

**JOINT MEETING OF THE PIERS, HARBORS & LAKEFRONT COMMITTEE  
AND THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2012 AT 6:00 P.M.  
CITY HALL, SENIOR CENTER**

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Wall at 6:05 p.m.

Roll Call. Present: Alderman Wall, Alderman Kehoe, Alderman Tolar, Alderman Mott, President Skates, Commissioner Steinberg, Commissioner Swanson, Commissioner Phillips, Commissioner Schneider, Mayor Connors and Alderman Kupsik. Not Present: Alderman Hougen (excused), Commissioner Quickel (excused) and Commissioner Hassler (excused). Others in attendance: City Administrator Jordan, DPW Winkler and City Clerk Hawes.

**Election of joint committee chairperson**

Kehoe/Skates motion to nominate Chairman Connors as the joint committee chairperson. Unanimously carried.

**Comments from the public, limited to 2 minutes per person and 30 minutes total**

John Swanson, 1518 Orchard Ln., Lake Geneva, commented that he has not witnessed any problems with dogs swimming near the West End Pier. However, this should not be a swimming area for the general public.

James Strauss, 1517 Meadow Ridge Cir., Town of Linn, said he didn't think it was right for Commissioner Swanson to address the committee during the public comment session as a member of the public.

Penny Jones, 1321 Dodge St., Lake Geneva, spoke in support of allowing dogs to swim near the West End Pier. She said police enforcement of this issue is a waste of resources. She suggested a simple ordinance change or enforcement policy is all we need.

Bob Host, 412 Host Dr., Lake Geneva, said he spoke to police officers and they did not think it was safe for dogs and swimmers in the boat area.

Don Heise, 549 Franklin Avenue, Lake Geneva, stated that dogs are only part of the problem near the West End Pier. People swimming near boats is a problem, too.

Candy Kirchberg, 917 Marshall St., Lake Geneva, commented that dog owners go to the West End Pier primarily in the morning when there are few boaters out. She said dog owners use common sense when there is boat traffic. Ms. Kirchberg further commented that taxpaying citizens deserve access to the lakefront amenities just as much as boaters do.

Doug Harmon, W1922 Townline Rd., Town of Bloomfield, said that dogs swimming is not a big deal, but he is more concerned with people swimming in undesignated areas. Mr. Herman said the West End Pier area is a gray area right and it needs to be clarified what is allowed.

Candice Finnegan, 660 High St., Lake Geneva, spoke on behalf of a group representing kayakers, swimmers and dog owners. She said she submitted a petition with 640 signatures from people interested in revising ordinances relating to dog leashes. Ms. Finnegan said she has only seen up to three boats in the area that they are proposing for dog swimming.

Bill Huntress, 1015 Pleasant St., Lake Geneva, said he would like an opinion on the issue of liability when it comes to dogs and swimmers near the West End Pier. He said it is the job of the police to enforce the ordinances that are adopted by the Council. He suggested adding a dog area on the east area of the lakefront.

Sarah Hill, 1024 George St., Lake Geneva, stated she hasn't seen any incidents involving dogs swimming near the West End Pier in five years of bringing her dogs down there. She said she has never seen more than six dogs there at one time. Ms. Hill further added this is a matter that has been brought forth by a small number of people.

Gary Milliette, 492 Wrigley Dr., Lake Geneva, said he agreed with establishing a dog area east of the Riviera Beach. He suggested tweaking the ordinance regarding dog leashes so that leashes aren't required in the water. Mr. Milliette further stated that people should be allowed to swim anywhere in the lake.

Melanie Brady, 225 Ridge Rd., Lake Geneva, said that as a kayaker she is aware of the potential for injury when dogs and people are in the lake near boaters. She said that unless there is signage, the West End Pier area could turn into a dog park.

Maryann Moller-Gunderson, 395 Oakwood Ln., Lake Geneva, said that she is a boat and dog owner and that she has not seen an issue with people or dogs swimming near the West End Pier.

Louann Anderson, 1333 Promontory Dr., Lake Geneva, commented that the lake is an asset that serves a variety of users. She believed that dogs and swimmers near the West End Pier wasn't a problem, commenting that people are flexible and patient with one another.

Catherine Stoodley, 919 Carey St., Lake Geneva, said the only time she saw the police address the dog owners at the West End Pier was around 4<sup>th</sup> of July. She said that dog swimming in this area is not a problem and that people should be allowed to use the lakefront in a multitude of ways.

Richard Peterson, 300 S. Edwards Blvd., stated there are safety and liability issues with allowing people to swim near the West End Pier.

