



Addendum
Minnetonka Park Board
Meeting of December 6, 2023

ITEM 7A – Purgatory Park Master Plan – Public Feedback Summary

- **Feedback received after the distribution of the park board packet**

From: Angela Moreira

Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 10:36 AM

To: Korey Beyersdorf <kbeyersdorf@minnetonkamn.gov>; Ella DiLorenzo <edilorenzo@minnetonkamn.gov>; Anne Hanley <ahanley@minnetonkamn.gov>; David Ingraham <dingraham@minnetonkamn.gov>; Ben Jacobs <bjacobs@minnetonkamn.gov>; Katie Semersky <ksemersky@minnetonkamn.gov>; Christopher Walick <cwalick@minnetonkamn.gov>

Cc: Matt Kumka <mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov>; Kelly ODea <kodea@minnetonkamn.gov>

Subject: Off-leash Ordinance

Dear Park Board Members,

I have lived at my current address which is directly adjacent to Purgatory park for 17 years. I routinely walk in this park most days. I would like to add context to the survey/public feedback findings that indicate that the most common reason that discourages park use is the presence of off-leash dogs. Over the past 5 years, the increase in park utilization for off-leash dogs has created unsafe and inequitable conditions for other park users such as walkers and especially those walkers who bring their dogs on-leash. Due to the subjective nature of the off-leash ordinance, the law has stopped being enforced and this has created a culture of bad behavior that is dangerous and inequitable to other park users. There is blatant disregard for the ordinance and this creates unhealthy conflicts between park users trying to manage this negative interaction. In addition, our neighborhood has frequent rogue dogs from the park running up to back doors and through our yards. I will share with you three examples of the regular encounters that I have with off-leash dogs both in my neighborhood and within the park.

Last week, I looked out my window and saw a dog running around my neighbors house foundation and deck. It crossed the street of Nantucket Place and ran across my front yard and into the neighbors yard where it continued to chase around the foundation of that house. After 30 minutes without hearing anyone calling for a dog, I decided to walk into the park and see if there was someone looking for a "lost dog". I called out, "Is anyone looking for a dog because it is running in our neighborhood?" to a gentleman sitting on the bench in the "dog area" but he ignored me. Another park user walked by and commented that he had seen the dog too. Finally, the man on the bench said, "When Daisy is on a rabbit, she is hard to catch." The man made no effort to control his dog and did not care that his dog was running in an adjacent neighborhood.

A few weeks ago, I walked with my eight-year-old daughter around the main trail of the park. When we reached the parking lot, we noticed dogs running around the main trail and parking lot area. As we started up the hill, a large goldendoodle ran up to my daughter and jumped up on her. She was startled, but luckily uninjured. Again, the owner was not present and there was no attempt to control the dog. It is typical for dog owners to let their dog run off-leash from the car into the park.

My last example, again highlights the disregard for the ordinance even when the dog owner is told to comply by other park users. Last week, I walked with a friend. We noticed a dog running back and forth across the main trail. The man was making no effort to have his dog under voice command or heel. We asked if the dog running off leash was his dog to which he ignored us. We had to ask him three times until he finally admitted that it was his dog. We told him that he

needs to leash up on the main trail and he replied that he could see his dog, so he did not need to do anything else. We again told him he must leash his dog on the main trail, and he again refused.

The worsening off-leash culture has changed my behavior. I no longer feel safe walking around the main trail without a friend. I have called the community service officers multiple times, but that is pointless and a waste of my time because they have given up enforcing an ordinance that cannot be enforced, and they have also stopped patrolling the park and having a presence to deter bad behavior.

I think it is time for a rethink on the off-leash ordinance. A law is worthless when it cannot or will not be enforced. The lack of a strong ordinance leads to a culture of bad behavior that is unsafe and inequitable for park users.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Angela Moreira
5554 Nantucket Place
Minnetonka, MN 55345

From: Heather Holm

Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 10:25 AM

To: Ben Jacobs <bjacobs@minnetonkamn.gov>; Christopher Walick <cwalick@minnetonkamn.gov>; David Ingraham <dingraham@minnetonkamn.gov>; Katie Semersky <ksemersky@minnetonkamn.gov>; Korey Beyersdorf <kbeyersdorf@minnetonkamn.gov>; Anne Hanley <ahanley@minnetonkamn.gov>; Ella DiLorenzo <edilorenzo@minnetonkamn.gov>

Cc: Kelly ODea <kodea@minnetonkamn.gov>; Matt Kumka <mkumka@minnetonkamn.gov>

Subject: Re: A morning dog walk at Purgatory

Hello Park Board members,

I am resending this email I sent in April as it relates to the Purgatory Park master planning agenda item for tonight's meeting.

Thanks,

Heather

On Fri, Apr 21, 2023 at 11:50 AM, Heather Holm

wrote:

Hello Park Board members,

I understand that you will be continuing your discussion about the city leash ordinance this year.

I am a former dog owner and dog lover. This morning, I walked my friend's dog around the maintained trail at Purgatory Park. My friend's dog is uncomfortable with other dogs approaching it while leashed and can only be walked on a leash. My friend walks their dog on the maintained trail and avoids any footpaths where dogs are off leash.

The attached pdf paints a picture of my walk this morning. The number of interactions described is typical. My friend and I walk several times a week around the maintained trail together. I help with interference by walking ahead of my friend and their dog and calling out to a walker or runner to ask that they leash their dog on the maintained trail. Sometimes, the person has earbuds in and doesn't hear me, other times the person ignores the request and does not respond, often the person indicates that "their dog is fine" and continues walking and doesn't leash their dog, and on rare occasions, the person will leash the dog as requested.

It is much more difficult to walk a dog on a leash that is fearful of interactions by oneself. My friend will often avoid walking around the whole loop if I am unable to join them because it is difficult to avoid any confrontations or unwanted interactions.

I am sending this email so you understand what a typical day is like trying to walk a dog on a leash by oneself around the maintained trail. I hope it provides some useful information when you continue this discussion this year.

Thank you,

Heather