

Off Leash Dog Hours or Fenced in Parks – November 25 Comments

I commend PARC members for moving forward on off leash hours and fenced in dog parks. We really appreciated that you listened and showed appreciation for our past input.

Let me start by correcting a comment made by the chair at your last meeting where he inferred that because there are 3,800 registered dogs in town that dog owners are a minority of residents. I believe that 3,800 dogs most likely means 7,600 adult dog owners or more. For example, on my court we have 5 dogs that belong to 10 dog owners. Moreover, our google dog community group that uses Sunnyvale's San Antonio Park has 79 members and 38 dogs.

And, I do not understand why the Little League field should be closed all winter. My experience at both Sunnyvale's San Antonio Park [has a Little League field] and Grant Park is that every spring and fall the grounds people aerate and seed the fields and occasionally put up signs to keep the soccer people off the grass – but the parks are never closed to dogs or people for other activities.

As you previously heard dog owner's form communities and lasting friendships that benefit our community and our pets.

You also heard that off leash hours need to include daytime AM and PM hours that are consistent and easy to remember. We use the morning hours from sunrise to 10 am to walk our dogs and the 4-7 pm hours year round to socialize with pets and each other.

We also informed you that a fenced in dog park needs to have real grass to be safe and effective. I have talked to several friends that do not like the idea of fenced in dog parks because of cost and safety concerns.

And, we also let you know that more parks with off leash hours bring more benefits to our community. Despite council request for recommending one off leash dog park I urge you to include most if not all parks – including Grant. Now is the time for big changes rather than limiting off leash parks to just two places. It would be easier to cut back than to add more parks later.

Like it or not it is a fact that dog owners will continue to allow their dogs to run and play off leash while risking the obvious penalty due to selective enforcement. I liken our situation as an analogy to outdated marijuana laws that finally were changed.

What you have not heard is that if you ask dog owners to choose between off leash hours or fenced in dog parks – most would choose off leash hours. I for one would not use any fenced in dog park because of both health and safety concerns for my pet - but will support them as long as they do not take priority over off leash hours.

Commissioners, we are all willing to donate our time to help you achieve off leash hours and fenced in areas for our dogs. Just do it!

Sincerely,

Frank Martin *Frank Martin*