

**citizencanine.org**  
**newsletter**

**City Council Looking at More Off-Leash Access**  
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**Petition Completion Reminder**  
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## CITY COUNCIL LOOKING AT MORE OFF-LEASH ACCESS FOR DOGS IN VICTORIA ...?

Over the past month Citizen Canine has been contacting every City Councillor in Victoria to discuss the critical need for more off-leash parks in the City. Our position remains that Council must take responsibility for this serious citywide management issue and establish a network of neighbourhood parks around Victoria. Along with this, the City needs to have in place a clear process for adding more off-leash parks. We believe this is the only way to effectively reform Victoria's harsh ban on off-leash access.

A background paper prepared by Citizen Canine has been sent to the Mayor and all City Councillors. This paper is now posted on the Citizen Canine website at [www.citizencanine.org](http://www.citizencanine.org), or by clicking the following link:

<http://www.citizencanine.org/images/Meeting%20the%20Need.pdf>

The paper explains why the city needs to act now to simultaneously open a number of off-leash parks. It shows how other Canadian cities have used this process to successfully introduce vibrant multi-use parks where residents can exercise their dogs off-leash.

On July 24 (starting 9:00 AM) City Parks Department will be presenting the Committee of the Whole with some "off-leash" options for the city. While we don't know precisely what these options will look like, we do know that for the past three years Parks and the City have minimized the issue. Negotiations have been limited to a couple of groups of dog owners trying to negotiate deals for individual parks. Not being part of an overall city strategy or program, these park-level initiatives have gone nowhere, and dog owners have been left out in the cold. To effectively meet the legitimate need of dog owners for

off-leash parks it is clear Victoria must be proactive and develop a citywide plan with appropriate bylaw amendments. Neighbourhoods and dog owners deserve the backing of a comprehensive program that assures appropriate resources, management, and distribution.

It is vital that we send a strong message to City Hall that it can no longer shirk its responsibility for providing dog owners with equitable access to greenspaces in the City. The Committee of the Whole is open to the public. Although there is no opportunity for public presentations, COUNCIL WILL VOTE ON THE DOG ISSUE. As such, we would like to have dog owners show up at this meeting to alert Council to the fact that this is an important citywide issue they must take seriously. The Committee of the Whole meets on Thursday, July 24, at Victoria City Hall starting at 9:00 AM, Committee Room #1. The petitions will actually be presented at the City Council meeting on Thursday night, Council Chambers starting at 7:30 PM. The City Council meeting takes place at this is also a public meeting. Anyone who is interested in the outcome can attend.

## PETITIONS TO BE DELIVERED ON JULY 21

Most of you have received information about our petition effort. There is still time to collect signatures from everyone who uses Victoria parks. If you haven't done so, please print off a page and try to collect a few signatures. The petition form is available on the website at [www.citizencanine.org](http://www.citizencanine.org)

Citizen Canine plans to present the petitions to City Council at their meeting on July 24. This is the same date that the Parks Report on Dog Management will be submitted. A strong showing on the petition will help us make the point that there's a need and a demand for more dog off-leash areas.

Please return the signed petition pages by July 23 at the very latest so they can be included with the bundle that will be presented to City Hall. You can drop signed sheets off to the mailbox or front porch at 222 Vancouver Street. Or send them by mail to 222 Vancouver Street, Victoria. V8V 3S8.

## THETIS LAKE UPDATE

Mark Hawkes, the dog-owners' representative on the CRD's Draft Management Plan Advisory Group attended his first meeting on Thursday, July 10th at the CRD headquarters in Mill Hill Park along with two members of the Citizen Canine Steering Committee as observers.

At the meeting the summary of the Public Response to the Draft Management Plan was discussed and the strong opposition to the proposed leash law noted. The Group agreed on a process for attempting to resolve the dog management issue and plans to meet again in August after a field trip to the three parks. More updates will follow as the process unfolds.

THANKS!  
HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND