



AGENDA REPORT

City Council Meeting

TODAY'S DATE: May 24, 2024

MEETING DATE: June 5, 2024

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jason Welker, Community Planning & Development Director

SUBJECT: Proposal to Amend Sandpoint City Code 7-5-3(A) and 5-4-5(A) to allow off-leash dogs at City Beach for a limited controlled effort at waterfowl mitigation.

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

This report presents a proposal to amend Sandpoint City Codes 7-5-3(A) and 5-4-5(A) to allow off-leash dogs at City Beach specifically for waterfowl mitigation purposes. This amendment aims to address the growing issue of waterfowl population control at City Beach. Allowing city-sanctioned groups of dogs and their handlers to be off-leash on a limited basis is intended to naturally deter waterfowl, thereby reducing health hazards, beach contamination, and maintenance costs associated with waterfowl waste.

The presence of large numbers of waterfowl, particularly geese, at City Beach has led to significant challenges. Their droppings create unsanitary conditions, and their aggressive behavior can be problematic for beachgoers. Traditional methods of controlling waterfowl populations have proven to be either insufficient or overly invasive. Utilizing off-leash dogs in a controlled manner is a non-lethal and effective method that many communities have successfully implemented to manage waterfowl populations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends amending Sandpoint City Code 7-5-3(A) as follows:

Current ordinance language:

"No dogs shall be allowed on the Sandpoint City Beach property, except as provided under Sandpoint City Code 5-4-5, and as follows:

1. Service dogs under constant control of their owner; and
2. Dogs utilized by the City for the purpose of controlling waterfowl."

Proposed amendment:

1. Service dogs under constant control of their ~~owner~~ handler; and

Proposed additional exception:

3. Dogs allowed off-leash for waterfowl control as part of city-sanctioned groups. Handlers must have an off-leash permit applied for and in possession and ensure dogs are under voice control at all times. All waste must be promptly removed by the handlers.

City Code 5-4-5(A) also requires amendment:

Current ordinance language:

3. Leash Law: No dog, whether licensed or not, shall be, or remain upon any public street or alley within the City, or any public place therein, or upon any premises other than the premises of the person who owns, harbors, keeps, possesses or has custodial care of the dog, unless the dog is maintained on a "leash" as heretofore defined, with the following exceptions:
 - a. Police dogs, in connection with lawful police work, so long as under adequate voice or other control of an authorized law enforcement officer.
 - b. Any dog being used and trained for search and rescue operations, under such conditions as may be reasonably necessary in the particular circumstances.
 - c. Any licensed dog at large on private property with the express permission of the owner of the property.

Proposed additional exception:

- d. Dogs off-leash in designated areas of public property where dogs are allowed to be off-leash provided that the dogs are under adequate voice control of the owner or handler, and the owner or handler carries a leash and is prepared to restrain the dog if necessary. The specific conditions under which dogs are allowed off-leash, including times, locations, and any additional rules or regulations, shall be as established and posted by the City. Off-leash permits must be applied for and in possession of the handler.

Considerations:

1. Public Safety and Health: Owners must ensure that their dogs are well-behaved and do not pose a risk to other early-morning beach users.
2. Environmental Impact: Regular presence of dogs may help to naturally deter waterfowl without causing harm to the birds.
3. Community Support: Feedback from the community should be considered to gauge support and address any concerns.

Amending the ordinance to allow for off-leash dogs at City Beach for waterfowl control presents a practical solution to a persistent problem. This approach is humane, cost-effective, and aligns with best practices used in other municipalities. The Council is requested to review the proposed amendment and consider its adoption.

ACTION: Staff asks City Council to approve the amendment to Sandpoint City Code 7-5-3(A) and 5-4-5(A) to allow city-sanctioned groups of dogs and their handlers to be off-leash at City Beach for waterfowl control, with the requirement of an off-leash permit.

WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? NO

HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED? N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposed ordinance amending City Code 7-5-3(A)

Proposed ordinance amending City Code 5-4-5(A)