

Danville Dog Park Committee

October 23, 2023

Inaugural Meeting

Attending : Alison Low, Chelsea Hewitt, Gary Farrow, Erin Kennedy, Dora Palmieri, and Gary Farrow.

The meeting started at 6:35 p.m, in the Town Hall. Since this was an organizational meeting, attendees made their introductions: Alison Low, selectboard, lives in the Village with “Nancy,” who is a brindle rescue mix; Chelsea Hewitt, Chamber of Commerce, lives in the village with “Biscuit,” a Samoyed; Dora Palmieri, business owner of the Bud Stop, has two dogs Newfoundlands and wants to take them to a dog to a park that’s closer than St. J. One of the dogs is shy ; Erin Kennedy, Danville resident with three dogs but doesn’t take them to a dog park. One is a Portuguese Water Dog and she is not too sure of the dog’s socialization. Nevertheless, Erin is a veterinarian who knows that dogs need socialization. She can also assist with public health issues; Gary Farrow, Danville resident with two dogs (one a Golden Doodle). One is 9, and one is three. Gary walks them on the Railtrail, but it would be nice to let them socialize with other dogs; Jo Oliver, Conservation Commission, lives on Hill Street and works in Morrisville. Has two Aussie cattle mixes.

Two other members were unable to attend the meeting: Polly Joncas, who worked with Chelsea on the press release that is in this month’s Danville North Star; and Karen Hauserman, who is interested in being our outreach coordinator. Going forward we will make this meeting accessible via the Town of Danville’s Teams account!

WE WILL MEET MONTHLY, THE SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH.

First, officers were appointed: Chelsea Hewitt and Alison Low as co-chairs, with Chelsea chairing the meeting, and Alison taking minutes.

Alison made a motion to elect Chelsea as co-chair, and Gary seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Erin Kennedy made a motion to elect Alison as co-chair, and Gary seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The terms are effective for one year. In accordance with our charter, we will have one organizational meeting a year.

Next on the agenda we reviewed the sites under consideration, to bring the new members up to speed. We had visited the Town Forest (Rodger lot), a private residence (with extra land) in the Village, and Town-owned land upslope of the Danville Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). The land abuts the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and could be accessible by either the trailhead across from Marty’s or by a pedestrian bridge on the LVRT. The Town opted for the Town-owned property, and we have started to reach out to H2O (the consultant that manages the WWTF. We will need to be able to demonstrate that this function does not interfere with the intended use of the WWTF. There is a precedent: the City of Portsmouth has a dog park near its WWTF.

We also reviewed potential costs for establishing a dog park. Earlier this spring, Chelsea had a conversation with the Derby Dog Park Committee, and they shared their expenses. Much of their money was done through fund-raising, donations, and sponsorships in a memorial wall. They also raised money by participating in “Bark for Your Park” on Facebook. Their maintenance is low because they have no grass. Fall cleanup and spring cleanup. Volunteers do it. Trash and poop bags \$1,000. Somebody picks up the trash once a week. Their total build was \$30K. Little shelter that was donated. They do 5K fun run. Memorial wall. Bake sale (that raised \$2K+). Volunteers plow and shovel in the winter. Installed electric for a well pump. They sell sponsorships 500, 1000.

Erin asked about being able to run water off the site. We should be able to do that, but we will definitely include this in our discussion with H2O and ANR. We should also be able to provide some shelter from the sun.

We can do similar fundraising, and grant writing is also a possibility, but grant applications would need to be approved by the Town selectboard.

Currently, we have no money, and we should start some fundraising. We identified a Dog Photo with Santa, a fundraiser by donation, just prior to the Holiday Stroll. At the time of this meeting, the date of the fundraiser was not known. The fundraiser would take place on the Green, in the Gazebo. We could also make and sell dog biscuits. There will be businesses that would be willing to sell them, and we could sell them during the photo shoot.

Assignments for next meeting:

- Get approval from the Selectboard to use the Green. (Alison)
- Find a photographer (Chelsea/Erin/Jo)
- Find a Santa?
- Reach out to set up a meeting with H2O and the Agency of Natural resources about the use of the WWTF lands (Alison)
- Draft Rules of conduct for the park (H2O, the Selectboard, and ANR will want to see this) (Dora)

NEXT MEETING IS NOVEMBER 9th, 6:30 p.m. The agenda will go out in accordance with Vermont’s Open Meeting Law and will include a Teams Link for those who cannot attend in person.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low

WOOF