



**PARK CITY MUNICIPAL OFF-LEASH TASK FORCE
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
445 MARSAC AVE.
PARK CITY, UTAH
APRIL 11, 2016**

**Heinrich Deters, Trails and Open Lands Manager, Staff Liaison - Park City Municipal
asked for a motion to open the meeting of the Park City Municipal Off-Leash Task Force
at approximately 3:30pm**

**Eric Hoffman, Recreation Advisory Board moved to open the meeting;
Alisha Niswander, Recreation Advisory Board, seconded the motion.**

Task Force Members in Attendance:

Tate Shaw – Assistant Recreation Manager, Park City Municipal Corp.
Ken Fisher – Recreation Manager, Park City Municipal Corp.
Charlie Sturgis – Mountain Trails Foundation
Alisha Niswander - Recreation Advisory Board
Eric Hoffman - Recreation Advisory Board
Alison Child - At large
Ed Parigian – At large
Kate Sattelmeier - Summit Land Conservancy
Becky Burns - At large
Cynthia Sandoval - Recreation Advisory Board
Barbara Maw – At large
Brian Hanton - Snyderville Basin Recreation District
Councilman Tim Henney - Council Liaison Alternate
Heinrich Deters – Trails and Open Lands Manager, Park City Municipal Corp.
Jody Morrison – Park City Municipal Corp.

Excused: Councilwoman Becca Gerber – Council Liaison
Andrew Latham - Park City Police Department
Clay Coleman - Summit County Animal Control
Tod Frohnen - At large
Rusty Millholland - Utah Open Lands

Guest Speaker: Elise Gatti, Doctoral Student/Graduate Assistant
Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, College of Health,
University of Utah

Adoption of Minutes of March 28, 2016 Task Force Meeting. Alison Child requested a correction of her last name be noted; Ms. Morrison stated she will make the correction on the final approved minutes.

**Alison Child motioned to approve the minutes of March 28, 2016;
Alisha Niswander seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously**

Staff and Board Communications and Disclosures: Deters reminded the Task Force of the April 14 Council meeting at which he will give council members an update on the Off-Leash Dog Task Force. His presentation to council will be at approximately 6:05pm, all are welcome to attend the meeting.

Brian Hanton mentioned that his staff would be presenting their recommendations to modify the animal policy guidelines in regard to public events to the Snyderville Basin Recreation District Board this Wednesday, the 13th. at 6:00pm. His presentation will be at 6:35pm at their offices on Trailside Drive across from Trailside Elementary School.

Public Input:

Heinrich Deters asked if there was any public input, there were no comments.

Deters welcomed the group and introduced Elise Gatti who would be giving a PowerPoint presentation on Integrating Dogs into Parks and Trail Systems.

Ms. Gatti shared some of her background with the group; she is originally from Canada, is in her third year as a PhD student at the University of Utah in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, and has interest in outdoor recreation, urban planning and urban designing. She stated that dogs and outdoor recreation is an area of interest for her although not her main focus.

Ms. Gatti stated that she has some experience with dogs in parks; while living in Pittsburgh as a resident she coordinated a dog park in her neighborhood of Lawrenceville. The community has very little green space with a population of 11,000 residents.

She is currently doing a study regarding the meaning of dogs and outdoor recreation, 'what does it mean for people to take their dogs on outdoor recreation'. She has interviewed twenty-one individuals with the focus on trail based recreation.

Gatti recently attended the Utah Recreation Parks Association conference in St. George and gave a presentation on how dogs can be integrated in an urban outdoor recreation environment.

Gatti and Deters had previously discussed the issues the task force was working on and to focus on those items for this presentation.

Gatti emphasized to the group that she was not a consultant; she has done a considerable amount of reading on this topic and has personal experience. She is happy to be attending and speaking to the group to share her assumptions and values.

Ms. Gatti explained that she feels parks should be sustainable and should be used to address larger problems outside of park boundaries. She views dog parks as a representation of something that is meaningful to people in our culture; the human - dog relationship is about 30,000 years old.

