

## Gautho, Julia

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**From:** Scott Carson <sec123abc@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 24, 2024 3:28 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Park Regulations for Dogs

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Capitola City Council,

I am writing to you because I understand you are reviewing the park regulations for dogs in the City of Capitola and I want to provide my feedback for your consideration. The park of most interest to me is Cortez/Hidden Park, as I and my family have lived adjacent to this park for the past 30 years. I would like you to know that I fully support the current regulation which does not allow on- or off-leash dogs in this park. This regulation was wisely reconfirmed by a previous Capitola City Council after careful consideration of community feedback and a police department review, both of which supported the restriction. One topic that came up at the time was that even though dogs were already not allowed in the park there had been many dog complaints and it was difficult for the police department to provide oversight because the park is hidden from street view. Significantly, the same conditions that existed then in the park still apply today.

Foremost, the park is small and its features (swings, play structure, lawn area) were designed for and are primarily used by small children. In addition, the lawn area is often used by children up to young teens for such activities as soccer, Frisbee, football, etc. Because the park is so small, under even the best of circumstances, there is simply not enough room for adequate separation of these children and their activities from any dogs in the park. Unfortunately, this space and use problem is often exacerbated because, based on my observations, nearly all dog owners that inappropriately still bring their dogs to this park "hidden" park do so to let them off leash. This results in interactions that are unplanned and sometimes upsetting to children and other times a safety hazard to children.

In addition, I have observed that the off-leash dogs are often poorly supervised and wander the lawn and shrubbery areas where they sometimes do their business without the owners doing any cleanup. Unwittingly, I personally have stepped on the resulting dog poop a number of times, and I know the Parks Dept. personnel have sometimes been frustrated by this same problem. This is especially problematic because these are the same lawn and shrubbery areas where children often play. Another problem that frequently occurs when dogs are brought to the park is that they often disturb the park users and neighbors by barking or by aggravating the dogs in adjacent back yards, causing them to bark.

Because the priority for this park should be safe and undisturbed play for children and because unfortunately most dog owners seem to want to take advantage of the hidden

nature of this park by letting their dogs off leash, I believe it is in the best interests of the majority of park users and the community to continue to not allow dogs on- or off-leash in this park. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,  
Scott Carson  
Columbus Drive  
Capitola