court

Yes – in favor. I did not have intention on coming up but since my name was mentioned I figured I would step up for the benefit of the audience. This is an economic piece. I notice some hesitation that 62% majority of pet owners are millennials. Not being able to have pets in parks is crazy. I have been east to west and dogs are allowed in the parks. Dubuque is behind the times. We are used to not having dogs in parks but the fact that we are penalizing people that are responsible it is not right. Since I am a responsible pet owner, it does not give me the chance to allow my dog in the park and to clean up after him. I give what I can under my control. My Be Aware campaign and I are both against irresponsible pet owners. Not having my old dog by my side sucks. I agree with Mr. Kirkendall. Dog parks are not my thing. Quit punishing responsible owners. I want to be able to go out in the public with my dog and not just go to dog parks.

Cassie Bird
1561 Parkway Street

Yes – in favor. Want to start a family in Dubuque and it is not pet friendly. When my parents bring the dogs, we are limited on where to go due to not being able to have pet friendly. We do not have an area for the dog to properly exercise. For my generation, we give dogs the right treatment and it is beneficial for own health. It is a huge decision

for people my age on whether or not they want to stay in Dubuque once they graduate college. In order to make that happen, young professionals need to be able to go to the parks with their dogs.

Kenda Summers
514 Woodland Court

Yes – for. I have a goldendoodle dog and I frequently take him to parks that allows pets in them currently. I walk Bergfeld quite often. I have never been fearful of a dog attacking me. When I go to Bergfeld pond it is geese feces. And no one seems to be alarmed by geese or geese feces. I think there is a real danger in not being open to change. The world is in constant change. There is a worry about people being stagnant.

Joshua Bird
1561 Parkway Street

Yes – for. I come to attend Loras College. My parents have a dog and it's their 3rd child. It is tough when my parents visit because they have animals. My mother struggles with walking so taking my mother and dog to Mines of Spain is a struggle. It would be beneficial to leisurely walk. Not being able to bring others is not okay.

Nancy Bradley
2380 Clarke Crest Drive

Yes – in favor. In favor of an additional dog park as well. I live near the one on Grandview currently. I have lived in Dubuque most of my life. A whole lot of smart men and woman have brought us from a dark time. We want to be a vibrant, alive and attractive community. We are not a pet friendly community and we know that. Thanks to you, we have the opportunity to move forward. I thank you for the opportunity and consideration.

Judy Greene
980 Davis Street

No – against. I do a lot of walking and riding my bike in the parks. I go to parks where pets are not allowed. I have been on bike ride where animals have attacked. I walk in cemetery because dogs are not allowed in there and no feces. I would not be able to walk in any of the parks if this is passed. I have a lot of elderly people in family and dogs have taken them out. So, if a dog charges to a kid who is going to pay the lawyer fee and pay the bills? Is the City liable? Will there be a sign that says enter at your own risk? If we enter at our own risk and something were to happen, I would sue the City. Keep that in mind I love dogs and people but there are certain places for dogs and certain places for people. I would not be able to go to the places if animals were allowed. Elderly community would not be able to go. Responsible pet owners I love them to death – I walk down Windsor and they do not pick up after themselves. It's disgusting and gross.

Marissa Joer
Grace Street

Yes – in favor. Moved to go to University of Dubuque and why I chose to stay here is because of how far the city has come so far in the past five years. Has to appeal to the younger generations. 67% of households have dogs. 80% of Millennials want to live in cities where animals are welcomed. In proposed ordinance not all direct places so people who do not want to be around animals will still have those options to go to. This is not making it so every place allows pets. Children playgrounds will not allow pets around them. Dubuque is the only major park that does not allow pets in parks. Establish families and homes. Dubuque wants to attract these people but in order to do some this would only be a step in the right direction. But clearly if most cities allow pets in parks it outweighs any negatives. I am in favor of the ordinance.

Lisa Johnson
206 Southgate Drive

Yes - in favor. One step forward towards making Dubuque a more pet friendly community.

Pat Gallart
1300 Tomahawk Drive

Yes - in favor. Thank you for your consideration.

Chuck Harris

Just a question - Does Eagle Point Park currently sit on Historic Places?

Sherry Moore
Dickeyville Wisconsin

Yes – In favor. Come at that standpoint from a tourism standpoint. If you compare to a lot of other cities, we have a unique opportunity from a historic standpoint to make this change and allow pets in parks. I am a responsible dog owner. We travel a lot. Choose our travel points based on pet friendly. 90-billion-dollar industry and in the next over 5 years 100 billion dollar industry and economically good standpoint and I do feel as though it is a loss for the city of Dubuque.

Lyle Gallart
1300 Tomahawk Drive

Yes – in favor. I think I am a boomer and it would be good for future generations. We recognize that it would be a good thing for the community.

Gerry Welch
720 Brookview Square

Yes – in favor. Golden Lab not disturbed by the animals but by the people and the mess

that they leave. My wife says let's go to Swiss Valley, but I am afraid that we will get mugged. I currently live two blocks from Valentine Park and I am unable to take my dog there. Allowing pets in parks is social aspect that is needed. My family has yet to go to the park because dogs are not allowed to go.

AJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Kennicker, seconded by Tigges to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Unanimous.