

LEASH FREE
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MEETING MINUTES



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday November 8, 2017

Mississauga Valley Community Centre, Program Room 2 from 7-9 pm

Board Attendance	Board Member Regrets	Board Member No Regrets/Vacancy	Guests
Gayle Laws- President Irene Hill- Secretary Karen Forrest, Treasurer Dave Carty – Past President Krista Kevin Pulis – Garnetwood Carol Mitchell- Parkway Belt Elaine Theriault – Q Park Alex Izzo – Lakeside Leslie	Jennifer Reid-Kuess – Etob Valley Kim Miedema – Toto		Hazel McColl – City Liaison

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00. Kevin & Karen moved that the agenda be approved. Carried.
2. The minutes from November 23, 2016 were reviewed.
Kim & Carol moved that the minutes be approved and posted on the website. Carried
3. REPORTS:
 - a) President: Gayle welcomed Colleen Conner to our board as the new representative for Lakeside Park. The previous rep, Alex Izzo has moved to Etobicoke Valley, replacing Jennifer Reid-Kuess who has stepped down.

Highlights and accomplishments:

7 park reps—one for each park--- dedicated and committed volunteers-- critically important as these people are front and centre in ensuring the parks are well maintained, park clean ups, order wood chips, raise issues with the city. LFM cannot be successful without that level of support.

They will each give a park report and feel free to approach them after the meeting for further discussion on how you can assist them.

This is the first year that the City of Mississauga took over the cost of grass cutting and other maintenance. Huge savings for LFM. Grass cutting was more frequent than when LFM was paying, and after a bit of a rocky start, it got much better as the summer wore on. Very much appreciated.

As a Board—we had 8 meetings, with quorum. We had a formal agenda, recorded minutes (thanks to Irene) and made thoughtful decisions. Our meetings were respectful. We encouraged all views.

We updated the Board of Directors names with Service Ontario, thus complying with the expectation for non-profit corporations. I mention this because in past boards this was not done (last year it was updated after many years—we are now legally compliant)

We wrote, formatted, designed and emailed out two fabulous newsletters—one for Spring and one for Fall. Thanks to volunteer Kira Wilkinson

Irene arranged for pictures of each park, to be used for promotion and outreach.

We had a booth at Pet Expo at the Mississauga Convention Centre, staffed by volunteers with their dogs. Really enjoyable event. Thanks to Irene for doing the ground work and coordinating.

We attended Riverwood Dog Fest. Weather was terrible so not a good event this year.

We maintain sound financial reporting—with responsible and accountable spending of funds. We were frugal. We will review the statements shortly and one issue we have is that membership dollars were not identified to parks—more on that.

We received a \$7000 grant from Purina—past years the grant was \$5000. Very much appreciated.

We referred to the new LFM manual—which is a work in progress and will need on-going revisions. But is an excellent reference for board members and volunteers.

Our new and improved website was launched. Thanks to Anna from Toto, she worked tirelessly with the vendor to fix the bugs and get it working. It was a highly difficult time as LFM did not have someone who was knowledgeable with WordPress. With it was our new dog memorial section that we plan to build upon—to build a sense of community among dog users. We also have a business directory which needs to be promoted and built up.

We have an experienced webmaster now—Krista came on board a few weeks ago. Experienced in Wordpress, she is actively fixing things and uploading new material. LFM is very fortunate to have her.

Q Park got badly needed new fencing along the east side—replacing old farmer style fencing that was in terrible state and dogs could get out. The City paid for this upgrade and we are grateful.

Parkway Belt—our pilot project to build a wind shelter. It's been in the works for over 2 years, but maybe we will see the finished product shortly. IF it is deemed a valuable structure, we may request permission to build others.

JD Small Dog Park—hugely successful, lots of use. An area for small dogs to congregate.

CHALLENGES

Board membership:

In January 2017 we had a full board, but then the resignations started: first the IT and Website, followed by Membership and Communications—both really important positions that promote LFM. Then the Fundraising and Events person quit in April—she was also instrumental in getting the website functional, and lastly the VP quit in June.

