

Parks Commission Meeting

October 13th, 2026 at 5:30pm

645 Pine St., Front Conference Room & Zoom

Commissioners in Attendance: Lantieri, Boehm, Davis, Mobley, Mamo, Etter & Bergmann

Staff in Attendance: Sauve & O'Daniel

Lantieri opened the meeting at 5:32pm by welcoming everyone.

1. Agenda

1.1 Motion to amend/adopt agenda

Boehm made a motion to adopt the agenda. Davis seconded.

All were in favor, none opposed.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1 September Minutes

Mobley made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Bergmann seconded.

All were in favor, none opposed.

3. Public Forum – Time Certain, 6pm

No one was present in-person or online for the public forum.

4. Deliberative Agenda

3.1 Dog Ordinance (Appendix D, Section 7)

Lantieri opened by sharing some context about how this process has gone so far and the overall timeline. He noted that there was a Dog Task Force created in 2021 that put together recommendations for the Commission and other bodies to review in 2024. He continued that the Commission put time into it for a few months and then sent it along, but it is back with some notes and further review. He shared that with varying opinions on the topic, more time to think about it and a pilot that took place, there is more to discuss with this body. He noted this was an “information” item so no decisions needed to be made at this juncture.

Davis asked if there were still opportunities for changes to be made.

The consensus was yes, with Lantieri noting that most of the notes made by the City Attorney were removing any discretions and being sure to link it to existing policies, both of which he felt made sense. He continued that the only whole clause addition was Section E, which essentially said that there can be a BPRW off-leash dog policy. Lantieri continued that the main areas that need the Commission’s review were sections 3 and 4.

Mamo noted that the implication there would make Texaco not an off-leash area anymore if that was changed.

Lantieri asked Sauve if she had any context about the pilots that have happened over the years, including the off-leash area in sections of Leddy Beach and Oakledge Cove.

Sauve shared that there have been complaints, but that tends to be the nature of most feedback so it's hard to gauge based off of that.

Lantieri shared that he has only received questions about the signage, not the behavior of dogs and/or owners.

Etter asked how far into the lake park property technically goes.

No one in the room had that answer and the conversation shifted to enforcement.

Mamo shared that he felt it was important to maintain Texaco as an off-leash space so that people can be redirected there if they have their dogs off-leash elsewhere.

Boehm noted that they had heard a similar sentiment from staff in previous conversations about this topic. She continued by asking hypothetically what would need to happen to the document they were discussing.

The group then discussed ordinances vs. policies and the different approaches to this topic with both types of documents at play and what had been discussed at past meetings about this topic, including the fenced vs. unfenced verbiage in section 3. Some felt removing section 3 would be a good step in this process, but that a policy would need to be created to fill that gap, while others had an idea to delete the word "fenced" and leave Texaco Beach there.

Lantieri asked if there was a consensus on wanting Texaco Beach to remain a designated off-leash dog area.

Bergmann reminded the group of the Northshore Natural Area, which is used quite often as an off-leash dog area as well. He shared that he feels off-leash dogs create more problems than solutions.

Davis noted that when you google Texaco Beach, it says that it is a popular, dog friendly location.

Boehm chimed in that keeping some unfenced, off-leash dog areas would reduce going against the existing cultural norms of the spaces which would be difficult given the lack of enforcement available.

Bergmann clarified that he wasn't against off-leash areas, but that whatever decisions that are made should be clearly communicated to the community.

The group then resumed the discussion about how to potentially move forward with or without section 3.

Boehm noted that another section references the policy being the place off-leash information could live. She continued that the policy would need to be voted on, or there would at least need to be a draft, at the same time that the ordinance was being voted on. She shared that by approaching Texaco this way, it would give future Commissions an easier way to change that, which she noted the group would need to decide if that was a pro or con.

Mobley cautioned the group about temporary spaces, reminding everyone that once something exists, like dogs being allowed off-leash at Calahan from 6am – 8am, it is difficult to reverse that. She continued that making something clear and defined, like Texaco as an off-leash area, as opposed to having vague language about potentially temporary other spaces might be a helpful path forward.

The group then discussed the pros and cons of clearly defining things like this and the community's expectations and reactions when they are put into place, or not.

