
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 17, 2003
File No.: 6130-02

To: Ron Born, City Manager
From: Joe Creron, Parks Manager
Subject: Paws in Parks Program

Prepared by Randy Zahara, Parks Coordinator

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT existing special events that already include dogs as a specific attraction be permitted to continue in parks that ordinarily prohibit dogs, if approved under the conditions of the Outdoor Events Bylaw No. 8358 and related policies and procedures;

AND THAT the general public be permitted to bring dogs to new special events, runs or walks that want to include dogs for the first time and which are to take place in parks that ordinarily prohibit dogs, excluding all waterfront or beach parks with the exception of Cedar Creek Park which permits dogs, if approved under the conditions of the Outdoor Events Bylaw No. 8358 and related policies and procedures;

AND THAT the necessary amendments to Parks Bylaw No. 6819, as outlined in the report of the Parks Manager dated July 14, 2003, be forwarded for reading consideration.

BACKGROUND:

At the regular meeting of City Council held on June 9th, 2003, staff was requested by Council to bring forward a recommendation in response to requests to allow dogs on leash in City Park in early and late hours for joggers and walkers and/or take them on fundraising walks and during special events.

Parks Division staff were asked to follow up on the above request and discussed various issues with staff in Parks and Leisure Services, the City's Bylaw Enforcement and Central Okanagan Regional District Dog Control. Our recommendations are based the following comments.

1. Independent public opinion surveys indicated that approximately 70% of Kelowna Residents do not want dogs in beachfront parks. The survey questions were specifically related to City Park and Waterfront Park and the promenade between City and Waterfront Park.
2. Enforcing the "no dog" bylaw in parks is already difficult. Permitting dogs at specified times only serves to make enforcement even more difficult than it already is. In discussion with communities that have allowed dogs in parks at certain times has confirmed bylaw enforcement staff concerns. Allowing dogs on leash in parks which prohibit dogs for fundraising walks will further confuse the issue. Ultimately it will

become impossible for Bylaw Enforcement or Dog Control to enforce the No Dog policy in these parks during the times that they would be designated as Non Dog parks. However for those walks that want dogs on leash, organizers should pick a park which allows dogs.

3. There are over 40 walks, runs, fundraisers and special events in Waterfront Park and City Park each year. Often two or three a week in the summer time. It is impossible for the general public to know when the dogs in the park are associated with an event or not, which would make enforcement during other times even more difficult.
4. Six different event organizers were questioned about the need to have dogs on their walks or at their events and all but one were indifferent about the subject. Some said that it would be nice to allow families to bring their dogs but that is not a critical part of their event and would not add to the success. Others were just as happy not to have to worry about the extra hassle of cleaning up any additional messes, ensuring that everyone had a doggie bag and proper leashes, the additional liability that might be involved or the attitudes of the participants who do not want dogs on the walks. In discussion with a person associated with the MS walk that has mobility challenges and loves dogs, they were concerned about their ability to navigate through a lot of leashes and dogs running around. One event organizer advised that the No Dog Policy had a negative impact on their event which was the "Aids Walk". The AIDS national marketing program encourages people to bring their dogs on the walk with them and therefore they have not been able to use this national marketing program in Kelowna and believe their walk has suffered as a result. Therefore if an organizer wishes to have participants take their dog, this can be achieved through organizing a walk where this is permissible.
5. Existing events such as the Regatta K-9 Frisbee toss will be allowed to occur as in the past and be permitted through the special events permit guidelines. Restrictions can and have been placed on which dogs are permitted in the park for these events. Bylaw and Dog Control can accommodate these special dog events as long as they are notified of these situations well in advance of the event occurring.
6. If a group wishes to have an event involving dogs they will be directed to those parks with trails that allow dogs such as Mission Creek Greenway and the future perimeter trails at Mission District Park.
7. New dog exhibitions or events will be considered in non waterfront parks if approved through the special event policy.

In conclusion, the report recommends that existing dog exhibitions managed through the outdoor event policy be permitted to continue, that new dog events are permissible in parks that permit dogs if approved through the outdoor event policy and that the Parks Bylaw be amended accordingly.

Joe Creron
Parks Manager

Cc Director of Parks and Leisure Services
Sports and Facilities Manager