

Dear Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commissioners and Director McFarlane,

I am writing on behalf of the Point Roberts Taxpayers Association (PRTA) in support of a

A Proposal to Address the Problem of Off-leash and Out-of-Owner's Control Dogs in Whatcom County Parks in Point Roberts, WA, which I understand has been submitted to you by our Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee (PRCAC) and which is on your meeting agenda for review and consideration on September 9, 2021.

At PRCAC's request, I previously submitted a personal letter of support, which may be appended to the proposal you have received. Here is the text of that letter, dated August 3, 2021:

Hello PRCAC and Whatcom County Parks and Recreation:

I think an off-leash dog enclosure within Lighthouse Marine Park would be an excellent and much needed addition to the Park. There are many visitors to the Park--locals, day-trippers, and campers who bring their dogs with them. Currently there is no public land in Point Roberts where dogs and their owners are permitted to play and train off leash. The advantages of Lighthouse Park are it's large size relative to the modest space requested for the off-leash enclosure; availability of water and washroom year round; availability of some shade and varied terrain; and serving the needs especially of overnight campers at the Park.

In recent years, there has been some tension between Park users with dogs and law enforcement/Park Rangers. Having a designated enclosed space for off-leash use should help to eliminate such problems.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mark Robbins
2110 Deer Road, PO Box 141
Point Roberts, WA 98281-0141
mark.robbins@prodigy.net
(360) 945-1357
Cell (702) 280-0255

The PRTA board of directors shares that support for the proposed new facility at Lighthouse Marine Park (LHP). While the desire to have some sort of off-leash facility in Point Roberts is far from new, this latest effort to achieve that goal began a few months ago with a request to PRTA from one of our members. I met with the member, and we discussed several potential options, including LHP, which seemed to be the best and practically speaking probably the only good option. Our board of directors concurred and asked our PRCAC Representative to pursue the matter with PRCAC, in keeping with the County Executive's preference that such requests and proposals be channeled through PRCAC in order to reflect community involvement and consensus.

In addition to the points offered in my August 3 letter above, I would take this opportunity to suggest that the proposed off-leash enclosure at LHP is supported by the County's Comprehensive Plan (in accordance with the Growth Management Act):

GMA Planning Goals

Open Space and Recreation: The proposed enclosure does not reduce open space within LHP and adds an additional recreational opportunity for visitors to the Park.

Environment: Channeling off-leash dogs to an enclosed space will contribute to proper disposal of dog feces in LHP. On-leash dog waste is mostly picked up by conscientious dog owners; but when they allow their dogs to run off-leash, they may be unable to find and remove the feces even if they so wish.

Whatcom County-Wide Planning Policies (Comprehensive Plan):

H.1: For both residents and visitors, Point Roberts represents a semi-rural, relaxed, and uncrowded oasis, sometime reminiscent of a bygone age. Dogs are an important aspect of family and recreational life for many residents and visitors. While allowing dogs to run loose is no longer considered permissible, accommodating pets in a safe and acceptable manner contributes to both the owners' and animals' quality of life and recreational enjoyment in Point Roberts, without encroaching on the safety, rights, or enjoyment of others.

H.2: Just as accommodating needs of children with play areas and cyclists with bike paths, accommodating dog owners with off-leash areas is consistent with meeting the mandate of public parks.

Policy 4F-4: High priority is given to improvements to existing county recreational sites and facilities and using them to their full potential.

Goal 7E/Policy 7E-1: Many campers and day trippers to LHP come from Canada. Accommodating those who wish to travel with dogs contributes to the goal of enhanced economic trade and tourism from Canada. They are more likely to return and stay longer.

Policy 9A-7: Parks should be designed to accommodate a range of age groups, accessibilities, and interests. One of those interests is to play, exercise, and train accompanying dogs while at LHP.

Thank you for your consideration.

With best regards,

Mark Robbins, President
Point Roberts Taxpayers Association
PO Box 158

Point Roberts, WA 98281-0158

mark.robins@prodigy.net

(360) 945-1357

Cell (702) 280-0255

cc: Barbara Bradstock, Secretary, PRTA