Mamo circled back to replacing section 3 and suggested wording it in a way that Texaco is the only off-leash, unfenced dog area.

The group then discussed how incorporating the policy and temporary pilot programs could come into play here.

Mamo noted that adopting the ordinance as it is currently written in its draft form would be changing the status quo for Texaco.

Mobley chimed in that yes, but only in practice, not from an ordinance perspective.

Lantieri noted that there currently is no policy about this because it has long since expired.

Mobley reiterated Boehm's question earlier about having a policy to vote on in tandem with the ordinance.

The consensus was yes.

Boehm noted that there was a draft of a policy created by the Dog Task Force that could be used.

Mobley asked what staff member they should be in touch with about this.

There wasn't a definitive answer, but the Park Rangers were mentioned as a possibility as well as the Director.

Boehm wrapped up by noting that there seemed to be some momentum behind removing section 3 and coming up with a draft policy for the Commission to vote on in tandem with the ordinance update.

Lantieri noted again that it didn't seem like the Commission was at a consensus for hot to move forward yet and shared that he was leaning towards not defining off-leash, unfenced areas in the ordinance but leaving that to the policy to allow for more time and flexibility with the process and practice.

Mamo reiterated that on BPRW's website it says that dogs are allowed off-leash at Texaco Beach, so it isn't just a cultural practice of people bending or breaking rules, so by removing it from the ordinance the status quo would be changed.

Mobley clarified that Texaco isn't currently in the ordinance, it's just in the draft version that the group is looking at.

Mamo responded that by crafting an ordinance that excludes Texaco would be changing the status quo of how people currently use a space.

Lantieri noted that this was not where the Commission was even 6 months ago on this topic and that he is looking to open things up in a way to allow for that.

Mobley chimed in about how the policy would come into play here as opposed to keeping locations defined in the ordinance.

Boehm brought up the current ordinance, noting that there are locations listed as off-leash areas that she wasn't aware of.

Lantieri pointed out that it was void after 18 months and it expired years ago.

Boehm noted that another big piece of this will be the public information part, including appropriate signage and updates the website with maps and hours and references to the rules, which could all be covered in the policy.

Etter wanted to make sure that it would be specific in saying that these would be the only areas dogs would be allowed off-leash and they would be fenced, except for potentially Texaco.

Lantieri noted that this approach would remove the opportunity for pilots to happen in other locations.

The group then discussed the various paths forward, using example scenarios to play them out, with the consensus being to change section B, number 3 to permanent unfenced, off-leash dog area is only located at Texaco Beach with the next section noting the potential for other pilots to be determined in the policy.

Boehm asked if the goal for the next meeting was to vote on this and the policy together or to have more discussion with both documents in front of them.

Lantieri suggested having an information item be focused on the policy for discussion and then have the ordinance, with the changes from this meeting, be an action item that's voted on if the group feels ready to do that.

There was general agreement from the group.

3.2 Playground Replacements

Sauve began by sharing her screen and noting that the Planning team has been doing outreach at Baird, Smalley and Ethan Allen parks this fall for feedback from the community. She continued that the Parks Foundation agreed to fundraise for 5 playground replacements in 5 years, and although they're a little behind on the timeline, the 3 locations noted above will be getting new playgrounds with \$100,000 allocated for each one out of Penny for Parks for fiscal years 25, 26 and 27 in addition to what the Parks Foundation is able to raise. She shared that she's hopeful that this will allow the department to play catch-up on replacements, get better pricing from vendors with these larger orders and help with efficiency for capacity. She then showed a map of all of the playgrounds in Burlington as of 2022, which showed the ages and status of all of the existing playgrounds. She noted that there were several at the 15-20 year mark then and when she came on seven years ago, staff were focusing on replacing parks to keep them going as long as possible, but in certain circumstances when parts could no longer be found, structures were removed. Sauve shared that the goal for playgrounds moving forward is to replace them before they need to be removed due to age. She noted that 3 playgrounds have been replaced since 2022, and now they're looking forward to the next 3 replacements, which were determined by maintenance inspections and locations. Bergmann asked for a clarification on how much money was allocated for each location. Sauve answered that Penny for Parks would be contributing \$100,000 each and the Parks Foundation has a goal of raising \$150,000 for each, for a total of \$250,000 per location, but the size of the playground will determine how much of that is spent for each and how, noting that they have various levels of accessibility currently. She continued that the Playgrounds for All Forever campaign by the Parks Foundation is aiming for accessible playgrounds which will create a stronger community by allowing for everyone to be able to enter into and use those spaces and equipment. Sauve then shared that the policy that was developed a few years ago by the Parks Foundation and the Parks Commission was done so to address each playground as universally designed as a whole, so first that everyone can access a playground and that there is flexible usage and a variety of play equipment in each. She noted that each site will be different based on the space itself, but they're also hoping to make each one different so that they're new and exciting for everyone to try out.

