

Date: July 27, 2021

To: Ordinance Committee, Town of Berlin

From: Parks and Recreation Commission

This document summarizes concerns/recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Commission as the Ordinance Committee considers Animals on public property.

- I. The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the current draft Ordinance for Animals (Chapter III). **We strongly suggest that the Ordinance be modified to prohibit any animals on town owned athletic facilities and fields.** As we read the definition of Designated public property, it appears to allow animals on a leash or lead 20 foot in length on Centurelli Field, Denehey Field, Baretta Field, Percival Soccer Field, Petit Complex, Sage Park... The town has spent considerable funds on improving and maintaining our athletic fields. Animals do not belong on the athletic facilities/fields and it can ruin or damage the grass, field, etc. The athletic facilities/fields are for human use only. We are not asking for animals not be allowed to be allowed in parks, but rather not be allowed within the playing field or track. The town should post signs at each athletic playing facility/field to further identify the areas animals on not permitted. Some Commission members and the town staff have seen and received calls of dogs and their owners on the high school track and playing fields and we cannot do anything to stop them. Athletic facilities includes tracks, athletic playing fields.
- II. As you consider different locations for a dog park, we offer the following points for your consideration of the Pistol Creek site.
 - a. Parking is available across the street from the open field being considered. There are a few handicap parking spots on the same side as the open field being considered. If you decide that the Pistol Creek site is the location of a dog park, we ask that you require all pets on a leash when walking from the parking lot or handicap spots until the owner arrives at the dog park defined. To protect:
 - i. walkers and
 - ii. children and families that attend the Parks & Recreation summer camp for children that operates in the building and the back deck and please note, the campers sometimes walk the course currently being considered for a dog park. etc.
 - iii. Anyone renting the facility.
 - b. McGee and Berlin High Cross Country teams currently run their meets at Pistol Creek and use the open field identified as a potential dog park site. Prior to any decision the teams and coaches should be contacted, allowed to provide commentary and find a different location if the open field being considered as an option for a dog park.
 - c. Pistol Creek is used and enjoyed by many walkers. We believe that is the best use of this open space and the walkers should be the #1 priority in any field at Pistol Creek being proposed as dog park. It is our strong opinion that any dog park at Pistol Creek should be fenced in preventing unleashed dogs from roaming into other areas and into

the wetlands. This will also allow the walkers to continue having access and using the full course for walking.

- d. For those that may want to walk an animal on the walking course, we strongly recommend they must be leashed.

We would be glad to attend future meetings or offer any additional information the Ordinance Committee deems necessary as it considers changes. We do recommend the Committee take immediate action to prohibit animals (whether leashed or not) on athletic facilities or fields.