




Date: December 18, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District 

Subject: **Establish An Off Leash Dog Area (Dog Parks) Advisory Committee**

**Discussion:**

The City of Long Beach has six off leash dog areas also known as dog parks. There is interest in opening more in other areas of the City and some residents want to be able to utilize portions of existing parks to let their dogs run off leash. Currently, the City lacks a policy regarding the opening and operating of a dog park and dog owners can be fined if they allow their dog to be off leash in a park.

Most cities allowing dog parks and off leash areas have in place a policy that outlines program structure, funding and project operating costs, basic facility elements or design standards, facility rules and regulations, and general dog owner group requirements to support this effort. These cities have required that all dog exercise areas have a "dog owner group" which is responsible for "policing and maintaining" the dog parks because of governmental funding and staff shortages.

An Off Leash Dog Area (Dog Parks) Advisory Committee would provide needed input to the Parks and Recreation Commission about the many issues facing existing and proposed dog parks in the City. Suggested membership would include:

- Community members representing: veterinary science, dog owners groups, and each council district.
- Ex officio members from the following departments: Animal Care Services, Parks/Recreation/Marine, Health and Human Services and Development Services.

This Advisory Committee would meet monthly, without compensation, and assist the City in drafting policies related to the establishment and operation of off leash dog areas in the City. These policies would be given to the Parks and Recreation Commission which would decide whether or not to approve these policies and recommend to the City Council for adoption.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Staffing would be required for the Advisory Committee. However, the involvement of the community in this effort would provide much needed clarification and consistency of the policies concerning establishing and maintaining dog parks in Long Beach.

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**Recommendation:**

By motion of the City Council, establish an "Off Leash Dog Area (Dog Parks) Advisory Committee" to advise the Parks and Recreation Commission on the needed policies related to the establishment and operation of off leash dog (dog parks) areas in the City