

Press Release

SANTA MONICA RESIDENTS SEEK OFF LEASH DOG ZONE AT BEACH NEAR ARIZONA OVERPASS

Santa Monica, CA, June 12, 2004: Calling their group, "Unleash The Beach", about a dozen Santa Monica residents met at Joslyn Park on Saturday, June 12, 2004 to strategize for the creation of an off-leash dog zone on Santa Monica beach. Organizer Georja Umano Jones explained that in the belief that dogs help us to be a community, their mission is to establish an off leash dog zone on the beach where we can recreate.

Speaking to the group was Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tempore Kevin McKeown, Daryl Barnett, founder of FREEPLAY, a group lobbying for a similar dog zone at Dockweiler State Beach, and Sandra Lloyd-Jones, Political Director for Mayor Mike Gordon of El Segundo, now a candidate for the Californian State Assembly. Speakers told of their experience and strategy suggestions and all lent their support to the new Santa Monica group. Unleash the Beach is part of Dog Beach Now, an alliance with FREEPLAY of Venice and PalliDog of the Pacific Palisades to establish multiple dog beaches in Los Angeles County.

The group has targeted the area between Lifeguard Stands 11 and 12 in the stretch of underdeveloped and poorly used beach very close to the Arizona overpass and south of the California Incline. Many businesspeople and lifeguards have referred to this area of the beach (also very close to a storm drain) as the "desert". The dog beach movement has begun to take off in California. Presently in Los Angeles County, a successful dog beach is run in the Belmont Shores area of Long Beach. Throughout California, all other counties along the coast have such an area. Yet, by comparison, only 40 softball players have to share each acre of baseball diamond, but over 3500 dog owners have to share each acre of dog park.

For Immediate Release

Initially the group plans to circulate an informal petition throughout Santa Monica. "With between 4,000 and 5,000 licensed dogs in the City, we should certainly be able to show a huge amount of support via this petition and then be ready to take our request to the City Council", Georja explained.

Unleash The Beach will also be sponsoring a campaign kick off event for dogs and their guardians near the beach (but not on the sands where it is illegal) scheduled for July 31, 2004. Georja announced that the details and exact location would be heavily publicized through the local newspapers and through signs posted in all the dog parks and in various businesses at or near the beach. Many of those businesses are quite excited about the idea – believing that more traffic to the underutilized section of beach will help their businesses.

Anyone interested in receiving further information or updates, or who might like to volunteer in a variety of capacities, may contact us via email to: unleashthebeach@adelphia.net.

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