

Animal Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting held – Wednesday 20 May 2020

Present:

Councillors: Cr Mary-Lou Jarvis (Chair)

Community: Animal Professionals – Michael Linton (left 5:45pm), Lea Dazley

Residents: Paul Mitchell, Nicola Grieve, Rebekah Lam, Adam Courtenay, Bridgette Regener

Staff: Colin De Costa (Coordinator - Regulatory Services), Sophie Katrakis-Mol (Ranger - Animal Control), Andrew Charles (Team Leader Regulatory Services), Timothy Tuxford (Manager –Compliance), Martina Patience (Secretary)

Apologies:

Councillors: Cr Nick Maxwell, Cr Matthew Robertson

Staff: Paul Saffery, Suzy Rich, Paul Fraser

Meeting opened: 5pm

Item No.	Subject	Discussion	Action
1.	Confirmation of previous minutes		
	Confirmed as true and accurate		
2.	Business arising from previous minutes		
2.1	Presentation of AAC meeting minutes from 13 March 2020	Minutes circulated by email, presentation continued from previous meeting as below.	
2.2	Quarterly statistics (Jan – March 2020)	Colin De Costa presented Council’s quarterly statistics by PowerPoint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 dog attacks in total • Vaocluse & Paddington 30% each, Rose Bay 20%, Double Bay and Bellevue Hill 10% each • Of the 11 dogs, 2 dogs could not be identified • Action for other dogs included no action (2), warning (2), infringements (2), ‘Notice of Intention to Declare Dog Menacing’ (3) and Declaration of Menacing Dog (1). • 1 significant attack in Rose Bay – dog declared menacing (owner couldn’t control the dog on lead) • 2 major off-lead attacks in Vaocluse Beach Paddock during off-lead time 	Statistics on numbers of ‘off-lead’ dog attacks to be circulated with minutes

2.4	Protecting animals in public domain –poisoning incidents and leashing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of poisoning incidents spread largely via social media. No medical confirmation • Vet Michael Linton confirmed there were a few cases of dogs with symptoms of toxicity around in Bellevue Hill area over a short period - October 2019. However cause was not determined and no new cases identified. • No reports of poisoning to Council by Vets • Leashing discussed in ‘new business’ item – 3.1 	Noted
2.5	Managing dog control provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed in ‘new business’ item 	
2.6	Rose Bay Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Roads and Maritime provides the land, not technical part of the Woollahra Local Government Area • One of a small number of beaches where dogs can swim off-leash • Access to Rose Bay Beach through Tingira Reserve however dogs are required to be leashed in the reserve • Signage improvements are being progressed • Dogs need to be on leash getting to off-leash area 	Noted
2.7	Vaucluse Beach Paddock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed by Sydney Living Museums (SLM) on behalf of NSW • In 2004 Council resolved dogs on leash at all times and unleashed between 4.30pm – 8.30am on the ‘public place’ of the Beach Paddock. This was in conflict with SLM which was on leash at all times. • Grounds of Vaucluse House – dogs on leash all the time • After many years SLM will be adopting Council’s leashing requirements for the Beach Paddock – ie. dogs on leash 8am – 4.30 pm and off-leash 4.30pm-8am • Brief discussion held regarding to on/off- leash signage. Some members felt nominating off-leash times might be confusing for the public. Tim Tuxford clarified that the general requirement of the Act is to have dogs on leash at all-time unless otherwise specified. Therefore, it is necessary to specify the off-leash times in compliance with the Act 	Noted Comments to be passed on Paul Fraser

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared signage with clear display of controls with both WMC and SLM logos is being discussed 	
3	New Business		
3.1	COVID-19 regulatory services social distancing patrols and off leash dog observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redeployment of Regulatory staff almost entirely to social distancing patrols at the beaches and parks More than 5000 social distancing patrols 501 off leash dog warnings within period of 6 weeks High level of non-compliance with leashing across the whole WMC area Penalties not being issued at the moment Discussion about Robertson Park and Derby Street Reserve where dogs are prohibited, suggestions to reduce non-compliance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allowing dogs on leash to walk through the park to get to off leash areas applying the above to all parks where dogs are prohibited Colin De Costa provided following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reminder about equity of space, respect towards people who are scared of dogs, extensive numbers of off-leash area available within WMC controls/signage to be kept simple Brief discussion about the need for a Watsons Bay off-leash area Considered Gibsons Beach Reserve - beach not suitable for off-leash due to its popularity for parents taking their children swimming and for picnics Emphasis on education of dog owners due to big increase in numbers of dogs/dog owners Broad consultation to be undertaken in the development of Council's 'Open Space Strategy'. Considered opportunity should be made available for AAC members to have input in strategy. Tim Tuxford to follow-up timing of Strategy with Open Space & Trees staff* 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Current rules and signage to be reviewed and included in 'Open Space Strategy' when placed on public exhibition*</p>
3.2	Animal registration fees and the Companion Animal Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registrations fees set by NSW State Government and generally increase annually by CPI. Current fees; 	Noted

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ De-sexed animal \$58 ○ Non de-sexed animal \$210 ○ Pensioners \$25 (de-sexed animal) ○ Shelter sold \$28 (de-sexed) ● Finances gained from registration used for : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment of Council's specialist Rangers and associated fees ○ Impounding cost ○ Legal expenses ○ Education and enforcement ● Low impounding rates for animals in WMC ● New pound to be considered in new financial year, within reasonable distance of WMC to cut cost and travel. Current pound Sydney Dogs Cats Home at Carlton ● Monitoring new animal registrations in next quarters of FY ● Increase of staff numbers and moving away from social distancing resuming back to normal duties in next 2 weeks or so 	
4. General business			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational material for dog owners/confirmation that poisoning incidents have stopped to be shared on social media ● Follow up on timing of Open Space Strategy ● Meetings to be generally kept at quarterly bases with option of emailing Councillors if any issues arise ● Responsible dog ownership material to be sent to committee members ● In closing the Chair offered her thanks to the Committee 	<p>To be shared on social media</p> <p>Tim Tuxford*</p> <p>Electronic copy to be circulated with minutes</p>

The meeting closed at 6.09pm

NEXT MEETING:
5pm Wednesday 22 July 2020

- * TT spoke with Council's Open Space Management staff after the meeting. The Strategy, known as a 'Recreational Needs Study', has been delayed due to COVID -19 restrictions. It is hoped the draft Study will be placed on public exhibition later in 2020, following initial consideration of a draft by Council.