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## Townsend Dog Park Feasibility Committee

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### **Townsend Dog Park Feasibility Committee Minutes**

**September 4, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.**

**Trustees Room, Townsend Public Library**

**Meeting called to order by Chair Sara Grant at 7PM.**

**Present: Members** Sara Grant, Julie Byars, Laura Doell, Cheryl Voutour

**Alternate:** Nicki Reed **Guests:** Jim Araujo, Pat Jemiolo, Chris Nocella

- Approval of minutes from 7/31/19 and 8/21/19 meetings. [VOTES MAY BE TAKEN]  
Motion to approve CV 2<sup>nd</sup> JB Motion to approve the minutes of 8/21/19 with the date corrected, CV. 2<sup>nd</sup> JB Both minutes accepted.

- Quick thoughts on the recent Open Meeting Law session by Town Counsel Adam Costa and answers to our group's questions:

**Cheryl reported on minutes, emails, and the use of Facebook.**

**Minutes** - Draft minutes can go out early. Minutes are Drafts until a Board or Committee has voted to approve them. Members can send suggested corrections and additions to the Secretary, but only matter-of-fact items can be changed. i.e. dates, spelling of names, etc. Any other suggested changes must be discussed in public at the next meeting. A revised version of the minutes cannot be shared at all until the next meeting. A disclaimer must go on Draft Minutes if they are sent to committee members in advance: "This email is for distribution of materials only, not for discussion purposes."

**Email** - Never "reply all" to emails from a committee member. This would be a quorum and would be considered a meeting. When responding to an email, remain objective and do not give an opinion or make a decision. (The exception is emailing to set up a meeting time.) Any email or written document a committee member generates in their official capacity is a public record. Atty Costa recommends using a separate email account if possible. He was favorable to the use of an official town email account.

**Facebook** - As a group, do not communicate on FB. Sara said that someone else (someone not on the TDPFS Committee) needs to take over the old FB page that was set up and used by the interest group.

**Laura reported on Atty Costa's answers to the specific questions she posed: Conflict of Interest** Town Counsel said that before any TDPFS Committee member assists a start-up of a 501.c.3 for Townsend Dogs, she should call the State Ethics Commission. There is an Attorney-of-the-Day Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 – 2; available by phone.

Can TDPFS Committee members join a 501.c.3 for Townsend Dogs after it should be formed? Potentially problematic because 3 or more committee members could be together at a meeting or event. That would appear to be a quorum and could be questioned.

**Sara on the need to follow correct legal process:** We need Sue Dejnia to resign at the Town Clerk's Office (Kathy Spofford). Then we need to move on through the correct process by having Jim fill out the Volunteer form. He needs to then be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. This is the procedure when there is a resignation.

- Discuss Concord Feasibility Report
  - Any additional items we should cover in our report? Laura – impact on animal control officers. Cheryl: Compare before/after? Laura: Yes, with graphs, etc. Jim: size of Concord park seemed so large. Nikki: Sam Squalia said she wished the Fitchburg small dog area had been made smaller. Size: Group expressed concern – we want smaller than 5 acres, yes? Want suggested rules in it?
  - Is the format ok to proceed? Sara feels the Concord report is a good template to use. Nikki – one of the towns has a book of guidelines. Julie made motion to follow the basic format of the Concord Feas. report. Cheryl seconded. VOTE: Yea; unanimous
- Assignments for Feasibility Report
  - Develop questions for a Public Interest Survey – Who is interested? Cheryl: Motion to assign the creation of a public interest survey and suggestions on how to distribute to townspeople. Second, Laura VOTE: Yea; unanimous
  - Research and write-up average cost of dog parks comparable to Townsend – Who is interested? (Note: we have an excel spreadsheet started) Sara: We need to come as close as possible to actual cost. Asked Cheryl if she would take that on. Julie: Motion to assign to Cheryl Voutour. Laura: Second VOTE: Yea; unanimous
  - Research and write-up features of dog parks comparable to Townsend – Who is interested? Cheryl: Motion to assign to Laura Julie: 2<sup>nd</sup> VOTE: Yea, unanimous
  - Research and write-up on dog park rules, guidelines, offensive dog behavior mitigation – Summary; common rules, etc. What do parks have in common? Who is interested? Julie: Motion to assign this topic to Nikki Laura: Second Sara suggested that she look at AKC online for tips.
  - Research and write-up of potential park locations in Townsend – Julie Byars offered to do this. Laura moved that this topic be assigned to Julie. Cheryl seconded VOTE: Yea, unanimous
  - Research and write-up our report's Executive Summary – Who is interested? Julie: Move to assign to Sara Cheryl: 2<sup>nd</sup> VOTE: Yea; unanimous
  - Interview and invite all Town Resources who are stakeholders to meetings – Who is interested? Possibles: Police, first responders, Land Use Coordinator, Animal Control Officer, Parks and Rec, Highway, Bd of Health. Laura: One of first things Concord did was to interview town Officials. Should we do that, and ask them if they want to attend a meeting? Or should we have a forum? Sara – use letter to Laura Shifrin as

guide; write to Boards and ask if we can be put on their agenda to speak about the Feas. Study. TABLED

- Other topics to research?
- Interest Group activities
  - Upcoming Events? Laura emailed Sam to cancel any participation in Fitchburg event.
- Planning/Zoning/Land Use update from Julie B. (Error: Properties Committee)  
Julie said the Properties Committee has only met once. Laura reported that she did write to its Chair, Laura Shifrin, to ask for a joint meeting. Julie has asked Vicki Tidman for a list of pertinent town-owned properties.
- Other Business
  - Discuss how we want to acknowledge public comments in meetings.  
Julie: Should we go back to meeting in the Town Hall? Sara: Should the public: Raise hands; wait to be called? Laura: Change seating to be more like other committees?
  - Karen Clement; Josh, possibly Janelle to do Interest Group. Sue D?
  - Response from chair of Properties/Planning on attending a future dog park meeting –  
Laura: Too soon. Table to next meeting.
- New Business  
Agenda – Sara wants to get to a point where there are standard agenda items - Minutes, assignments, Properties update  
Recording: Can we get tape recorder from town? Sara: Motion that in addition to minutes, we tape. Was this seconded and voted??

Next mtg: Wed Oct 2, 7pm at Library (Note: Later changed to Town Hall)

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Doell  
Secretary TDPFS Committee