



## PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 2, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.  
Los Osos Community Services District Office  
2122 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 106, Los Osos, CA

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Lou Tornatzky, Chairperson  
Jon-Erik Storm, Alternate Chairperson  
Alissa Feldman, Member  
William Fitzgerald, Member  
Jennifer Foronjy, Member  
Andrea Lueker, Member  
Shaunna Sullivan, Member

### STAFF

Renee Osborne, General Manager  
Ann Kudart, Administrative Services Manager

## AGENDA

1. **Opening at 5:30 p.m. – Call To Order; Flag Salute; and Roll Call**
2. **Update on Proposed Dog Park**  
*(Discussion Only, No Action Associated)*  
Presented By: General Manager Osborne
3. **Update of Previous Committee Assignments**  
*(Discussion Only, No Action Associated)*  
Presented By: Committee Members Feldman and Sullivan
4. **Preliminary View of the Best and Worst Practices of Dog Parks**  
*(Discussion Only, No Action Associated)*  
Presented By: Chairperson Tornatzky and Committee Member Fitzgerald
5. **New Assignments to Committee Members**  
Presented By: Chairperson Tornatzky
6. **Public Comments on Items NOT on this Agenda:** At this time, the public may comment on items not on this agenda. Each commenter is limited to 3 minutes and shall address the Chairperson.
7. **Schedule Next Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting**
8. **Closing Comments by Parks and Recreation Committee Members**
9. **Adjournment**

## **ITEM 4**

# **PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE BEST AND WORST PRACTICES OF DOG PARKS**

## **Best Practices for Dog Parks**

*Development, Implementation, Operations*

*Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee*

*May 1, 2017*

*L. Tornatzky and B. Fitzgerald*

### **Positive Practices Analyses**

*20 Tips for Creating Successful Dog Parks In Your Community.* Dog-On-It –Parks Inc., 2010

*How to Build a Dog Park in Your Community.*

*Designing a Model Dog Park Law.* [www.animallaw.info](http://www.animallaw.info)

*Complete Parks Playbook.* ChangeLabSolutions.org

*Local Agency Strategies for Funding the Development and Maintenance of Parks and Recreation Facilities in California.* ChangeLabSolutions.org

*Establishing a Dog Park in Your Community.* American Kennel Club. [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

*Ten Tips for Planning And Building A Dog Park in Your Community.*  
[www.doodycalls.com](http://www.doodycalls.com)

*Tips for Building Successful Dog Parks in Your Community.* Dog-On-It Parks, Inc., 2010  
(Revised 2012)

*Recommendations and Guidelines for Dog Park Site Selection, Design, Operations and Maintenance.* <http://muttmitt.com/dog-park-guide/>

*Dog Park Guide. Keeping Dogs Happy.* <http://muttmitt.com/dog-park-guide/>  
(short form)

### **Negative Practices Analyses**

*Reasons I Stopped Going to Dog Parks.* <http://fidoseofreality.com/six-reasons-stopped-going-dog-parks>

*15 things humans do wrong at dog parks.* <http://www.mnn.com/family/pets/stories>

*Last-ditch worries fail to derail dog park.* <http://www.Sandiegouniontribune.com/communities/north-country>

*5 Reasons I Hate Dog Parks (And Where to Go Instead).*  
<http://www.care2.com/greenliving>

*Excessive poop threatens to close another dog park – this time in Highlands Ranch.*  
<http://www.denverpost.com/2017/03/21/highlands>

## **Summary Conclusions and Recommendations**

It is recommended that members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, and other interested parties, read all of the reports cited above. While these reports do not cover all the available analyses in the dog park literature, they nonetheless provide several guidelines for going forward. Some of the preliminary conclusions include the following:

**Community Involvement.** A strong theme in the reports is that dog parks are successful if they can recruit and retain community volunteers. Also pointed out is that the community volunteers should be “multi-generational” which includes parents, retirees, teen-agers and younger children. Few community projects appeal to this spread of involvement, but dog parks do. Several creative examples are described in the reports cited. One important point is that community involvement needs to be a long-term effort. Designing and building may take a few months; operating and maintaining quality operations involves years. Committed dog owner volunteers are a key ingredient.