Deters asked Gatti to define off-leash areas versus dog parks and were there accepted definitions of both, a universal understanding of the two types of parks.

She explained off-leash exercise areas are not fenced, dogs can run off-leash legally; often times the off-leash areas are within a larger park with restrictions in other sections of the park. Gatti identified Memory Grove along City Creek in the Salt Lake City area as an off-leash dog park and shared a few slide photos. She also shared photos of a dog park in Park City, enclosed with fencing and specifically for dogs.

She reported that dog parks are the fastest growing segment of city parks.

Gatti explained that those definitions were based on her observations.

Ken Fisher shared his experiences at dog beaches in California, off-leash areas not fenced; Gatti stated that beaches in Florida had fenced off-leash areas that reached out into the water.

Deters stressed that the group has been stuck on the definitions of off-leash areas and dog parks.

Ms. Maw interjected that an off-leash area was not fenced and that a dog park was fenced.

Deters conceded that was how the group defined the two areas although those definitions may not be viewed by others in the same way.

Another example of a dog park was Run-A-Muck near Kimball Junction it's a fenced area where dogs run free.

Deters reminded the group of their previous thoughts and discussion points in defining use: are you exercising with your dog or are you exercising your dog – this has been mentioned numerous times in earlier meetings.

Gatti stated that dog parks are not specifically intended for dogs but for people; the parks are social environments, dogs facilitate their outdoor recreation and motivate people to get out. In her qualitative study she has found that for many women their dogs allow them to go on trails that perhaps they wouldn't be on otherwise.

Sturgis mentioned that in a dog park the dog is off-leash although questioned are they under control, what is the level of control, is there a standard.

Ms. Gatti stated that her impression is that in an enclosed dog park dogs should not be dog aggressive. On off-leash trails there are voice control rules.

Gatti continued with her presentation sharing that dog parks are currently where skate parks were a number of years ago with the same concerns of liability and bad behavior and are now in many neighborhoods and parks everywhere.

Gatti shared facts relating to dog park growth in America. In one hundred of America's largest cities between the years 2005-2010 dog parks have grown by 34%; between the years 2010-2015 dog parks grew by 20%; in 2015 there has been a 6% increase in the one hundred largest American cities, this data is from a survey conducted by the Trust for Public Lands; this is not just a local trend it is a national trend.

Over view of Survey for Urban Conference conducted by Elise Gatti

Gatti also conducted a survey for the Urban Conference, she surveyed communities around the state including Snyderville Basin.

A question asked in the survey was whether dogs were allowed in their parks. Some communities do not allow dogs in their parks leashed or off-leash, Moab is an example; Bountiful is another example, they do not allow leashed dogs in their parks.

Another question asked was under what conditions a dog could be leashed or off-leashed and allowed in parks - 62% stated that dogs have to be leashed at all times, they do not have any off-leash areas.

Gatti continued with the results of the ongoing study: another question was why have dogs in parks and on trails.

Ms. Gatti discussed the positive associations and benefits to having a pet: influence peoples recreation habits; senior citizens recover from surgery much more quickly with a pet around; pets decrease loneliness and isolation and increase social interaction; they influence dog owners health through physical activity with their dog; people perceive support from their dog 'the unconditional love'; dogs support healthy lifestyles; not all but many dog owners walk their dogs; they are more likely to walk their dogs in all seasons - good and inclement weather.

Dogs need regular exercise and socialization: shelters reported that many of the dogs brought to shelters to be given up by their owners were due to behavioral problems; most likely the owners were not getting their dogs out and exercised.

Environmental designs support dog parks; 1/9 Americans do not meet the minimum guidelines for physical activity where as a person with a dog is twice more likely to meet those requirements.

Gatti shared a number of photos with the group, one of interest was of a private water feature built for the public and their dogs in the Avenues on the Bonneville Shoreline trail that had a bath, a human water fountain and a dog water fountain.

Gatti's overview of the survey continued.

