

On Wed, Dec 8, 2021 at 11:29 AM Robert Beets <[robert.beets@gmail.com](mailto:robert.beets@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear park administrators,

Attached is a letter undersigned by several Madison residents recommending a set of changes to the process for setting dog designations / policy in parks. Thank you for considering our perspective and requests.

Sincerely /

Robert Beets

Madison resident

Secretary, Rolling Meadows Neighborhood Association

**From:** Robert Beets <[robert.beets@gmail.com](mailto:robert.beets@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 19, 2022 8:57 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <[pacommission@cityofmadison.com](mailto:pacommission@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Letter on Dog Free Park Designation Process

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

Dear park administrators,  
To date, I have received no response regarding the attached letter about dog free park designations that I submitted to the Board of Park Commissioners on December 8, 2021.

Over the past 10 months I have remained in contact about this letter with my alders — formerly Lindsay Lemmer, and now Erik Paulson. They have provided periodic updates. Neither they nor I have received a response that has satisfactorily addressed the issues and concerns raised in the letter — items there were brought forth by more than a dozen residents who signed it.

I write to you now asking if the Board has discussed these issues, and to inquire if any adjustments are expected to be made to how dog free park designation statuses are determined, or if any additional steps are likely to be taken to increase transparency regarding the administration of this policy.

Thank you for taking time to address our concerns prior to the next cycle of revisions to dog free parks designation statuses.

Sincerely /  
Robert Beets

Rolling Meadows resident

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On Tue, Sep 20, 2022 at 1:09 PM Freiwald, Ann <[AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com](mailto:AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com)> wrote:

Hello Robert.

Parks reviews the requests for dog status changes each year at their November meeting. Your request is on the list for review.

Meanwhile, in early October, Parks will be sending out post cards to the neighbors of the parks that have received status request changes. We will also post the info in the park itself. Parks will send emails to those requesting a change, informing them that their issue will be before the Park Board at the Nov meeting and they are welcome to attend the meeting. Finally, we will also inform all alders regarding the requests for 2022.

I hope this answers your questions.

Ann Freiwald

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**From:** Robert Beets <robert.beets@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 21, 2022 9:35 AM  
**To:** Freiwald, Ann <AFreiwald@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; Goke, Kevin <kgoke@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Letter on Dog Free Park Designation Process

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Hi Ann,  
Thank you for responding. These efforts appear to be great improvements in process which will allow increased transparency and more resident input on the decision making. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely /

Robert Beets

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**From:** Nicholas Davies <nbdavies@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 10, 2022 11:11 AM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Dogs in Parks Process: Too beholden to an individual

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Dear Park Commissioners,

The proposed process for changing dog permissiveness in a city park is too beholden to the individual requestor.

One person may initiate this process for one park (or multiple parks) and bring back into question something that didn't need reconsideration. It then puts a high burden on the city (you all, and city staff) to seriously assess the proposed change, no matter how inane it is, and it puts a burden on the neighborhood and wider community to show up, participate, and refute an idea that the original requestor has perhaps not spent more than a minute considering.

If you've spent any time on Nextdoor, where people walk their dogs and how they clean up after them is a perennial topic of contention. There are some individuals who see the presence of dogs

in the public sphere as a hazard and nuisance. There are others who believe they should be allowed to bring their dog wherever they wish, and that their dog is the exception to the rule when it comes to leash rules and disturbance of wildlife. City government has a responsibility to moderate the influences of either extreme, not to amplify them, as this process would.

The process would put up signage in the park about the proposed change, but that would lack any context about who is requesting the change or why. In doing so, it would grant the proposed change an impression of more legitimacy and support than it may actually have.

The designation of a particular park shouldn't be something that neighbors have to organize around and reinforce year after year. It's a decision that should be made and relied upon, and only reconsidered when the conditions or priorities change. This cuts both ways:

- \* There should be dog-welcoming parks within walking distance for dog owners throughout the city. If someone chooses their residence based on proximity to this amenity, they would be ill-served if that amenity was taken away because of an individual's whim.

- \* There should also be dog-free spaces for wildlife conservation. These natural spaces and the wildlife populations they support take years to establish. Their fate should not be called into question year after year.

In short, the proposed process privileges and amplifies the individual requestor's voice, and puts a burden on the community to answer it. Overlay this with the underlying reality that some social demographics have more time and leisure to engage in city processes than others, and this could lead to starkly inequitable outcomes, where those with privilege get to effectively dictate the terms of their local parks.

For instance, right now I could go fill out that form once for every Madison park, in favor of keeping the current dog designation the same in each one. That would place over a hundred agenda items on your November agenda, and prompt city staff to put up signage in every Madison park. But I'm not going to do that, because I'm not a jerk and I don't think that should be what it takes to preempt someone else's asinine, ill-considered proposal from getting serious consideration.

Maybe there are certain parks in certain neighborhoods where there's widespread support for changing the park's rules. But this proposed process isn't an effective way to detect and reflect that.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
3717 Richard St

**From:** Joan Laurion <joan.laurion@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 8, 2022 3:57 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Keep dog friendly status in Forest Hill Cemetery

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

Hi again, I just learned that the reason for this proposal is not because of a problem but because of one person's fear of a problem--that dogs might urinate or defecate on a grave or headstone near the road.

Here's are my thoughts:

- 1- We should not be making or changing public policy because of one person's fears.
- 2- Before changing policy, at least let dog walkers know that it would be preferable to avoid allowing their dogs to pee and poop on the headstones--out of respect for those "resting" here. We should know the perceived problem before the Parks Commission changes the status.
- 3- I hope that we keep the dog friendly status of Forest Hill Cemetery because it encourages more beautiful enjoyable dog walking which is great for people's--the young and old alike--health and well being.
- 4- It encourages more use of one of Madison's lovely properties. The more eyes and ears in and on Madison Parks--the safer and more highly prized they are.

Please keep Forest Hill dog friendly. Thank you, Joan Laurion

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Joan Laurion  
she/her

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**From:** KAREN A CARLSON <kcarlson2@wisc.edu>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 8, 2022 4:48 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Dog Status in Forest Hill Cemetery

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It's surprising that a single request carries so much weight that it earns even a place on your agenda. Unless the person who complained has some evidence of mistreatment of graves, the value of leash walking for many citizens and their dogs should easily convince the commission to continue

the status quo.  
Karen Carlson  
1137 Erin St #105  
Madison 53715

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