Animal Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

Meeting held - Wednesday 24 April 2013

Present:
Councillors: Ted Bennett (Chair), Anthony Boskovitz
Community: Vicki Etherington, Dr Pamela Tinslay, Margaret Titterton, Julie Brandon, Joshua Swift, Rosemary Stafford

Staff: Colin De Costa (Coordinator Regulatory Services), Melanie Isaacs (Companion Animals Officer), Paul Fraser (Team Leader Open Space & Rec Planning), Andrea Waghorn (Secretary)

Apologies: Nicola Grieve, Suzy Rich (Team Leader Regulatory Enforcement), Michael Weston (Team Leader Regulatory Enforcement)

Meeting opened: 3.30pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Welcome to new Animal Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Introduction of Committee members and outlining of expectations of Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Confirmation of the previous minutes</td>
<td>Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting held Wednesday 15 August 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moved – Councillor Ted Bennett Seconded – Vicki Etherington</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Business arising from previous Minutes</td>
<td>The minutes of the AAC meeting of 15 August 2012 were presented to the C&amp;E Committee meeting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Presentation of AAC Meeting minutes to the Community and Environment Committee</td>
<td>Noted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3.2     | Update on review of the dog-off-leash hours for parks (Discussed in conjunction with item 4.4) | The following ‘Notice of Motion’ was adopted at the Council meeting of 12 November 2012: *That a report be brought to the Community & Environment Committee investigating the following:*

1. A review of the dog-off-leash hours for parks in the Municipality (including identification of dog-off-leash areas); and

2. A review of our approach to our regulation of dogs-off-leash policies (including promotion of said regulations)

Paul Fraser presented the Animal Advisory Committee with an overview of current dog regulations within the Woollahra Council |

Noted
Municipality which outlines the steps to be taken in the preparation of the report *(refer to Annexure 1).*

The Committee were advised an update on the progress of the report will be provided at the next AAC meeting and a draft of the report will be presented to the AAC prior to being presented to the Community & Environment Committee.

Dr Tinslay raised concerns that the off-leash hours of after 4.30pm and before 8.30am are a safety hazard putting the high number of runners using the parks at these times at risk of dogs jumping on them and that the elderly will not walk their dogs at these times due to the cold.

Paul Fraser advised that dog-off-leash hours for parks have been put in place to avoid conflict with organised sports and to be consistent across all parks to avoid confusion.

Margaret Titterton seeks clarification of the regulations at Vaucluse Park. The Committee is advised that the Historic Houses Trust of NSW own the land, therefore their requirement of dogs on leash at all times is in place.

### 3.3 Update from the Open Space & Recreation Planning Section – Replacement of dog bubbler in Lyne Park and Christison Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noted</td>
<td>Paul Fraser confirmed that drink stations with dog bowls have been installed in both parks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 Update from the Open Space & Recreation Planning Section – Dog bag dispensers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noted</td>
<td>Paul Fraser informed the committee that Council have had a new company install dog bag dispensers which are more durable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Councillor Boskovitz referred to a Notice of Motion which has previously been put forward to place advertising on dog bag dispensers.

The Committee were advised the matter was investigated by the Communications team at Council and was found not to be feasible from a marketing point of view.

### 4. New Business

#### 4.1 Puppies in the Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noted</td>
<td>Melanie Isaacs gave an overview of this year’s event indicating there were approximately 800 attendees who all seemed to enjoy the day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Members of the committee recalled that in...
previous years, the event was held on a larger scale drawing crowds of up to 4000 people, with more stalls, entertainment and talks.

Melanie Isaacs advised that the Puppies in the Park event was created as a social gathering for dog lovers in the local community and for Council to promote information on responsible pet ownership through talks and the meeting of Council’s regulatory staff with dog owners.

The Committee request that Council seek the suggestions of the AAC in the planning of the Puppies in the Park for 2014 and that a member of the Communications team attend the next AAC meeting to discuss the budget for the event.

