

Meeting Report
Animal Issues Committee
Saturday March 31, 2007

Committee Members Present: Paul Kuhns
Marcia Maldeis

General Public: Approximately 20 Interested Citizens

Discussion Subjects: 1) Proposed Mission Statement – To be placed upon City web-site under Animal Issues Committee.

2) Dog Park(s)/Run(s) within the City limits- Discussion of the possibility and necessity of Dog specific areas within the City limits. Many good suggestions and critical concerns voiced by interested citizens of the audience. Dialogue about results of letter to the editor request (to be placed upon committee web-site). Total responses to letter to the editor questions and citizen initiated concerns and suggestions about the need for a Dog Area: 34. Against: 23 (19 City property owners). For: 11 (6 City property owners). The results of preliminary discussions and correspondence clearly point to need for continued gathering of information prior to making a decision on the subject. However, based upon discussion and correspondence, many citizens feel very strongly about a suggested change in the City Code to expand the off-season restrictions of no pets on the Beach and Boardwalk, which is Presently, October 31 through April 1. The Committee plans to look into the subject and formally make suggestions to the Commissioners at a future workshop.

3) Beach and Boardwalk Pet Restrictions- In addition to the discussion noted above, the committee pointed out pet restrictions of the many other municipalities with beaches in the Rehoboth Beach area. Rehoboth Beach does have the longest season of pet restrictions in the area. However, Rehoboth Beach does also have the greatest population of visitors to the area during the summer season.

4) Increased Signage and Pet Waste Receptacles- The audience voiced the need for many more visible and clearly stated signs, especially around the Beach, Boardwalk, City Park areas. Also, the suggestion was made to have waste receptacles and plastic bag dispensers attached to some of the signs in these

areas. Many local municipalities provide these for their citizens. Some are supplemented with donations or fees.

5) Dog Registration- Brief discussion pointing out the State law which requires all dogs older than 6 months to have state registration tag. This discussion lead to review of other state laws, specifically the leash laws in the state. It is against state law to have any dog off a leash on any public property. Many people thought, incorrectly, that it is legal to allow dogs to run loose on the beach in Dewey.

6) Overall Enforcement of Pet Regulations - Many audience members felt that the City needs to more vigorously enforce present pet restrictions, (City Code section # 88). Presently, the City Solicitor and the Chief of Police are reviewing City Ordinances with the intentions of considering the possible changes to make pet restriction violation processing a simpler administrative process.

Overall Highlights: First step towards more dog friendly Rehoboth Beach would be to relax some restrictions in the beach and boardwalk area. Possible addition of dog park needs further research and should be, at the earliest, the fourth step towards a more pet friendly Rehoboth Beach. Secondly, the City needs to think about more signage throughout the city concerning pets, especially dogs. Also, consider the possibility of erecting waste receptacle/bag dispensers. Third, work with Police Department to make the enforcement of dog restrictions an easier process.