Town of Keene

Public Hearing

Local Law on Comprehensive Dog Control

 March 27th 2025

 6:00 P.M. Town Hall

**Board Members Present**: Joseph P Wilson Supervisor, Teresa Cheetham-Palen, Robert Biesemeyer, Christopher Daly Council Members

**Absent:** Ann Hough

**Town Officials Present:** Anna Whitney Town Clerk

**Town Counsel Present:**

**Members of the Public**: Martha Allen, Yvette Tillmen, Noreen McCarthy, Roger Allen, Jeanie Cross, Cindy Ayres, Kate Gorman, Jim Gorman, Jim Mooney, Chris McGuire, Charles McGuire

**Call the Public Hearing to Order** at 6:00 P.M. by Joseph P Wilson

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING:**

Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Sun Community Newspaper, posted on the **Town of Keene Website**, and posted on our signage boards at the Town Hall. This public hearing is to hear comments on the draft, Local Law on Comprehensive Dog Control, from the public.

Mr. Wilson thanked everyone for coming. He stated the most up to date draft is on the table for those who want it. He wanted to be clear board members have listen to the input we have gotten and have discussed it at multiple board meetings and workshops to come up with a balance with the concerns people have raised to have this law affective but not overearnest. We have worked over 2 years on this and trying to make this balance.

Tonight’s Public Hearing is to take public comment.

**Public Comment**:

Mr. Wilson answered someone’s question in regards to 15-day jail time, he explained these penalties have not changed in 20 plus years, the penalties in this draft are the same as they have been. This is what really surprises him how people have said these penalties are so extreme and they are what they have always been.

Ms. Whitney asked people to state their name.

Ms. McGuire asked why a Public Hearing.

Mr. Wilson explained it is legally required.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen added that when a change is made to a draft another Public Hearing has to be held.

Mr. Daly offered to the public that one thing we did agree to at the workshop is an adoption by resolution immediately following the adoption of this law (if adopted), to designate places that will permit off leash.

Several people speaking at the same time, back and forth on where these location will be. Someone asked about Marcy Field.

Ms. Cross stated she does not want to see people arrested, she does not think that is the purpose of this law; she feels this law is to prevent problems. She stated there is a need for education; she is also sympathetic to the langue of the law. She said she would call the DOC if her dog took off and as this draft reads unless it is a dangerous dog the DOC will go find the owner. If it is licensed, as the state law requires, they can than look up who the dog belongs to and return the dog. She states she does not see this as a burden.

Mr. McCormick stated it does not seem necessary to include the same penalties, he stated he doesn’t see that it would undermined the law if you didn’t have the 15 day penalty, he asked to go on the record opposing that.

Ms. McGuire prepared a statement that she read which is available from the Town Clerk.

Mr. Shopmaker had a neighbor read his thoughts. His concern is legislation as purposed; he believes strongly the quality of life is being dismissed by the tourists, short-term rentals, and illegal parking. He sees his neighbors being responsible. The proposed law does nothing for the tourists.

Mr. Plumley asked the Town Board take in to consideration to do this vote in August. Second, he hopes we consider no harsh law.

Ms. Palen stated that before this is brought to a vote there will be a resolution waiting with Jack Rabbit Trail on it for an off leash location. In this process, she stated she has asked everyone she sees and she does not know why they don’t come but she has talked to many people that like the idea of leashed and unleashed areas.

Mr. Alan asked if there was an accounting logbook to look at. Second was to offer an easy solution to putting signs out and that is to offer a QR code, scan here and it can have the latest laws, trails, updates. Third question is what is the Boards sense of the residents feelings ?

Mr. Wilson stated what he is hearing outside of the people here is clearly agreement a leash law is important.

Mr. Biesemeyer asked to chime in; he does not agree the Board feels this way. He proposed an alternative to designating the hamlet areas to have dogs leashed all the time; he has not heard from people that they want a Town wide leash law.

Ms. McCarthy wanted to say she does not understand why the Board does not support what the majority of the people are saying, why do you not support that we do not want this law. Why do you keep pushing this?

Mr. Daly stated that people in this room are not the majority, this is mathematically incorrect, and your premise is that everyone in this room constitutes the majority of the town. Not everyone in town wants to go onto NextDoor to be eviscerated on social media. Your lecture that we are undemocratically approaching this is completely inappropriate and wrong.

Ms. Weston ask about a dog park.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen asked to speak to this, she has listened to many people and she wished they were here. She has struggled with this and when she hears that she is not listening that is very hurtful, she listens to everyone.

Please note at several occasions there were many people talking at once making it hard to determine who was speaking.

Letters from residents, shared with the Town Board are on file with the Town Clerk.

Recording posted to the Town Website.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Wilson adjourned at 7:07 P.M.

Town Clerk

Town of Keene

Ann Whitney