**Volunteer Education and Development.** Recruiting volunteers is only the start. Successful dog parks – according to virtually all the articles above – involve education, discussion, goal setting, and participation by many types of community volunteers. Moreover, the education and training needs to be more than a one-time episode. Rather, it must continue for the life of the park, which is likely to be years rather than months. Several of the case examples discuss how volunteer experts can contribute to an ongoing training/education function, including gathering statistics to guide program activities and needs.

**Design Issues.** The cited reports make strong recommendations on key design issues that confront the dog park, including those that are confronted early on, and others that emerge as the facility settles into operational issues. These include issues such as layout, size, facilities, water, fencing, shade, drainage, furniture, sanitation and feeding arrangements. These issues are rarely perfectly solved when the park opens, particularly the expected usage volume by people and their animals, and how that will change over the seasons and changing demand. All dog parks are confronted with the issue of poop, and how to manage animals, owners and facilities.

**What About the Negatives?** As noted above, we have also reviewed a small number of online reports that deal with potential negatives that may emerge from the dog

park experience, for both the animals and for the family members who treasure their pets. The five reports dealing with some of those instances are discouraging indeed. Each of these is a mix of sometimes dreadful negatives encountered in the dog park experience. So how should the LOCSD, working with community volunteers, address these potentials?

One solution is to double down on the front-end planning, design, and analysis. A second useful strategy is to always opt for the more demonstrably effective (and often more expensive) design, engineering, build and operational choices. It is always more expensive to fix the mistake that was made in order to cut costs. In several of the articles cited above the amount and quality of front-end planning is large and often expensive. Perhaps that path is the better option.

It is incumbent upon all members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to be aware of problems encountered in dog parks elsewhere. Please see attached a two page table of problems we uncovered.

## Problems encountered with Dog Parks

URL

1	2	3	4	5	6	"Problem"
X					X	Sanitation: Failing to pick up dog feces
X						Not exercising a dog before taking her to the park
	X					Dog gates left open
X						Dogs with rude greeting skills
X				X		Leaving prong collars and harnesses on while playing
X				X		Keeping dogs on leashes in off-leash area
X						Bringing a pregnant or in-heat female
X				X		Bringing puppies less than 12 weeks old
X	X					Unvaccinated or INCOMPLETE vaccinations
X						Small dogs in same area as large dogs
X						Picking up and carrying a small dog
X						Bringing in a dog that lacks recall skills
X			X			Allowing dogs to bully other dogs
X						Letting the dogs "work it out"
X	X			X		Dogs with resource-guarding problems (toys, treats)
X			X			Owners failing to supervise dogs
X						Owners on cell phones
					X	Owner trying to supervise too many dogs (owns 3)
	X	X				Failure to supervise kids
		X				Putting stuff in the middle of the field (chair, stroller)
		X				Bringing in human food
		X				Feeding someone else's dog
	X	X		X		Bringing dog-aggressive dogs to socialize them
	X	X		X		Bringing fearful dogs to socialize them
		X				Giving out training advice
		X				Letting a dog walker take your dog to a dog park without spying on them to make sure they know what they're doing

		X				Blaming the breed for bad behavior
		X				Forcing your dog to play
					X	I don't go because I don't trust other dog owners
					X	Park is too big
					X	Park is too crowded

URL 1 <http://www.mnn.com/family/pets/stories/15-things-humans-do-wrong-at-dog-parks>

URL 2 <http://fidoseofreality.com/six-reasons-stopped-going-dog-parks/>

URL 3 <http://www.mnn.com/family/pets/stories/10-more-things-humans-do-wrong-at-dog-parks>

URL 4 <https://drsophiayin.com/blog/entry/bonnie-and-porter/>

URL 5 <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/5-reasons-i-hate-dog-parks-and-where-to-go-instead.html>

URL 6 <http://keepthetailwagging.com/8-reasons-why-i-think-dog-parks-are-dangerous/>