



City of Needles, California Request for City Council Action

☒ CITY COUNCIL ☐ NPUA

☒ Regular ☐ Special

Meeting Date: March 25, 2025

Title: Consideration of an Ordinance Regulating Animals in City Parks

Background: On March 11, 2025, the City Council directed City Staff to research and present information on potential regulations regarding animals in city parks, particularly in relation to athletic fields and other public-use areas. Currently, many municipalities enforce leash laws and other regulations to ensure public safety, cleanliness, and proper park usage.

Key Considerations from Other Municipalities:

1. Bullhead City, AZ Prohibits dogs from entering fenced areas designated for athletic activities (softball, baseball, football, and soccer fields) at all times, regardless of whether an event is taking place.
2. City of San Mateo, CA Dog Parks & Off-Leash Areas Ordinance: Permits off-leash dog access to ball fields during designated hours (6:00 AM - 8:00 AM, Monday-Sunday). Outside of these hours, dogs must remain leashed. The city provides designated off-leash parks separate from athletic fields.
3. Lake Havasu City, AZ
 - Title 6 - Animal Control Regulations: Requires dogs to be leashed at all times unless in designated off-leash areas. Prohibits dogs from entering Rotary Park and restricts access within 10 feet of playgrounds and athletic fields. Owners must clean up after their pets to maintain public cleanliness and safety.
4. Existing City of Needles Code Section 4-13: Restraint and Sanitation
(C): It is unlawful for the owner or person having care, custody, or control of any animal to permit, either willfully or through failure to exercise due care and control of such animal, any animal to excrete any solid waste upon any sidewalk of any public street or public park, or upon any real property of any other person, or upon any place to which the public has normal access or right of ingress or egress, provided further, that no violation of this section shall occur if the owner of the offending animal promptly and voluntarily removes the animal waste. (Ord. No. 447-AC)

The Council may wish to consider the following options when adopting a local ordinance:

1. Restricting Dogs from Athletic Fields
 - Option A: Fully prohibit dogs from athletic fields (like Bullhead City).
 - Option B: Allow limited access during non-game hours (like San Mateo).
 - Option C: Implement buffer zones prohibiting animals within a set distance from fields (like Lake Havasu City).
2. Leash Requirements
 - Maintain or enhance existing leash laws.
3. Establish designated off-leash areas within certain parks. Waste Management Regulations
 - Increase signage and enforcement regarding pet waste cleanup.
 - Require dog owners to carry waste disposal bags while in city parks.

Fiscal Impact: Implementing new regulations would require installing signage to inform visitors of the updated rules. Additionally, there would be costs associated with developing the ordinance in collaboration with the City Attorney's Office. Increased enforcement efforts by Animal Control would be necessary to ensure compliance, and if designated off-leash areas are established, additional resources would be needed for their maintenance and oversight.

Recommended Action: Provide Staff Direction

Submitted By: Tony Rubalcaba, Animal Control Officer

City Manager Approval: Patrick J. Martinez

Date: 3/19/2025

Other Department Approval (when required): _____

Date: _____

Approved: <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Approved: <input type="checkbox"/>	Tabled: <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: <input type="checkbox"/>
------------------------------------	--	----------------------------------	---------------------------------