

Westgrove Pack Board Meeting Minutes

Date	Start Time	End Time
Wednesday, December 12, 2018	6:30 PM	8:20 PM

Executive Summary

- Board met with Park Authority about enforcement options for rule violations
- Chair made 'first contact' with Park Authority; Told MOU done soon (e.g. weeks).
- Park Authority aware of sink-hole; investigating cause and size.

Roll Call

Position	Name	In-Attendance?
Chair	Mark	No - Out of area
Vice Chair	Melissa	Yes
Treasurer	Jeff	Yes
Secretary	Emma	Yes
Membership and Fundraising	Marissa	Yes
Director of Operations	Rachael	Yes
At Large	Chrissy	Yes
At Large	Anne	Yes
At Large	Megan	Yes

For the first part of our meeting Fairfax County Animal Control Officers Sergeant Pitts and Officer Cook join us and answered our questions.

Jeff asks about county rule enforcement at the park. He says that we've had problems with park users who don't read the rules posted or care about them. (ex. poop pick up, aggressive dogs, under age children, etc)

He explains that we politely remind them of the rules, but sometimes they get aggressive or defensive with us or just ignore us. He says we know about calling the non-emergency number, but we aren't sure when that is appropriate.

Officer Cook explains that breaking the posted county rules is a criminal violation. If we see this we should grab the tag number and call the park authority. Also, call the animal

control unit, however the officers can't enforce the law unless they observe the violation. We as the board (and other park users) can press criminal charges against offending individual. It is a class 4 misdemeanor. The person who presses charges would have to go to court and testify.

Our magistrates office at Mount Vernon PD department.

Sergeant Pitts explained what a banning letter is. She said to call the animal control officers first and then they will alert the park authority that there is a problem with an individual. The board must keep a detailed log of violations (time, place, tag numbers) to submit to the Park Authority. She explains that you need more than one event for a user to be banned because the Park Authority is very reluctant to ban a user.

Jeff asks how difficult it would be to occasionally get a walk/drive through by animal control.

Sergeant Pitts explained that the department is 33% under staffed which means that there is one animal protection office for 100 sq miles. It might take them 30-45 mins to get from one end to the other. It also depends on call load. They used to be able to do regular park patrol when they were fully staffed, but can't now.

They suggest talking to Dan Stork at the park authority and asking for more drive throughs. They explain that the county voters are the ones that matter.

Sergeant Pitts says she can email the officers and the other squads and ask them to do drive by if they happen to be in the area. She can also suggest that if an officer has reports to write then they can sit in the park to write them.

She also suggests to reach out to Barron Cameron park because they have had some experience with the issues we are dealing with.

The board asks about people who jump the locked gates/fences with the Park Authority locks on them. The officers explain that those users can get charged with trespassing.

The officers suggest that we talk to Phil Hagar at a meeting. He would be the one who would have to take the violators to court. Again, the officers emphasize that we need to keep a log of violations.

Melissa asks about the procedure if there is a dog fight or other incident. Sergeant Pitts explains that when you take your dog into the park you are agreeing to the risk involved. The dog owner is responsible for what happens in the park. If it is dog vs dog the officers will not get involved. If a human is bitten then the police should be called immediately. If it happens outside the caged dog park and the incident is severe enough the police will get involved so call them.

Again, if it is a repeat aggressive dog/user the board needs to contact the park authority (because it is a threat to public safety). They can send that user a ban/trespass letter. Officer Cook says that we need to make sure the dog is also included in the ban letter because often times a different member of the family will bring in the aggressive dog.

If a dog or person is banned, are they banned from all the county dog parks? The officers say to ask Phil from the Park Authority.

Sergeant Pitts suggests that we use airhorns, water spray bottles or can of rocks to distract fighting animals. Anything to distract them and get them focused on something else.

Officer Urps said that he will send out a PSA event to his officers. We need to email him and give him times that we would like his officers to patrol the park. What times is it the busiest and the most violations happen? What are our major concerns.

Agenda for the rest of the meeting.

MOU

Mark says he has been talking to Todd Brown. They are saying the same thing—that they are close to finishing the MOU. We've been waiting a long time now. Todd mentioned concerns about Westgrove's turf. Melissa says she doesn't know what that means in term of MOU. They didn't specify north or south end.

The board suggests next steps to take in terms of the MOU. We decided that when Mark gets back Melissa will suggest we have a sit down with Lynwood. We've been patient. We need more answers than the vague ones they are giving. Nothing is happening and we are marching in circles.

Can Barry be a representative in this situation?

Sinkhole

Park Authority is investigating sinkhole problem.

Events

The board has decided that we will tentatively have some kind of event for spring. It wouldn't be for fundraising, just clean-up.

We agree that we still want to hold Hot Dog Friday Nights.

We can resume Caretaker Saturdays starting April/May.

Marissa suggests we do a board meet and greet day to educate users at the park.

However, we will table discussion of other events until the spring.

Projects

Most projects are still waiting on the MOU. The next project that we are looking into that doesn't require an MOU agreement is the non-permanent play structure.

We will revisit other projects come spring time. Hopefully, MOU comes through soon.

Spigot

We need to have it replaced with all weather spigot, but it seems that the county is leaning away from all weather options. They just want the water turned off in the winter. However, our problem is that we can't turn off without turning pump-house off.

We need to get with Phil as soon as possible to get a procedure in place for turning on and off pump-house.

We haven't gotten report back from Monday/Tuesday evaluation of our stuck-open faucet.

Melissa suggests we talk to Phil about putting in a fixture we would like and choosing our own contractor.

Meg says they have said no in the past, but it might be a big enough mess now.

Membership

Renewal letters? They have been overdone in the past. Marissa says we can do it in another way. Twitter, facebook....etc She is coming up with a plan.

We can do a membership renewal day in April in conjunction with a shelter collection day. We can mention is to users are the January General Meeting.

Photo of the Month will start again.

Closure

Open Big End? Yes, No, On weekends?

Grass condition: We have stripes. We've had a seeding problem. No way to fix it until next year (spring). Immature still. Jeff says it should be open in April. Melissa says We can't say it depends on weather anymore.

We've decided to talk to a grass expert and get a report. We can get an assessment and talk about it with users at the Jan general meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Cash on Hand
\$23,001.05

We still need regular subscribers. We need concrete plan (need MOU first) before we have aggressive fundraiser campaigns.

Other Items

A1 Irrigation

Anne says they will meet us after the first of the year to walk around the park and talk about a basic estimate based off of their long experience. They have done many large jobs like this so they can give us an educated estimate.

Recommendations for Facebook? Do we want to do this? We'd have to put disclaimer that we don't endorse and they are public recs. But if we have an official recommendation we become liable especially if tied to advertising. Someone would have to moderate.

The decision was made that we won't do recommendations on the group page. Users can post how we've already been doing it so there are no liability issues. Also, moderation takes work and we have larger things to work on.

We talked about getting access to the official Facebook Page for Westgrove pack again. Marissa will ask.

Meeting ended 8:20.

Next Dates:

Jan 3 meeting at Marissa 6pm

Jan 9 General Meeting at Martha Washington Library 7pm

