

**From:** Samantha Whitham <sawhit10@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 30, 2022 1:05 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Portland Park Dog Free Petition

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Good afternoon,

I noticed the signs outside Portland Park about the petition to make Portland Park a dog free park, and I completely support that decision. My home backs up to the park and there have been many issues with dogs running free. One being they come up and bark at our neighbor's dog when he's in his backyard. Another instance, my two year old has been at the park with us when a dog is running loose. Not only does that make us nervous not knowing what the dog will do, but our two year old is allergic to dogs. Lastly, we have been playing in the park when we come across poop that has not been picked up by the dog's owner. We often walk to Kingston-Onyx Park (which is dog free) and the park is so much nicer not having to deal with any of these issues. Thank you for taking all this into consideration.

Sincerely,  
Samantha Whitham

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**From:** lgnlgo <lgnlgo@charter.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 31, 2022 11:52 AM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Portland park

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Seeing they made it a t-ball, softball free park by removing the backstop which eliminated the kids t-ball and softball practice in the spring and changed two basketball nets down to one might as well let dogs crap in the other 7/8 area of the park. That huge area is not used by anyone at present. Have no dogs. Dogs will be great though for all of the rabbits that took up housing in the weeds they planted, so that's a win win for dogs. Just provide a trash container for the dead rabbits though.

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**From:** Charlene Hapke <chbooker612@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 31, 2022 3:29 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Dog Status Request Portland Park

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I see no reason to make the park dog free. We can walk our dogs along the edge if we must. I do think the dogs should be on leash but let the neighborhood enjoy a little time with their dogs,

We were promised a new up dated park back before Covid. Nothing has been done to improve the park.

Let the people walk their dogs in an open space free of cars and bikes.

Thank you,  
Charlene Hapke  
14 S Walbridge Ave  
Madison, Wi 53714

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**From:** Rebecca Drinkwater <drinkwater.rebecca@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 1, 2022 4:25 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Portland park dog status

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Hello,

In regard to the dog status request for Portland park, I do not think it should be restricted to dog free. This neighborhood is very dog friendly and I don't think dogs should be restricted at all from parks.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Drinkwater  
321 Belmont Rd

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**From:** Juli Thomas <juli.thomas26@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 3, 2022 12:32 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Portland Park - Dog Status

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello City of Madison BPC,

I am writing to you regarding the Portland Park - Dog Status topic. I am in favor of keeping the park dog rules as they are - dogs are allowed on leash, and you are to pick up after your dog.

I am a resident of this neighborhood, and I have a 7-month old yellow lab – her name is Ada. Ada is registered with the city, she is up to date on all vetting, and she is currently in training to become a “Canine Good Citizen” and I am also training her to title in several AKC trials as she is a purebred dog who qualifies for such activities. I exercise Ada (and myself) daily, and we do a variety of things together, but the basic bread-and-butter activity is going for a walk around the neighborhood. You’ll often see me and Ada walking and we have even become familiar to others out in our neighborhood – we wave to

others, we stand out of the way to people coming our way out of respect, I walk her on a leash, and I **always** pick up after her.

Our walking loop is Belmont Rd to Portland Parkway. When we get to Portland Park, Ada's ears perk up. She gets excited and I put her on her 30ft lead so she can have some free-ish roam time in the city park as she is a hunting dog in training who is accustomed to long runs in fields. We spend about 30min at a time at the park and she loves to sniff around and get some zoomies out. I am aware to stay away from certain houses as they have chickens, and dogs there and I do not want to disrupt others' homes. I am also aware of City of Madison ordinances and I never let her near the playground and she stays off benches and tables. We also keep out of the thicker weeds/native plants as there are burrs in there, and we also do not want to disturb the natural habitat of bees, small mammals, and other insects. We are also cautious to not use the grass after heavy rain or a winter's thaw as we do not want to disturb the grass growth. We love Portland Park – and frankly, I often think to myself that it's a shame that I rarely see other people there when I am there with Ada. I think in my years living here, I've encountered another person in the park at the same time as me less than 3 times.

A week ago when Ada and I walked past the sign that said it was up for debate to remove dogs from the area, my heart sank. I stayed at the site for about 20 minutes and waved over other people out walking their dogs to show them the sign (approx. 5 people with dogs on leash) and all of these people shared my shock and disappointment. Several took photos of the sign to remember when the meeting was, and I was glad to receive a memo postcard in the mail as well. I am so frustrated and disappointed that this is even on the table for discussion. The other park option is Heistand Park which is across busy Milwaukee Street, it is almost impossible to safely cross Milwaukee Street as drivers blatantly ignore the illuminated walk sign - I have almost been hit by a car several times, it is extremely dangerous and shocking at how little regard drivers have for that crosswalk - the city should actually consider a camera there as I am surprised someone hasn't been killed yet! And there are two other local parks within walking distance: McGinnis Park (dog-friendly on leash) and Kinston-Onyx Park (no dogs allowed). McGinnis Park is also nice, and we sometimes go there too, but you have to cross Crystal Road, and that can also be as dangerous as Milwaukee Street during busier driving hours and there isn't a crosswalk.

