

DATE: June 28, 2021

MEMO TO: Jessica Vealitzek, Chair
Operations Committee

FROM: Mike Tully
Chief Operations Officer

REQUEST: Provide policy direction regarding whether the District should add Dog Exercise Areas (DEA's) to the list of areas in which smoking and vaping are prohibited.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Public Access and Connections

FINANCIAL DATA: If direction is given to staff to amend the General Use Ordinance to prohibit smoking and vaping in the DEA's, there will be an initial cost of roughly \$2,000.00 to fabricate and install signs at the five areas.

BACKGROUND: This past Spring, a concern from a frequent user of the DEA's about people smoking was brought to Commissioner Clark, who then brought it to the attention of the Operations Committee. Chair Vealitzek and President Kyle discussed the issue and agreed to bring the topic to the Operations Committee so that the Committee could review and give staff direction on the issue.

The District has been operating DEA's since the late 1970's. To date, smoking at the DEA's has not been a common complaint. The District currently sells approximately 7,500 annual permits for the DEA's, as well as another 12,000 daily permits. Assuming that each annual permit holder visits a DEA on average twice per week, we estimate approximately 800,000 unique visits spread across the five sites annually.

Since April of 2021, Public Safety Department officers, during their routine patrols, have informally monitored whether DEA users smoke or vape in any of the DEA's. In the timeframe of April – June, they observed seven patrons smoking or vaping in the DEA's:

- 2 at Prairie Wolf
- 2 at Duck Farm
- 1 at Lakewood
- 1 at Waukegan Savanna
- 1 at Independence Grove.

Maintenance staff has also been asked to observe whether there is smoking litter at the DEA's. They state that it is rare to see cigarette or cigar butts discarded within the fenced portion of a DEA. They do, on occasion, come across such litter in the parking lots of the DEA's, at about the same level of frequency as the other general preserves.

If the Committee would like to move forward with prohibiting smoking and vaping within the DEA's, the process would be to direct staff to bring an amendment to Section V,D,(xx) of the General Use Ordinance to a future Committee meeting to be approved and sent to the Board for final review and approval. The cited section of the General Use Ordinance currently prohibits smoking and vaping:

- Within 20 feet of any District Building or open air dining facility
- On or near any District playground
- Within any area that is being used for a special event or program sponsored wholly or in part by the District.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Director of Finance, Director of Operations and Infrastructure, Director of Public Safety, Corporate Counsel.