Dogs having fun can be a terrifying site to some people and has to be acknowledged.

Therefore another question on the survey was 'how many dog parks are needed'.

Gatti shared some statistics with the group:

Four out of ten families have 1.7 dogs in the United States; it is estimated that there are approximately eighty-two million dogs in the US; current estimation is that there are more households with dogs than children; this has become a very social phenomenon in our culture.

There are an estimated seven-thousand dogs in Summit County and approximately two-thousand dogs live in Park City.

Portland Oregon has thirty-three off-leash dog parks largest in the United States; Calgary Canada has one-hundred and fifty off-leash dog parks the most dog parks in North America. Salt Lake City has seven dog parks with three currently under construction. Park City has one off-leash dog park.

Ms. Gatti gave examples of how a community will know when it needs a dog park or additional dog parks. She stated it's typically when members of the community begin using spaces to play and exercise their dogs in areas not identified for dog use due to lack of another area or dog park.

She explained a use in Sandy, Utah that identified a need for more dog parks: Sandy had developed two dog parks side by side and put them on a two week use rotation so as not to have resource over-use; a sign they needed additional facilities.

Ms. Gatti shared photos and descriptions of dog parks in other states describing their locations and amenities.

She recommended viewing Park City as a whole, looking at the possibility of neighborhood parks one to five acres in size and to review with the County its range of possibilities. Design guide lines for a successful dog park will have fencing, clear signage, rules, etiquette, shade, parking, water and lighting. She also shared that dog parks are not any louder than a children's playground.

In creating future dog park settings Gatti recommended larger venues similar to Round Valley, Mill Creek Canyon and Tanner Park. These are regional parks that most would drive to for a specific experience that a neighborhood park or city park may not offer. An active dog running off-leash will run three times the distance an owner will walk releasing much more energy than being on a leash.

Neighborhood dog parks and open spaces that are easily accessible by walking to and from is preferable, they become very social places.

Addressed enforcement

Ms. Gatti continued by addressing enforcement policies used in the Salt Lake Valley specifically Mill Creek. Mill Creek is one of the valleys' most popular parks; they use the odd / even day off-leash, on leash program which has been quite successful.

Mr. Fisher suggested adding a no dog day as part of the program.

It was mentioned that many owners would begin the hike with their dog on leash and then take them off-leash further up the trail.

Park City's Yellow Ribbon program (yellow ribbon indicates a dog may not enjoy the company of another dog and may become aggressive if approached) was mentioned in regard to dogs off leash that may approach a Yellow Ribbon dog. Alternating the variations of the odd/even/no dog day program may be a solution.

Charlie Sturgis inquired as to the available statistics on Mill Creek regarding dogs biting on odd/even days; he felt it would be interesting to know about the biting issues in this canyon because of the high concentration of users.

He had additional concerns about the water shed issues associated with Mill Creek.

Deters stated that the park has had this type of use for a very long while and that there should be data.

Sturgis believes there is data although as yet not available in a presentable form.

Green Dog Program

Gatti referred back to her PowerPoint presentation to explain the Green Dog Program in Brookline, Massachusetts which has fourteen off-leash areas, is a tag licensing program to allow your dog off-leash. The program has established fees for: residents, non-residents, commercial dog walkers and non-resident commercial dog walkers along with specific off-leash hours. The group discussed this program in some detail.

Alisha Niswander shared that while visiting in Boulder, CO last year she used their dog parks and was impressed by their descriptive rules for the area. The signage for identifying leash off-leash areas was done using photos and maps. Alisha felt the signage was very clear and easy to understand.

Gatti mentioned Boulder has a new program as of December that requires testing an owner and their dog for voice and site control. This allows dogs to access designated trails with their owner if they are under voice and site control

Deters reminded the group of the suggested video program that would require dog owners to watch in order to receive a tag for their dog; he explained that research done five years after implementation showed that the program was not effective.

