

Parks Commission Working Subgroup: Dog waste Committee

Dog Waste Management Proposal

PURPOSE: To secure start-up funding for the establishment of a dog waste management plan for the parks of Montpelier (To manage pet waste in Montpelier and Hubbard Park.)

RATIONALE: Montpelier has the reputation of being a dog friendly community for residents and the many tourists who travel with their pets to enjoy the four season beauty of Vermont. As the dog population has increased so has the dog waste in Hubbard Park and throughout the city. Unmanaged dog waste concerns are threefold: environmental health and local water quality, human health particularly children and school groups using the woods and recreation areas, and the nuisance and aesthetics for all Montpelier residents and visitors. The current ordinance requires dog owners to pick up waste except in the woods. With an increase in dogs this option has become a problem.

This Working Group is recommending a multi-prong approach to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets. The first goal is to change the city ordinance to a simpler ordinance that states residents should clean up after their dogs regardless in order to bring the ordinance in line with the desired behavior. While this is a first step, major metropolitan areas have discovered that "pickup" ordinances with penalties have not had significant impact on dog owner behaviors and are difficult to enforce. Therefore, the second recommendation is the installation of high visibility waste management stations to project the desired behavior and increase compliance of dog owners. By providing waste bags and disposal containers, the community clearly communicates the law and makes it easier for dog owner responsibility and compliance. In addition, the high visibility stations may encourage non-dog owners to direct dog owners to resources in a less confrontational manner when needed. Research has shown that providing dog waste stations is the only effective solution to managing dog waste. This has been highly successful in other communities and we believe it would be just as successful in Montpelier. The third prong to this approach will be a strong educational campaign to educate the community regarding the value of dog waste cleanup.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Based on a general survey of Montpelier, the following stations will be needed.

11 "Gladiator Stations" @ \$399.00 each	total	\$4389.00
Generic replacement bags @ case of 20,000 @ \$0.025/ea.	total	\$500.00

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Total for initial start-up materials estimated		\$4889.00
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FOR FULL BUDGET see addendum.

#### SPECIFIC ACTION PLAN ON DOG WASTE STATIONS:

1. The Parks Commission formed a working group chaired by a Commissioner and composed of a group of concerned citizens. This group has been assigned the task of researching the issue and developing a plan to address the problem. The group's final recommendation is to install waste stations in high utilization areas of the parks and selected downtown areas. The group continues to meet in hopes of securing funding, following through on implementation, developing a public awareness campaign, and to evaluating the outcomes.
2. The "Gladiator station" by Zero Waste USA was selected for several reasons. First the station includes everything in one package to start off. In addition there are several beneficial features specific to these stations. Each station is vandal proof with locking waste can and is highly visible. The waste can itself has a fully sealed chute system with tilting door slot that limits disposal to pet waste, prevents odors and reduces pests. Each station includes: a 7 ft. square post, a pet waste sign, bag dispenser, waste can, hardware, 400 dog waste bags, and 50 can liners.
3. The high visibility waste stations will be placed in the following locations at first.
  - Hubbard Park: there will be 5 stations installed. A station will be placed at the main entrance gate, the "meadow" parking area, near the new shelter/kiosk, Hubbard Park Drive gate, and the gate at the bottom of the Tower road.
  - The Bike Path: there will be 2 stations installed. One along the path near the state commuter lot and one near the High school/VESCU.
  - North Branch Park: One station near the pool shelter/bridge to trails.
  - Stone Cutter's way: there will be 2 stations installed; one near the Co-op and one near Sarducci's parking.
  - Dog River Park Parking lot.
4. Once the stations are placed, volunteers will monitor use and make recommendations as to the need to maintain or relocate stations based on volume of use and reduction of undisposed waste in the areas.
5. Collection of the waste and replacement of waste can liners will be integrated into the Montpelier's general waste pick up. Initially the waste pickup will be covered by the start-up grant as a trial period and then eventually assumed under the City of Montpelier general waste can pick up during the city "trashcan season." Currently, the rate for a contracted person to empty waste cans is \$3.75 per can per pickup. At once a week for 9 cans the cost would be about \$810.00 per year. The Recreation department will be responsible for monitoring, disposing of liner bags, and restocking the can at North Branch Park and Dog River Park as they pick up their own trash in that area. In the off-season, the waste stations will be monitored by volunteers and the liners disposed of at the City Works dumpster. Utilization of cans will be monitored so that high use cans can be converted to a twice a week pickup if needed during the prime visitor seasons.

**BUDGET:** The initial start-up grant will cover the cost of the 11 “Gladiator” stations and a replacement waste bag supply for the first year. For the following years we anticipate the operating costs (see addendum) will be born by the City of Montpelier with efforts to offset those costs by voluntary contributions and community fundraising. Several sources of funds are being explored:

- A voluntary dog owner fee collected at the time of dog licensure. By state law, this must be voluntary and no more than \$10.00 a year per dog. Amount to be determined. Currently, there are approximately 400 licensed dogs within the city of Montpelier.
- Business or individual sponsorship of designated cans to cover the cost of maintaining the can supplies. A placard recognizing the business or individual sponsor will be placed on the waste station post.
- Integration of the waste disposal into the City of Montpelier budget for future years. This could come under general funds for the “garbage can season” or the parks budget.
- A secured mason collection box for donations at Hubbard Park.
- One-time fundraiser events by supportive organizations like The Friends of the Dogs of Hubbard Park or dog friendly businesses.

**EVALUATION:** An ongoing assessment and evaluation of use will be implemented. This will entail volunteers monitoring the waste stations for utilization with regards to volume of use and reduction of visible waste in the surrounding areas. In addition, the condition of the stations will be monitored for replacement or maintenance adjustments. If necessary stations will be relocated for maximum utilization and community need. Review and evaluation of community education efforts will be done yearly by the Parks Commission working group on dog waste.

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## Operating Budget for Dog Waste Management

One time cost items: 11 "Gladiator Stations" by Zero Waste, USA	\$4389.00
Replacement baggies, biodegradable at \$144.00 per case of 3200 x 5cases	\$720.00
Replacement can liners 4 cases of 200 bags per case @ \$65.00/case	\$260.00
Trash collector fee, \$3.75 per can at 9 cans for 72 weeks a yr. for weekly	\$1755.00
Plus extra pick up days cushion of 20 weeks	\$225.00
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Subtotal	(\$7349.00)
	Minus (\$4389.00)
Total yearly operating cost	\$2960.00