### **Discussion/Recommendation on dogs/swimmers at West End Pier**

Chairman Connors said there are two main issues at play – dogs swimming without a leash and people swimming in an undesignated swimming area. He suggested discussing these two items separately, beginning with dog swimming. He read from two areas of the Municipal Code regarding dogs. Section 10-67 states that dogs must be controlled by a five-foot handheld leash. Section 54-32 further states that no person shall permit their dog to run at large or upon any park or recreational area without obtaining consent from the Board of Park Commissioners.

Commissioner Steinberg suggested the ordinance be tweaked to allow dogs to swim in the lake without a leash. Commissioner Phillips agreed, stating that she favored allowing dogs to swim in the lake. Alderman Kupsik said the simple solution is designating an area for dogs to swim. He said there appears to be enough room near the West End Pier to establish a designated area. He added that the dogs would need to be supervised by their owner at all times. Alderman Wall said dogs should not be allowed on the boat docks. Commissioner Swanson said we need to make sure that dogs are licensed. Alderman Wall agreed, noting that there are currently only 127 dogs licensed with the City. Alderman Tolar said the designated dog swimming area makes sense from a safety standpoint. Alderman Mott said he disagreed with allowing dogs to swim near the West End Pier. He suggested a fenced-in area be established away from the west end.

Chairman Connors said the West End Pier area has been attractive to dog owners because of the sandy bottom. He agreed with Alderman Wall that dogs should not be allowed on the docks because it is not meant to be a play area for dogs. Mr. Connors said he agreed with a suggestion by Alderman Hougen at a previous meeting that the City could save space in the West End Pier area by establishing a shared dinghy program. Chairman Connors further stated he liked the idea of establishing a designated dog swimming area and he suggested that a short dog jumping pier could be erected. He noted that the pier wouldn't require DNR approval if it were shorter than a certain length.

President Skates agreed that there is ample space near the West End Pier to establish a dog swimming area. He echoed the concerns that dogs should not be on the boat or fishing piers and that dogs should be leashed when not in the water. Mr. Skates added that he liked the idea of a shared dinghy program and he further suggested that there be buoys in that area instead of boats.

A lengthy discussion followed on the exact location of a designated dog swimming area. There was consensus that it should be located within a 72 foot area along the east side of the fishing pier and west of the boat slips. The designated area would include a small pier for dogs to run and jump into the water to discourage the fishing pier being used for this purpose. Alderman Kupsik said staff may need to measure the area and determine if there are any safety issues. Chairman Connors said this proposal would need to go to Council for consideration and the Council would need to direct the City Attorney on drafting an ordinance.

**Kupsik/Phillips motion to recommend establishing a designated, 72 foot dog swimming area near the West End Pier, where dogs can swim without a leash on the condition that they are leashed upon leaving the area, that dog owners be prohibited from allowing their dogs onto the docks unless they are loading or unloading their dogs to a boat and that there be signage stating that dog owners must yield to boats. Unanimously carried.**

Chairman Connors said the second issue to discuss involves people swimming in the West End Pier area. He referenced Chapter 90 of the Municipal Code which states that swimming outside of the designated beach area is prohibited, except in areas adjacent to private property or when boaters are swimming to and front their boat. Mr. Connors also referenced Section 90-31 which states that the municipalities around Geneva Lake have agreed to common regulations regarding the use of the waterways. Chairman Connors said it would be in conflict with this ordinance and the ordinances of neighboring municipalities to allow swimming in undesignated public areas of the shoreline.

Alderman Mott said this issue is a no-brainer; as a matter of safety, there should be no swimming allowed in the West End Pier area. He said the Riviera Beach is only a couple hundred yards away. Alderman Kupsik agreed, stating that dog owners should be allowed to walk into the water of the proposed dog swimming area but they should not be allowed to swim. Alderman Wall said he favored leaving the ordinance as it is. He further suggested a no swimming sign be posted near the West End Pier. Alderman Kupsik said he agreed with adding the sign but said we should make sure the area doesn't become littered with signs. Lengthy discussion followed about the wording, size and location of the signage.

**Kupsik/Phillips motion to post a no swimming sign in the West End Pier area. Unanimously carried.**

#### **Adjournment**

Kehoe/Mott motion to adjourn. Unanimously carried.

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/s/ Michael Hawes, City Clerk

**THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED  
BY THE PIERS, HARBORS AND LAKEFRONT COMMITTEE AND THE BOARD OF PARK  
COMMISSIONERS**