



**HIGH PARK  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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**K9 Meeting Agenda  
February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Howard Park Tennis Club  
7pm - 8:30pm**

**Present:** John Cleary, Robert Glover, Roman Bijan, Bernard Sanders, Roy Siokola,  
Terry Wade, Kim Beemer, Paul Wehrle, Sharon Lovett

**Regrets:** Tammy Reid

**1. Adoption of minutes of previous meeting – Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008**

Paper copies were not available, John will provide minutes for both Jan. and Feb. at the March meeting

**2. Business arising from last meeting/minutes**

**a. Pamphlets**

The group discussed the draft pamphlets “Self-guided tour of off-leash area” and “But my dog is friendly” and provided suggestions. The draft pamphlets will be distributed to other groups and programs at the council for comments. There was a question about the inclusion of the nature centre in the “tour” pamphlet and it was explained that both groups frequently interact and information about Nature Centre would be good for general education.

**b. Entrance sign:**

The group reviewed and discussed the proposed entrance signs for the off-leash area main entrance and trail heads. There were questions regarding (1) Muzzle orders - what if order is challenged, can the dog be in the off-leash area? (2) Unfixed dogs – what about puppies? What about the potential for danger to other dogs, what about reaction of other dogs to unfixed dogs? (3) Control of dog – what percentage of owners have control? (4) licensing – problems with fee for puppies before they can be fixed? What happen to old rules about not having to pay for license if dog fixed?

The group felt a number of these questions weren't covered by existing wording of the law or open to interpretation. The group would like to have staff from Animal Services and/or Park Bylaw come and visit the K9 committee to discuss these issues.

**3. New Business**

**a. High Park Dog-owners Association**

A representative from the association was present and explained the group and their relationship with the High Park K9 Committee. The following is information provided to help those in attendance understand the two groups.

### **High Park K9 Committee and High Park Dog-Owners Association**

At the January meeting of the High Park Community Advisory Council, the council voted in a series of terms of reference and operating procedure changes. These changes included splitting the High Park K9 Committee into two separate organizations: a core committee (the High Park K9 Committee) and an independent representative group (High Park Dog-owners association). While both of these organizations share similar purposes, they have a distinct role to play as it relates to the dog-owners of High Park and the High Park off-leash area. This following outline should provide a better understanding of the role of each organization.

### **The High Park K9 Committee**

- their role is entirely defined by the High Park Community Advisory Council
- exists independent of the presence of the off-leash area in High Park
- deals with issues related to dogs in entire area of High Park including the off-leash area
- is bound by the Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures of the HPCAC
- is mandated, as with the rest of the council committees, to follow the direction of HPCAC
- is covered by the letter of understanding between the High Park Initiatives and HPCA

### **Why does the High Park K9 Committee need to exist?**

The High Park K9 Committee provides the HPCAC with a mechanism to deal with issues related to the dogs in High Park and gives it both a role and responsibility in relation to the off-leash area.

### **The High Park Dog-owner association**

- their role is defined by the People, Dogs and Parks policy of the City of Toronto
- exists only as it relates to the off-leash area in High Park
- is bound by the rules and regulations of the People, Dogs and Parks policy
- exists independent of the Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures of the HPCAC

### **Why does the High Park Dog-owners association need to exist?**

The existence of this organization is mandated by the People, Dogs and Parks policy. It provides local dog-owners with both a role and responsibility in the High Park off-leash area in line with the other DOA within the City of Toronto. Establishment of the dog-owners association in relation to the off-leash area would put dog-owners on par with other stakeholder in the park, such as the allotment gardeners and recreational groups. The association provides an advocate for dog-owners that is independent of the council.

There was lots of interest in the association including questions about; how to become a member; how to volunteer time and how to help develop a strategy to deal with the off-leash area and dog-related issues. The rep. indicated they have an email list to form the basis of their membership and will work to make links with other association across the City. The group is looking forward to a productive relationship between the association, K9 and the City review group.

#### **b. Rental space for dog hill bulletin board**

John indicated he had been approached by a number of local businesses to rent space on the glass side of the bulletin board as notices on the public side are being taken down or falling down due to weather. John presented the group with the proposed motion and the group discussed the various issues. Suggestions included raising the amount for the rental, changing the the poster review process to avoid overloading the City staff, limiting the space available for advertising and ensuring reputable businesses were using the space (ie. no puppy mills). The group was in general support of the motion

#### **c. HPCAC motions (Robin&Ken and Visitor Centre)**

John explained the background behind the motion and that it was coming before the council at next meeting. There was some questions about the need for this motion given the issue was already dealt with during the Jan.

meeting but the group was in support of the motion.