So this meant we did not do many outreach and communications, we did not have membership drives, we had limited events. It also created in delays in getting our website functional.

Website was a major focus. We had to deal with many plug ins with the new site, and issues surrounding programming. For several months, the memberships were not tied to particular parks, and this is a huge problem as the membership fee is split 50-50 between the local park and LFM. We are planning on sending out an email to those members who are not associated with a park to ask them to identify a park, so we can allocate funds accordingly. However we have a knowledgeable and committed volunteer now and things will continue to improve.

PLEASE NOTE:

For this year—we have 7 board vacancies—and only one person who is willing to have her term extended—our highly experienced treasurer Karen Forrest.

After serving 4 years, I am now stepping down.

For LFM to continue to be a success for the dogs and park users, we need at least 5 people to come forward tonight and be willing to serve. We have resources to help out—a manual, a city liaison, myself.

A guest requested what the incentive was to become a member? Park use is available for members or non-members equally.

Our response was that we are trying to establish discounts or coupons on our website for certain pet stores, which are only available for members.

- b) City: Hazel commended the President and Leash-free Mississauga for a wonderful and impressive year. She reported that the dog park policy is being developed and a draft will be presented to us in February approximately. It is a landmark accomplishment that dog parks are now an essential part of each new park design and development. The grand plans are a product of 'Future Directions' which is a community based idea bank which reviews the city park developments every five years.

Hazel gave a special thank you to all volunteers for which our group is entirely dependent and completely grateful for.

- c) Financial: Karen reported that past debts have been forgiven and brought to zero. This is a bookkeeping arrangement to simplify records for each park without changing any of the total amounts in each category.

Karen explained that more 'squares' are planned as a purchase in the new year to facilitate the park reps to fund raise in each of the parks.

Financial accepted; Jessica Baker moved, Jim Mercer seconded, passed.

4. Zone Updates:

- a) Etobicoke Valley: Jennifer reported that the access gate needs repair. The junk has been cleaned up; Yeah! She was informed that the city will supply bags and gloves for clean-up events.

- b) Lakeside Park: Alex reports that trees have been planted along the outside of part of the park which will grow to provide shade into the park. She is hopeful that this park can do some fund raising for lighting, perhaps solar lighting.

- c) Garnetwood: Kevin claims that this has been a great year. The only unfortunate incident was a patron who suffered a fractured ankle last winter which resulted in a law suit. **It is always worth repeating that everyone who uses the dog parks must wear appropriate clothing and footwear, and that parks are natural environments meant for dogs to play and this includes occasional uneven terrain.**

Kevin also reports that his park has had a bumper crop of puppies this year. What fun!

- d) Jack Darling: no report

- e) Parkway Belt: Carol reports that dogs in her park often have LED lights on their collars in lieu of any general lighting.

Patrons are very happy to have the concrete pad poured for their wind shelter but the rest of construction is not arranged yet and it is disappointing to head into another winter with no shelter.

- f) Q Park: no report

- g) Toto: Kim stated that 'Santa' photos are planned for Saturday December 2, and Sunday December 10, 2017. Times will be 10:30 – 12:30(?) Last year this event raised over \$1,500!!! Donations of \$5.00 are requested, as well as food bank items. This fund might be used for new agility equipment.

Kim also reported that the lighting needs repair and that she has called in to 311 many times for this issue.

5. Nominations and Elections

Vacancies include almost the entire board, excepting Karen, who remains our Treasurer; and Gayle who will step into the Past President position. Nominations or acclamations will be accepted for:

President

Vice President

Secretary

Membership and Communications

Fundraising and Events

IT and Website (Krista has volunteered for this work but does not choose to become a board member)

There are 30 days given to allow volunteers to step forward.

Alex Izzo announced she would like to take a position. Gayle deferred elections until December 6, 2017.

6. After our LFM business, we welcomed Chris Pyke to present his proposal of using dog poop to create biogas and energy for our electrical grid. Hot and sizzling ideas indeed!

Insert

Next meeting: Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, December 6, 2017 @ 7:00 PM

Minutes taken by Irene Hill, Secretary