



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Parks and Recreation Department

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way

Building B, Suite 203

Viera, Florida 32940

Inter-Office Memo

TO: Jim Liesenfelt, Interim County Manager
Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Ian Golden, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJ: Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendation #2025051

CEER #2025051, titled "Allow more dogs in Parks", was received by the County from Russell Wrenn.

Current Problem (as written by the citizen):

"As population density increases there need to be more public places to walk pets."

Citizen Recommendation:

"The default regulation in Brevard County Parks is to disallow dogs. The opposite tact should be taken and leashed dogs should be allowed unless there is a specific reason or area where they should not. Right now, especially in smaller parks, the "no pets" rule is being ignored and a lot of people, when told via social media that they can't walk their dog in a what they consider a neighborhood park are surprised because they have been doing it for years. There is no reason leashed dogs should be banned in most county parks and as the county's population density increases, there will be more demand for public areas where residents can get outside for a time with their pets. There's a nice walking trail around Veteran's Memorial Park, but if you take a leashed dog on it, you are violating the rules and a risking a reprimand from Citizen's Patrol. The default should be that leashed pets are allowed unless there is a specific reason why."

Staff Analysis:

The Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) operates several locations that offer dog parks: Canova Beach Park (Indian Harbour Beach), Fay Lake Wilderness Park (Port St. John), Lori Wilson Park (Cocoa Beach), Marina Park (Titusville), Nancy Higgs Park (Melbourne Beach), and Wickham Park (Melbourne). As the submitter indicated, there are Brevard County residents that already ignore any restrictions that are in place for other locations. This causes several issues, including: (1) lack of receptacles for the disposal of waste, (2) altercations between dogs and their owners, (3) dog bites/attacks on other patrons, (4) negative impacts to the environment (vegetation and wildlife), (4) complaints from other patrons, and (5) the perception that PRD staff are able to directly enforce a dog restriction. In regard to #5, PRD employees are avenues for complaints, however the departmental expectation is that they are not to engage in enforcement (which is outside of their job duties) and instead contact local law enforcement to address noncompliance to posted park rules and ordinances.

The question of restricting dogs in public parks requires the balancing of the use of parks by those who do not want to be exposed to animals (leashed or otherwise) with others who want the ability to walk their dogs. While most dog owners act responsibly, there are those who allow their dogs off leash, leave waste behind, and excuse aggressive animal behavior (towards other park attendees and wildlife). These actions could potentially deter families and individuals from using a park, which is the opposite of their intended purpose.

Public spaces require reasonable guidelines for shared enjoyment. Restricting dogs to certain parks and locations allows those who are uncomfortable around them to enjoy the area without interference.

Staff Recommended Action:

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject CEER #2025051 as it does not provide for the enhancement of the effectiveness and efficiency of County government as described in the staff analysis.

Cc: Frank Abbate, County Manager

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 5:41 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2025051

Recommendation # 2025051

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2025051 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization

Name Russell Wrenn
Address 667 Sunset Lane, Merritt Island FL 32952
Phone (321) 210-2136
Email rawrenn@msn.com
Alternate Email

Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID 2025051
Recommendation Title Allow Dogs in More Parks
Areas Affected
Department Affected PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
Current problem As population density increases there need to be more public places to walk pets.
Recommendation The default regulation in Brevard County Parks is to disallow dogs. The opposite tact should be taken and leashed dogs should be allowed unless there is a specific reason or area where they should not. Right now, especially in smaller parks, the "no pets" rule is being ignored and a lot of people, when told via social media that they can't walk their dog in a what they consider a neighborhood park are surprised because they have been doing it for years. There is no reason leashed dogs should be banned in most county parks and as the county's population density increases, there will be more demand for public areas where residents can get outside for a time with their pets. There's a nice walking trail around Veteran's Memorial Park, but if you take a leashed dog on it, you are violating the rules and a risking a reprimand from Citizen's Patrol. The default should be that leashed pets are allowed unless there is a specific reason why.
Attachments No Documents were attached.

Please do not reply to this e-mail, as it will go to an unmonitored mailbox.