- d. “Adopt-a-path” suggestion  
There was a suggestion from a member of the community about an “adopt a path” program for the off-leash and other trails of High Park. The group discussed the possibility of this program and raised a few concerns including: possibility of signs for the trail, the issue of ownership of public spaces, improvements over cleaning, alternative names for the program, type and level of work needed for trail improvements and overlap with other park programs.

#### 4. Reports/Updates

- a. Off-leash review group  
Paul Wehrle provided the group with a impromptu review of the ongoing discussion within the City review group about the off-leash area. Topics discussed included (*K9 committee comments are in italics*):
  - i. Removal of off-leash status for eastern section of Dog Hill – The off-leash review group has discussed removing off-leash status from the eastern section of Dog Hill. Erosion and presence of “ANSI” was cited as one of reason for removal. *K9 members discussed the amount of area removed (some thought as high as ~45%), the concentration of users within the remaining area, the lack of plans for improvements to existing area, possibility of rotation of area, the need for investment in the off-leash area, the need for more drainage and the need to prevent intensification*
  - ii. Other off-leash area in High Park. The review group had looked at other locations in High Park for additional off-leash space. These areas included: (1) Bloor/Keele bowl – *too wet, lack of amenities, trail no longer off-leash, lack of lighting, only good for early mornings perhaps*; (2) South-east apple orchard triangle area – *too close to roads and nearby residential areas, requires massive infrastructure; poor introduction to park for visitors*; (3) Small fenced area at northern part for early morning and small dogs: *location undefined; not appropriate for large number of dogs; may work for early morning quick walks but unsuitable for larger dogs and more active dogs*
  - iii. Other off-leash areas in surrounding wards – The off-leash review group has discussed the possibility of alleviating overcrowding in High Park with more off-leash space in surrounding neighbourhoods. *K9 discussed the problems with this solution, including the inability of City to establish off-leash areas without community initiative, lack of space in surrounding areas, the closure of existing areas and the inaction of the City in the past. The group heard from a member familiar with the Swansea/Rennie park off-leash area, which is still waiting for response from City about their area.*
  - iv. Gates at entrances/trail heads – The off-leash review group has discussed adding gates to major trail entrance. *K9 discussed the issue related to safety and gates as well as problems getting stuck in a particular area. The type of gate would be important to the process as well as maintenance, especially during winter.*
  - v. Off-leash trails – The City has money dedicated to improving the trails (section 37 money). *K9 discussed the changes in the width of*

*the trails and whether the City's proposal would decrease the width. The group would like to see proposed plans for the trail improvement for further comment.*

- vi. Trail behind Allotment garden – The City wants to close this trail to protect trees, reduce duplicate trails and prevent further erosion. K9 discussed the need for City to explain why the trail needs to be closed, what would be necessary to maintain the trail and to provide alternatives solutions. The group felt that City should not use ecological reason for this closure if money is the primary reason. In the latter case, they should give community chance to raise money to leave trail open.*
- vii. Entrance to Dog Hill from trails –The City group discussed switching the entrance to dog hill further up the road. K9 discussed the possibility of switching the main entrance to the allotment garden entrance, increased visibility, available water at bottom of path, can be plowed year round, drainage is available at bottom. Road is there and isn't going to go away in the future.*
- viii. Spring road – The City review group discussed spring road issues at the last meeting, including the possibility of limiting cyclists, expansion of the off-leash area to include small path at side of road, different paths for pedestrians, cyclists and dogs. K9 discussed the difficulties in dividing the road between uses, the danger posed by cyclists, the need to balance all users of the road, seasonal use by certain groups, expanding off-leash area to include all of creek area. There was some heated discussion about the contents of Spring creek and naturalization efforts.*
- ix. Input –The City review group will be having public meetings when review group can agree upon plan. K9 discussed the importance of the involvement of experts from the City directly with K9 committee and using smaller groups for the discussion, the failure of large group meeting to come to consensus, the need for multiple meetings to discuss and decide issues, the increased need for public consultation.*

## **5. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn 9:15pm Paul, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bernard