Etter reiterated his sentiments from a previous meeting that he wants to make sure there are enough physical challenges available for children too.

Sauve responded that yes, it's a balance and they are also looking through an intergenerational lens, as well as many others, and shared the example of the family slide at Oakledge being beloved by everyone. She then shared a slide about the timeline for replacing playgrounds and the various steps of engagement involved in the process, which includes tabling, meeting with schools, NPAs and the accessibility committee, then developing plans based on that feedback and requests for proposals which are then evaluated based on what they've heard from the community and BPRW's lens of universal design which has the goal of going beyond ADA and including exciting and new equipment. She continued that once things are narrowed down to a vendor, the Planning team works with them throughout the process as things inevitably need to pivot. She then reviewed why the 3 upcoming replacements would be happening, noting their ages and various reasons for their declines over time. Next Sauve outlined the engagement that they have done at all 3 locations over the past year and touched on next steps, including receiving survey results for people who couldn't attend the engagement events and in 2027 presenting designs to various bodies including the Commission, bidding out for the construction and hopefully building by late summer. Mamo asked if there were any lessons learned throughout the Pomeroy playground process that they'll be incorporating into these processes.

Sauve answered that letting everyone know that the process takes time, especially when engaging folks and partners at different junctures.

Mamo shared that the response to the new Pomeroy playground has been overwhelmingly positive, but he has heard some critical feedback from people that they participated in the surveys and info sessions but they didn't think to ask for a slide or a baby swing because they thought things like that were a given.

Sauve responded that all of the potential options are on the boards they display and then people vote, which is prioritized.

Davis asked if drug use had decreased at Pomeroy because of the new playground.

Sauve answered that she hadn't heard of any since the new playground went in.

Lantieri shared the sentiment that this is something the community can be excited about and look forward to for the future of youth and the community in and of itself.

The group then discussed fundraising, other ways to contribute and involved user groups across the City.

Lantieri noted that another way to contribute is by working in the parks and shared that there will be a community work day coming up soon at Baird that he would keep everyone posted on.

3.3 Comprehensive Plan Update

Sauve had an announcement about the next community open house, which she shared would be happening at the new Burlington High School on Thursday, November 5th from 4:30pm – 8pm, and the focus will be on visions and goals for the entire comprehensive plan as well as the 4 plans that it is representing. She encouraged Commissioners to attend and to invite others to as well.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Parks Foundation Update

Lantieri noted that there's a central question of where the campaign goes and how to raise money with a current focus on looking to past donors to start.

5.2 Director's Report

Sauve shared a video of Lantieri's bike path etiquette social media post that he worked on with BPRW's Marketing Manager with the group.

Lanteri noted the Marketing Manager's redesign of the Monthly Report, which the group felt very positively about.

Sauve mentioned that the department is looking for volunteers for Mystical Market and the Pomerleau holiday party.

5.3 Commissioner's Items & Volunteer Hours

Lantieri shared that there are 3 upcoming volunteering opportunities – a tree planting at the Leddy Bike Park on October 28th, a Baird work day in early November pending some final coordination pieces and then a clean-up at Inglesby Brook on November 14th or 15th. He had 15 hours to report.

Boehm had 1 hour to report.

Etter didn't have any hours to report.

Davis noted that the bandshell has emptied out and she asked who was doing that.

Bergmann didn't have any hours to report.

Mobley had 6 hours to report.

Mamo had an hour to report and shared that he spent most of that talking to people in and around Texaco beach, asking if they thought dogs should be allowed there off-leash or not.

6. Adjournment

6.1 Motion to adjourn

Etter made a motion to adjourn. Bergmann seconded.

All were in favor, none opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01pm.