



DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN
SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

DOGS IN METCHOSIN WORKING GROUP MEETING

Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at 1:00 PM
Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

1. Supplemental information received for the July 12, 2023 meeting:
 - Draft letter: educational campaign and signage 1
 - Proposed outline: Metchosin Muse article 3
 - Draft letter: amendments to Animal Control Amendment Bylaw No. 676..... 5

The Dogs in Metchosin Working Group thanks Metchosin Council for asking us to begin an education campaign to address dog-related conflict in our community.

We have submitted a report containing our first-stage recommendations to be considered at the June 17, 2023 council meeting.

However, the Group advises Council in the strongest possible terms that in order for educational efforts to be effective, they must be supported by installation of signage as recommended in our January 2022 report.

Between ongoing loss of greenspace due to development in other communities and the restrictive measures taken by some municipalities with respect to dog-related conflict, we can expect significant increases in the numbers of people with dogs using our beaches, trails, parks and other public places.

It is essential that all potential users know what is expected of them with respect to exercising control over their dogs when they arrive at beach entries, trailheads, parks, etc.

The Dogs in Metchosin Working Group urges Council to take immediate action leading to the ordering and installation of the recommended signage.

As signage and installation constitute recreational infrastructure that benefits both Metchosin residents and visitors from other communities, it should qualify for funding under the COVID Recovery and Growing Communities grants.

Proposed Muse Article Outline

Intro

Paragraph depicting the joys of walking a dog off-leash on a beach

People have a right under the Animal Control Bylaw (ACB) to walk dogs off-leash in Metchosin's public spaces — beaches, trails, parks, municipal grounds — but it's a conditional right. The condition is that dogs are under control as defined in the bylaw.

Under Control

Brief review of establishment of Dogs in Metchosin Working Group; mandate to provide recommendations to reduce dog-related conflict.

Existing ACB specified that dogs must be under control, but no definition; first task was to define. Reviewed nature of complaints and identified objective measures to address them.

Statement of each element of definition, problem addressed, meaning of wording (e.g. dog returns immediately to handler means when handler summons, dog begins moving towards handler right away, not after called three times, continues until reaches handler)

Summary

All provisions must be met for a dog to be permitted off-leash.

In order to safeguard the right to walk dogs off-leash, make sure you and your dog meet the bylaw requirements — and encourage others to do the same. If you don't keep your dog under control, you will contribute to the loss of the right to be off-leash not just for your dog, but for all the other dogs as well.

If your dog doesn't meet these standards, seek the help of one of the many fine trainers in Greater Victoria. [I don't think we should identify and certainly not endorse any specific trainers.]

Thanks to both Metchosin councils for taking a proactive, solution-focused approach to this issue, in contrast to the reactive, restriction-based approach taken by some other municipalities.

Among the amendments to the Animal Control Bylaw is the following:

“The owner of a dog shall ensure that when the dog defecates in a public place, the handler of the dog will immediately remove the excrement and retain it until disposing of it in a lawful manner.”

Although some dog handlers are ignoring their responsibility to pick up after their dogs, others are at least making an attempt to comply, but leave their dog waste bags at a beach parking lot or trailhead because no means to dispose of the waste is provided.

The Dogs in Metchosin Working Group is aware that an attempt a few years ago to deal with this issue by installing a garbage can at the Taylor Beach parking lot had to be abandoned because the service was abused by people using it to dump household garbage.

However, the rate of compliance with any requirement increases with the ease of compliance. It is time to revisit providing receptacles for the disposal of dog waste.

Many parks in the region provide dog waste receptacles that are much smaller than a garbage can and can be mounted on a post at the entrance to a park, trail or beach. They are designed with a relatively small hole that prevents the dumping of most household garbage.

The Group recommends that Council consider timely installation of such receptacles, at least at beach parking lots. Success could lead to installation of similar receptacles in other public spaces.

Alternatively, although this is less likely to be successful, a single receptacle could be placed in a central location in Metchosin Village, with signage at beach parking lots, trailheads, etc., directing users to its location. The location should be easily identified and readily identifiable. An example might be at the parking lot between the Metchosin School Museum and Instinct Training.

This, too, should constitute recreational infrastructure benefitting both Metchosin residents and visitors from other communities and should qualify for funding under the COVID Recovery and Growing Communities grants.