**4.2** Companion Animal Work Activity Statistics for the period 1/7/2012 – 31/3/2013

Melanie Isaacs presented statistics for the period. Document distributed at meeting containing statistics and graphs.

**4.3** Review of Companion Animal Taskforce Reports

Melanie Isaacs provided a summary (refer to Annexure 2) outlining the recommendations which are most relevant to Woollahra Council in relation to the review of the following Companion Animal Taskforce reports:

1. Report to the Minister for Local Government on the management of dangerous dogs in NSW – February 2013
2. Report to the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Primary Industries – October 2012

The committee members were encouraged to make their personal submissions by 10 May 2013.

**4.4** Overview of current open space companion animal controls

Presented by Paul Fraser in conjunction with item 3.2 (Refer to Annexure 1).

**4.5** Clarification of time of day for future meetings to be held

Chair of the committee Councillor Bennett proposed the next Animal Advisory Committee meeting to be held the third Wednesday of July 2013. No objections received.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at approximately 4:40pm.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday 17 July 2013 at 3.30pm
ANNEXURE 1

Dog Regulations Overview

Animal Advisory Committee
Introduction

Open Space & Trees

Paul Fraser – Team Leader, Open Space & Recreation Planning
Notice of Motion

The following ‘Notice of Motion’ was adopted at the Council meeting of 12 November 2012:

That a report be brought to the Community & Environment Committee investigating the following:

1. A review of the dog off-leash hours for parks in the Municipality (including identification of dog off-leash areas); and
2. A review of our approach to our regulations of dogs off-leash policies (including promotion of said regulations)
How will we go about it?

1. Presentation to the new AAC
2. Review current conditions & regulations
   - Open Space & Trees
   - Regulatory Staff
3. Review statistics for park users and sports ground usage
4. Compare regulations from other councils & agencies
5. Discussion with AAC
6. Council report – Community & Environment Committee
Overview of current Open Space Dog Regulations
Council regulations?

- Council created 4 categories:

  - Dogs Prohibited
    Very small parcels of open space, children’s playgrounds, formal gardens, lookouts, environmentally sensitive areas, reserves associated with aquatic recreation and enclosed ovals.

  - Dogs Permitted if Leashed
    Areas are generally medium sized parks where controlled access of animals is unlikely to have an impact on the enjoyment of other park users.

  - Dogs Allowed Unleashed between 4.30pm and 8.30am
    Council saw the need to allow for exercise areas for unleashed dogs. To avoid clashes with the hiring of sporting fields, this standard restriction was implemented.

  - Unleashed Dogs Allowed at all times
    Under the Companion Animals Act 1998, Council is required to provide at least one off-leash area.
Prohibited Parks

- Blackburn Gardens, Double Bay
- Redleaf Pool, Double Bay
- Double Bay Beach, Double Bay
- Percival Park, Rose Bay
- Gap Park, Watsons Bay
- Robertson Park, Watsons Bay
- Chiswick Gardens Reserve, Woollahra
- McKell Park, Darling Point
- Parsley Bay Reserve, Vaucluse
- Nielsen Park, Vaucluse
- Trumper Park Oval
- Woollahra Oval No.1
Dogs Permitted if Leashed

- Woollahra Playing Fields, Rose Bay
- Harbourview Park, Woollahra
- Trumper Park (excluding the Oval playing surface), Paddington
- Harris Street Reserve, Paddington
- Vaucluse Park, Vaucluse
- Samuel Park, Vaucluse
- Signal Hill Reserve, Vaucluse
- Bellevue Park, Bellevue Hill
- Cooper Park, Bellevue Hill
- Steyne Park, Double Bay
- Camp Cove Reserve, Watsons Bay
- Darling Point Reserve, Darling Point
- Rose Bay Park, Rose Bay
Dogs Allowed Unleashed between 4.30pm and 8.30am

- Lough Playing Fields, Double Bay
- Lower Cooper Park, Double Bay
- Dumaresq Reserve, Rose Bay
- Lyne Park, Rose Bay
- Rushcutters Bay Park, Darling Point
- Royal Hospital For Women Park, Paddington
- Christison Park, Vaucluse
24 Hour Off Leash

- Steyne Park (Northern End), Double Bay, except during organised sailing events
- Yarranabbe Park, Darling Point
- Lighthouse Reserve, Vaucluse
Companion Animals Act 1998
Impact on Public Open Space?

- Ensuring your dog is on a lead at all times when in public, except in a Council designated off-the-leash area.
- Ensuring your pet does not harm or threaten any other person or animal.
- Preventing your animal from causing a nuisance to others.
- Ensuring your dog does not enter public bathing areas, school grounds, children’s playgrounds, shopping complexes, food preparation areas and similar public places where prohibitions are in force.
- Always picking up your dog’s waste when in public.
# Sports fields at Woollahra Municipal Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dogs prohibited at all times</th>
<th>Dogs allowed at all times on leash</th>
<th>Dogs allowed on leash at all times and off leash between 4:30pm and 8:30am</th>
<th>Weekday scheduled training times and school sport – approx.</th>
<th>Weekend scheduled games times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra Oval 1,2,3</td>
<td></td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td>11:15am - 4:00pm (school sport) 5:00pm-9:00pm (organised sport)</td>
<td>8:00am-5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumper Oval</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8:00am-3:30pm (school sport) 4:30pm-8:30pm (organised sport)</td>
<td>8:00am-5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steyne Park</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7:00am- 5:00pm (school sport)</td>
<td>8:00am-3:30pm (Saturday only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Playing Fields</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:00am-5:00pm (school &amp; organised sport)</td>
<td>9:00am-5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyne Park</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:00pm-5:00pm (school sport) 5:00pm-9:30pm (organised sport)</td>
<td>7:30am-6:00pm (Saturday only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushcutters Bay Park</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:00am-5:00pm (school &amp; organised sport)</td>
<td>8:00am-4:00pm (Saturday only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christison Park</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11:00am-4:00pm (school sport) 5:00pm-9:00pm (organised sport)</td>
<td>8:00am-5:00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sportsground Issues

- We have very few stand alone sports grounds
- Grounds are currently highly utilised
- Conflicts with dogs interrupting organised sport
- Shared use is problematic
- Dog faeces on playing fields
- Back to back organised bookings
- No distinct zones for eg. Line marking is the only delineation
- Potential damage to sports surfaces
Questions
Companion Animals Taskforce

The Companion Animals Taskforce was established by the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Primary Industries to provide advice on key companion animal issues, including strategies to reduce the rate of companion animal euthanasia.

Specifically, the Ministers have asked the Taskforce to inquire into:

- Euthanasia rates and re-homing options for surrendered or abandoned companion animals
- The breeding of companion animals including the practices of “puppy farms”
- The sale of companion animals
- The microchipping and desexing of companion animals
- Current education programs on “responsible pet ownership”
- Dangerous dogs
- Any other high priority companion animal issues that become apparent to the Taskforce.

The Taskforce was chaired by the Member for Charlestown, Mr Andrew Cornwell MP, and consisted of representatives of the following organisations, invited by the Ministers to participate:

- Animal Welfare League NSW,
- Australian Companion Animal Council,
- Australian Institute of Local Government Rangers,
- Australian Veterinary Association,
- Cat Protection Society of NSW,
- Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW,
- Dogs NSW,
- Pet Industry Association Australia, and
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW.

Representatives of the Division of Local Government and Department of Primary Industries also participated on the Taskforce.