I have tried to think of logical “pro” reasons to enforce this proposed dog ban, and I came up with a few ideas: 1) dog owners are not cleaning up after dogs 2) Dog(s) presence in the park resulting in a disturbance of the peace to neighboring properties of Portland Park 3) dogs causing destruction to natural wildlife/foilage 4) residents in the area wishing to use the park but having a fear or ADA reason to avoid dogs 5) Dogs should only be using “Dog Parks” that are fenced in the City of Madison

Dog owners are not cleaning up after their dogs. In my time with Ada, I have never not cleaned up after her, and I keep ample biodegradable dog bags with me. There is a public trash barrel outside Portland Park on the curb of Portland Parkway that I often use to toss my dog's waste into, and if you are brave enough to look inside the barrel, you'll see several other dog bags too! Which is a great sign, because that means others are using the resource and also following the rules. I have walked every inch of this park, multiple days per week at a variety of times (I work from home) and I have actually never encountered another dog's poop pile either in the park or in the neighborhood. I keep extra bags with me because I would likely clean up any rogue piles if I saw them to keep the peace as I am grateful to have Portland Park available to me and Ada. If this is actually an issue, I propose that the City should install a dog bag station near the entrance to the park. Everyone is human, and if dog poop has been found onsite, it may be that an owner had forgotten a bag at home.

Dog(s) presence in the park resulting in a disturbance of the peace to neighboring properties of Portland Park. I think this is an unfair, non-issue. For example, when I purchased my property, I knew that the southern border of my property touched the City of Madison Parks Dept and a FedEx truck loading station. That would be like me complaining that trucks or tractor usage in these properties was disturbing my peace. What next? Ban children from screaming and playing at the playground? Ban families from using the shelter and having a party with music? A curious child can upset chickens and a fenced dog just as easily as a leashed dog. I say if you knowingly purchased a property that touches a public park – you are also signing up to exist near a shared community space which includes leashed, licensed dogs.

Dogs causing destruction to natural wildlife/foilage. This is reasonable, and I think this occurs because citizens are uninformed. If the city is worried about grass, a simple yard sign that says “keep off grass until...” sign would suffice. Likewise, if the city is concerned about dogs in the thicker weeds in the park, a snow fence or wire fence could be placed around areas that you do not want dogs or people to enter. I pay quite a bit in taxes, and I do not think that would be a bad use of my taxpayer dollars to invest in. I would even volunteer to help if the city sent a memo to surrounding houses!

Residents in the area wishing to use the park but having a fear or ADA reason to avoid dogs. Kinston-Onyx Park is a local park option where people can go who have a legitimate reason to not want/cannot be around dogs. Again, Portland Park is rarely occupied, and the very few times I have noticed someone else in the park while I have been walking my dog, I actually choose to bypass the park altogether as that is my personal preference. Those who have fears or need accommodations should be able to advocate for themselves and I have never met a dog owner who has disrespected personal space and boundaries. If it is a matter of a civil dispute, those who have a concern should be contacting local law enforcement to exercise their rights. There are also a wide variety of other dog-free parks citizens can explore if they wish to be away from dogs: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/dogfree>

Dogs should only be using “Dog Parks” that are fenced in the City of Madison. Dog Parks are fun if you as an owner are educated, and if other owners are of similar mindset. Unfortunately that is absolutely not the case. While dog parks are a fun experience for well-trained dogs and informed owners, dog parks are also a breeding ground for dog-illnesses, and set a stage for dog fights and traumatic situations for a dog who isn’t properly socialized. I am not against the existence of dog parks, but in my personal scenario – I have a well-bred, well-trained dog, who is a working dog – and I do not want her to pick up an illness from a dog park, as this has actually happened to us. There is plenty of evidence to support the “cons” to dog parks: <https://www.broomfield.org/DocumentCenter/View/8706/Dog-Park-Pros-and-Cons?bidId=> Alternatively, where can a sick dog go to be exercised appropriately in the City of Madison? When Ada contracted Kennel Cough from the Sycamore Dog Park – I had to quarantine her for 10-14 days per the vet’s recommendation. While she was in quarantine, she still needed light exercise, so I would bring her to Portland Park to have her be able to sniff around on her 30ft lead. We stayed far away from neighboring fences and if a dog was near us on the sidewalk I would make a full effort to stay far away to avoid the passing of an illness - this was confirmed appropriate by my veterinarian.

I will absolutely be attending the Wednesday November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting at 6:30pm to state my case and hear any other “pros” that I didn’t consider in this email. As a law-abiding homeowner/dog-owner in the area I am going to do my best to fight this proposal, as I feel it is unnecessary, unfair, and it is hurtful to the community in this area.

**In the meantime, I would like to request a public record of the reason behind the “why” for this proposed ban.**

Thank you for hearing my perspective.

Julianne (Juli) Thomas  
214 Belmont Rd Madison WI 53714

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**From:** Scherschel, Diane <DScherschel@uwhealth.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 3, 2022 5:19 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Nov 9 meeting Portland Park Dog status

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Hello,

I live at 4217 Milwaukee St. My yard backs up to Portland Park.

I am a bit confused by the notice that you are considering banning dogs from this park.

I am out in my yard or on my deck a lot. I watch the park all the time.

I have never seen an issue with people and dogs in the park.

I am curious to learn what has happened that you are now proposing dogs not be allowed in the park?

Did one person request this or have you received multiple complaints?

I see lots of people enjoying this park... picnicking, playing basketball, sitting in the grassy lawn, playing on the equipment and some folks walking and hanging out with their dogs.

Everyone enjoying this park together.

It would be a shame if dogs were banned.

I also think there would be an enforcement issue and think things would not change, people would continue to bring their dogs to the park.

It is far more difficult to take something away.

So unless there is a large uproar, many neighbors complaining, I don't think you should change the status of the park.

I will try to attend the meeting on November 9 to learn more but I do want my voice of support for dogs in the park to be known.

Thank you,  
Diane

Diane Scherschel  
4217 Milwaukee St  
Madison, WI 53714

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**From:** hrhshadow <hrhshadow@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 4, 2022 2:29 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Portland Park

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My property backs up to the park. I've never had issues with dogs in the park. I would like to see the park stay "dog friendly".

Lisa Macaulay

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