



# *Feasibility of Creating Dog Park*

February 21, 2013 – 7:30 PM - **Minutes**

Councillor William Saltzman Antechamber Room 213, Municipal Building

**\*\*View Agenda \*\***

**MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A DOG PARK**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2013**

**TIME: 7:38 P.M.**

**PLACE: COUNCILLOR WILLIAM SALTZMAN ANTECHAMBER, ROOM 213, MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR JANE GONSALVES, CHAIRPERSON; COUNCILLOR JOSEPH LOPES, VICE-CHAIRPERSON; EMANUEL MACIEL; ELAINE GERBER; JANICE ROGERS; DR. DEB GERGKE**

**ABSENT: NO ONE**

**ALSO PRESENT:**

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Councillor Gonsalves called the Dog Park Meeting to order and took attendance; with everyone present.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Lopes and Gonsalves, requesting, that the Special Committee on the Feasibility of Creating a Dog Park enter into a dialog with the Town of Dartmouth regarding the possibilities of New Bedford residents using their Dog Park (Ref'd 10/11/12, 11/29/12) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Manny Maciel. (1)

Elaine Gerber informed the Committee that she, Manny Maciel, and Janice Rogers met with DDAWG at one of their recent meetings to discuss the possibility of working together to create a commonly utilized and operated dog park. She reported that it seems that DDAWG is making fairly good progress and appear to be well organized and focused. She stated that they stressed to them, several times, that they are not “politically connected” and have made the effort to do things without “getting political”, and would like to remain that way. Manny Maciel reiterated Ms. Gerber’s sentiment about that and added that DDAWG said that New Bedford residents, as well as residents from other area communities, would be welcome to utilize the dog park that they create. Both Mr. Maciel and Ms. Gerber did say, however, that it appeared that DDAWG did not seem to be in need of or particularly desirous of a formal partnership with this Committee.

Councillor Gonsalves asked the Committee what their thoughts were regarding pursuing a relationship/partnership with DDAWG in light of this report. The Committee agreed that it is probably not worth pursuing.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Manny Maciel, the Committee VOTED: To take “No Further Action” on this matter at this time.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Related Motion, Councillor Gonsalves, requesting that at the next Special Committee on the Feasibility of Creating a Dog Park meeting that the entire City Council be invited to

address their concerns to the Committee (Ref'd 6/14/12, 11/29/12 – letters to the full CC asking for their input) was removed from the table by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Manny Maciel. (2)

A letter from Councillor Martins was read into the record by the clerk and received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Manny Maciel.

Councillor Gonsalves informed the members that she has scheduled a meeting with Mayor Mitchell to discuss his thoughts about a dog park. She stated that in her brief conversation with him, he did not seem to be aware that there is such a desire amongst New Bedford's residents to have a dog park established within the city.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Manny Maciel, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Discussion on finalizing a site for a Dog Park in the City of New Bedford. – **invite Attorney Blair Bailey to the next meeting in order to review city-owned parcels of land that are available & might be appropriate for the dog park.** (3)

Attorney Blair Bailey reported to the Committee that when asked about property in and/or around the Airport being possibly utilized for a dog park, the Airport Commission bluntly and emphatically said "No". They are very concerned with liability and safety.

Attorney Bailey also stated that the Elco and Payne Cutlery sites have gone out to bid and are no longer viable as potential sites. He did discuss other sites, particularly the Morse Twist Drill site still seeming to be the "best" potential site, with plenty of room – even if only a portion of it is used for the dog park – and the fact that, to his knowledge, there has been absolutely no inquiries or interest in that site for potential development of any kind, it remains one of the best potential locations in the city. He did bring up one other piece of vacant land that he said the city will own within 6 months is a parcel of about 4 or 5 acres near the Willows Apartments.

Councillor Gonsalves stressed her opinion that she feels strongly against the idea of using existing park land for a dog park. She feels that parks should remain open for passive recreational use. She also stated that she feels the Committee should stop looking for the "perfect" site and instead, formalize the list of amenities/attributes, etc. that the dog park should have and forward that in the form of a report to the Mayor and ask him to find the location, since it will ultimately be his decision to move forward or not.

Elaine Gerber stated she agreed with this. Councillor Gonsalves said she will bring that up to the Mayor when she meets with him next week. She said she will also discuss the pros and cons of one large site vs. two – three smaller sites in different locations in the city; and that she would report back the details of her meeting with the Mayor at the next meeting in March.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Manny Maciel the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Lopes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Manny Maciel.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:18 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Clerk of Committees