



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
City Commission Agenda Memo  
REGULAR MEETING**

**#24-0217**

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the  
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

**FROM:** Greg Chavarria, City Manager

**DATE:** May 7, 2024

**TITLE:** Resolution Amending the Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations  
**(Commission Districts 1,2,3 and 4)**

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**Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the City Commission adopt a resolution to amend the Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations, as recommended by the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Board (PRBB). Periodically, staff presents proposed changes of the Parks and Recreation Rules to the PRBB for its consideration and recommendation to the City Commission. At its meeting on February 28, 2024, the PRBB approved certain proposed amendments to the Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations. Recommended changes to the Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations are included in the Intent Section, Section 1.2, and Section 4.1 of Exhibit 2.

**Background**

Proposed changes to the Intent Section include the addition of the following language “These Rules and Regulations apply to all City parks and recreation facilities, including any City property that is zoned “P” for parks, recreation and open space.

Proposed changes to Section 1.2 changes the word users to uses.

Proposed changes to Section 4.1 are detailed below.

The current Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations prohibit pets in any park or City facility, except for service animals. Dogs are only permitted on the Canine Beach (North of Sunrise Boulevard), areas of the Riverwalk, designated dog parks located in Riverside Neighborhood Park (corner of SW 2<sup>nd</sup> St and 20<sup>th</sup> Ave and travels down 20<sup>th</sup>), Snyder Park and Holiday Park.

Parks staff in conjunction with the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Advisory Board (PRBAB) have been working on a recommendation to allow dogs access to city parks. It has been recommended by the PRBAB to allow dogs in all parks, on a maximum 6-foot leash, and be restricted from playgrounds, athletic fields, courts, water splash pads,

swimming areas, beach areas (except for north of Sunrise Boulevard), or any body of water.

On February 28, 2024, the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Board approved certain proposed amendments to the Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations, which are listed below, as well as incorporated in and attached to this Agenda Memo as “Exhibit 2”.

- Dogs are permitted in parks on a maximum six-foot leash or less under the control of a responsible adult. However, it is strictly prohibited to bring dogs or any other pets on or into any athletic fields, courts, playgrounds or water splash pads, swimming areas, beach, or any body of water unless permitted by law or permitted under this section.
- Dog owners are responsible for cleaning up and disposing of any waste created by their dogs. All dogs must have current vaccinations and a license. Owner or Handler must be responsible for their pet. Aggressive dogs may be removed at the City's discretion. Dogs shall not create a nuisance by causing any form of disturbance such as excessive barking or any similar conduct.
- Service Animals: Required documentation must be presented by the person responsible for dog, upon request.
- Dog Beach: Maximum of three dogs per owner or handler.

This recommendation has garnered mixed reactions from the community. In February, a petition supporting this amendment was submitted to the PRBAB, signed by 161 neighbors, indicating interest in more inclusive pet regulations. However, at a subsequent meeting held with District 4 constituents, opinions varied, some neighbors advocated for extending access to dogs across the entire park system, while others recommended restricting dog access to a limited number of parks within each district to better manage the impact and maintain the parks' usability for all neighbors. In addition, there were concerns raised with the oversight of existing dog parks that include the safety of dogs and park visitors.

The Parks Board minutes also reflect a suggested change to Section 4.9. Staff will be bringing that change back at a future meeting after receiving additional clarification from the PRBB.

### **Resource Impact**

This amendment to the Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations will require additional funding for the implementation of dog stations, dog waste bags, and signage at city parks. This cost is estimated to be \$150,000 for the first year, and \$10,000 per year ongoing. We plan to phase these updates in overtime to limit the financial impact to department budget. In addition, the city may need to procure a company to remove and change dog waste receptacles, hire additional staff to cleanup and replace worn areas due to increased use. An evaluation period will take place during the first six to nine months to determine impacts and additional funding may be requested at that time.

## **Strategic Connections**

This item is a *2024 Top Commission Priority*, advancing the Public Places initiative.

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Public Places Focus Area, Goal 3: Build a beautiful and welcoming community

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan: We Are Here

This item supports the *Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040* Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Public Places Focus Area
- The Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Element
- Goal 6: Be a community with high quality parks and recreational facilities that highlight the character of our City.

## **Attachments**

Exhibit 1 – Current Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations

Exhibit 2 – Proposed amendments to the Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations

Exhibit 3 – Parks, Recreation and Beaches Board Minutes – January 24, 2024

Exhibit 4 – Resolution

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Prepared by: Carolyn Bean, Parks and Recreation

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