

Huntington's Expansion of Dog Walking Areas – Town Hall, July 11, 2017

Good afternoon Mr. Petrone and members of the Town Board. I am Mike Kaplow, President of the Siberian Husky Club of Greater New York, Inc. This is my Service Dog, Lola.

Lola and I are here today to thank the Town Board for their initiative to expand the number of locations in which all dogs can be walked. *As my Service Dog, and per Federal law, Lola is allowed anywhere I am allowed, including areas that are legally dog-restricted. It is important to note that in the grand scheme of things, a well behaved dog with a responsible owner is a well behaved dog with a responsible owner, regardless of condition, title, or location.*

From our experience at many public events where both the dogs and the people were numerous, we have observed that the vast majority of both the dogs and their human companions are well behaved and responsible. Are there exceptions? Most certainly there are, even at Dog Shows, but the town has already seen the success of dogs in test parks, and the new code provisions will enhance that success for everyone.

There are still a few restrictions, notably at Heckscher, which can be revisited next time. Lola, and her brothers and sisters of all breeds and mixes, hope that the Town will seek to include the remaining locations at a later date, as success builds upon success.

We know that there are nay-sayers. To them we say, come with us on a walk in the Park. Come to a Dog Show. Come to a meet-up at the West Hills Dog Park. Come with us on a Pack Walk with the Long Island Dog Owners Group. You will see some of the best behaved dogs and most responsible human companions on our Island. Problem dogs, as with problem people, need to be disciplined in a way that reflects their timely actions not their very existence. Simple community education would help promote appropriate behavior.

Toward that end, Lola and I invite the Board (and any nay-sayers) to come with us on a nice walk thru Heckscher after this meeting, and see for yourselves the reactions to her in that park. If not today, then look for us there in the not too distant future. Remember as a Service Dog she can go with me anywhere I can go!

In the meantime, with political changes on the horizon after November, Lola and I encourage the extant Board to pass this canine-loving legacy legislation. We thank you for the time to express our views. Have a safe and sensible Summer and we hope to see you in a dog-friendly Town Park, real soon.

Mike Kaplow, President
SHCGNY, Inc.