Report To Government

The Taskforce has now completed its work after consulting widely in 2012 on a range of priority issues. The Taskforce has submitted two reports providing recommendations for the consideration of the Ministers including:

- NSW Companion Animals Taskforce Report
- NSW Companion Animals Taskforce Report on the Management of Dangerous Dogs

The following are a summary of the sections that are most relevant to Woollahra Council in each paper:

**NSW Companion Animals Taskforce Report:**

This report contains 22 recommendations which together provide a strategy to: reduce the number of cats and dogs that are impounded and euthanased, improve the current regulatory framework around the breeding, sale and management of cats and dogs, and promote socially responsible pet ownership to the whole community.

**Recommendations for the Minister for Local Government**

The Minister for Local Government has been identified as having responsibility for the implementation of the following recommendations.

8 - The Companion Animals Act should be amended to require cats and dogs to be registered on an annual basis.

9 - Cat and dog registration fees should be reviewed and set at such a level to provide an additional incentive for owners to desex their animals.

10 - The Companion Animals Regulation should be amended to require a cat to be registered from the time it is 4 months of age.

11 - The Companion Animals Regulation should be amended to allow cat and dog registration fees to be indexed to the Consumer Price Index.

12 - A new discounted registration category ‘Desexed animal – purchased from a pound or shelter’ should be established to further encourage the purchase of desexed cats and dogs.

13 - A grant funding program should be established for councils and partner organisations to deliver targeted microchipping, registration and desexing programs.

14 - Measures should be introduced to improve compliance with companion animal legislation data entry requirements.

15 - A community-wide socially responsible pet ownership education campaign should be developed (with Minister for Primary Industries).

17 - Comprehensive education material about the importance of confining cats to their owner’s property should be developed.

19 - Better practice guidelines should be issued to councils with a view to standardising impounding practices.

20 - The Companion Animals Register should be updated to provide a centralised impounded animal management tool for use by all councils, relevant State agencies and animal welfare organisations.

22 - An ongoing reference group on cat and dog management issues should be established.
This report makes the following recommendations;

1. Powers of councils and courts
   1.1 - Amend the CA Act to introduce a “potentially dangerous” dog category.
   1.2 - Introduce provisions in the CA Act for a “dangerous” or “potentially dangerous” dog declaration to be revoked if behavioural training is undertaken for the dog in question and the council is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so.
   1.3 - Update the dog attack reporting framework to more clearly differentiate between “dog attacks” and less serious incidents involving dogs.
   1.4 - Review existing powers of council officers under the CA Act relating to the seizure of dogs subject to dangerous or restricted dog declarations for the purposes of identification.
   1.5 - Review the statute of limitations under which councils can prosecute dog attack offences to ensure that it is in line with other relevant legislation.

2. Resources for councils and enforcement agencies
   2.1 - Introduce annual registration of cats and dogs and a breeder licensing system to improve the ability of councils to track dangerous dogs throughout their lifecycle.
   2.2 - Develop a model behavioural assessment for the use of councils and other impounding agencies.
   2.3 - Provide funding for research into dangerous dog issues.
   2.4 - Improve the dissemination of information about disqualified animal owners.

3. Cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional approaches
   3.1 - Develop a Memorandum of Understanding template for use by councils and NSW Police regarding the enforcement of the CA Act.
   3.2 - Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between councils, animal welfare organisations and relevant State Government agencies to standardise information sharing protocols in relation to dangerous and potentially dangerous dogs.
   3.3 - Strengthen cross-agency delivery of educational resources on dog attack and dangerous dog issues.
   3.4 - The Minister for Local Government and NSW Attorney General should write to the Federal Attorney General to request that a cross-jurisdictional working group be established to develop a national dog attack and dangerous dog database.
   3.5 - Amend the CA Act to allow councils to automatically declare a dog to be “dangerous” or “potentially dangerous” if they receive confirmation that the dog is the subject of such a declaration in another jurisdiction.

4. Education
   4.1 - As part of a community-wide socially responsible pet education campaign, review and update existing dog bite prevention and dangerous dog management educational resources for the public, councils and other agencies.

Deadline: 10 May 2013