Ms. Maw emphasized the liability issues again in regard to testing programs. After the dog owner and dog pass the program, receive their tag the dog bites someone who's responsible, the organization / instructor that approved and issued the tag?

Sturgis stressed to the group that had the municipality originally addressed liability many of the current issues wouldn't be issues at all.

Sturgis emphasized that if the ordinances were being ignored and the animal control laws broken then there is an unmet need.

Mr. Sturgis stated that over the years the City and the County had not been consistent in enforcing the dog leash ordinances.

Due to the City and the County currently enforcing the ordinances therefore resulting in many residences being ticketed the task force was created due to the confusion caused by inconsistent enforcement / lack of enforcement / and enforcement.

Sturgis mentioned the resulting desire should be a balance of factors: be able to maintain your cultural activities, stay within the law as stated and understand how the law is being implemented.

Gatti stated that planning for the recreational amenities with the future growth of the Wasatch Front and the Park City community is critical.

Deters added that by approaching the issues now, doing it right while there is time and making the program sustainable for the future three to five years out is very important and should be the goal.

Ms. Sattlemeier recommended the questions to be discussed and answered should be: off-leash versus compliance verses more dog parks; conversation continued on this topic.

Etiquette or Regulation

Deters asked the question of etiquette verses regulation.

Ms. Gatti stated that behavior with dog park users can be changed specifically with good messaging. Gatti suggested making the messaging seem normal; following the rules that need to be enforced.

Gatti used Liberty Park, a City owned park in Salt Lake City as an example; most of the dogs in the park are on a leash, an owner not using a leash will be reminded by another owner that regulations are enforced by ticketing; a dog off-leash is not the norm in the park.

Gatti shared a program that is being used near the University of Utah called the Urban Ranger Program primarily made up of University students. Their volunteers are on mountain bikes riding the Shore Line trail stopping to visit with users, giving directions and picking up dog waste, they do not have any enforcement abilities.

She feels engaging with users is key to a successful program; Park City might consider a similar program.

Gatti stated that users will often comment that they don't know the regulations; signage is not clear or adequate.

She recommended to the group that signage should be clear, stating the rules and etiquette and setting behavioral expectations.

She reminded the group that dog parks and trails are not just about the dogs it's about the people also.

The group thanked Ms. Gatti for her presentation.

Deters reminded the task force of the City Council meeting this Thursday, he will present an update of the task force progress and recommend Council continue the off-leash pilot project through June 2016.

He gave a brief overview of the staff report, a copy of which had previously been sent via e-mail to Task Force members. .

Questions to Council for future consideration:

- Continuation of the designated off-leash areas
- Termination of the off-leash areas
- Expansion and/or reduction of the off-leash areas
- Creation of additional dog park type facilities
- Identification and enforcement of areas prohibited to dogs
- Programs, ordinances and/or fines associated with the compliance and education of animal control related items.

The report also listed items completed in addition to those proposed for May and June:

Implementation:

- Ordinance
- Signage
- Coordination with County

Education and Outreach:

- Website
- Mountain Trails, Summit Land Conservancy, Utah Open Lands Ambassador Events,
- Dog task Force

Evaluation of the designated off-leash areas:

- Dog evaluation application

Public Input

Deters continued with the staff report overview going into some detail of the highlighted topics.

Deters mentioned Enforcement and the Tag Program discussions will continue in depth into May in preparation for the Council presentation in June.

Conversation on enforcement and a tag program continued among the group.

Deters stated that Child and Parigian did a good job using the phone app to report data.

A discussion on conducting a public survey ensued with most of the group in agreement.

Conversation continued on varied topics pertaining to the City Council Staff Report.

Deters thanked the group and reminded them of the next Task Force meeting May 2, 2016 at 3:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Deters then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting;

Alison Child moved to close the meeting; Ed Parigian seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously

Meeting minutes prepared by Jody Morrison

The meeting of the Park City Municipal Off-Leash Task Force was noticed on Thursday, April 7, 2016 on the Park City Municipal website, Utah Legal website and posted at City Hall, Park City.