

From:

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] URGENT: Addressing Animal Control Overreach and Expanding Off-Leash Hours

Date:

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 5:33:50 PM

Dear Mayor Stapp, Members of City Council, County Supervisors and Board of Community Services,

I am writing to bring to your attention two critical, interconnected issues affecting the quality of life in our city: the urgent need for expanded off-leash hours for dogs and the alarming conduct of Animal Control Officer Anthony Faas.

A Rogue Animal Control Officer is Creating a Hostile Environment

Our community is being terrorized by an Animal Control officer who has completely lost the plot. Anthony Faas is aggressively targeting responsible dog owners, issuing exorbitant fines—ranging from \$300 to \$500—for minor infractions. His methods are extreme and predatory. Residents have reported him hiding in bushes with binoculars, lurking in the shadows, and waiting to ambush unsuspecting community members as if they were criminals. This behavior is inappropriate, unnecessary, and deeply damaging to the sense of safety and trust in our city.

Worse still, his demeanor is antagonistic and unnecessarily aggressive. He does live in this community, he does not represent the values of this community, and his actions have made many people—particularly elderly residents—feel unsafe in public spaces. This is unacceptable. He must be removed from his position immediately.

Thousands of Residents Deserve Fair Access to Parks

Our city is home to thousands of responsible dog owners, yet there are almost no public spaces where they can safely allow their dogs off-leash without the looming threat of excessive fines and harassment. Your job, as city leaders, is to make this community a welcoming and enjoyable place to live—it's time to enact new ordinances to support that mission.

Currently, a small concession has been made for off-leash hours—6:00 AM to 8:00 AM in a handful of parks. While this is a step in the right direction, it is also impractical for the vast majority of residents. Many people's schedules do not allow for such early outings, and frankly, most dogs are not even awake at that hour.

What We Are Asking For

1. **Expansion of Off-Leash Hours:** We request that the existing off-leash hours be **extended to include 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM** at all parks where morning off-leash hours have already been approved. This is a reasonable, balanced solution that ensures both dog owners and non-dog owners can enjoy our shared spaces.
2. **Immediate Removal of Anthony Faas:** His conduct has crossed the line from enforcement into intimidation. He has been reported for targeting and harassing elderly residents and peaceful dog owners, issuing unjustified citations, and treating the public with blatant hostility. His removal is necessary to restore public trust and safety.

Addressing Potential Concerns

I understand that some concerns may arise regarding off-leash dogs. Let's address them directly:

- **Dog Aggression:** We all acknowledge that a small number of dogs can be aggressive. However, the overwhelming majority of dog owners are responsible and manage their pets appropriately. Aggressive incidents are rare and are not a valid justification for banning all dogs from enjoying off-leash time. If the concern were aggression alone, we would be banning problematic individuals from public spaces—not issuing city-wide restrictions.
- **Dog Parks Are Not a Solution:** Many might suggest that dog owners simply use designated dog parks. However, dog parks are well-documented to be unsafe environments for canine socialization. Any experienced dog owner or trainer will tell you that enclosed, high-energy spaces are a recipe for conflict and injury. Off-leash play in open park spaces is safer and healthier for dogs.
- **Dog Waste:** If the concern is waste management, then stricter fines for failing to pick up after one's dog would be a reasonable and widely supported measure. However, I can assure you that the vast majority of responsible dog owners are meticulous about cleaning up after their pets. Meanwhile, there is more human feces in our parks than dog waste—so let's keep the concerns in perspective.

reasonable and widely supported measure. However, I can assure you that the vast majority of responsible dog owners are meticulous about cleaning up after their pets. Meanwhile, there is more human feces in our parks than dog waste—so let's keep the concerns in perspective.

- **Public Safety:** If some residents prefer to avoid off-leash dogs, they have the option to visit the many, many other parks or plan their visits outside of designated off-leash hours. This is how public spaces function in a shared society—through compromise and respect.

This is About Community, Not Just Canines

At its core, this issue is about nurturing a thriving, connected, and joyful community. Off-leash hours allow residents to connect with each other, form friendships, and strengthen the fabric of our city. This isn't just about rules and regulations—it's about creating a place where people want to live, work, and stay.

I urge you to take swift action on both of these matters. Addressing these concerns is an easy win for the well-being of our city and its residents. We are simply asking for fair and reasonable access to public spaces and the removal of an officer who has abused his authority.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Laurel Misuraca

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Overreach, Community Building, and a One Simple Ask

Date:

Friday, March 28, 2025 11:28:58 AM

Good morning Jen Santos, Brian Whipple, members of SR City Council, and Sonoma County Supervisors,

I write as a 20+ year community member, educator, parent, and neighbor in support of Santa Rosa's own mission, vision, and values -- "To provide high-quality public services and cultivate a vibrant, resilient and livable city."

Today, that mission is being compromised, threatened, and eliminated by an overly aggressive solution in search of a problem. And our once thriving local community and neighborhood is being marginalized.

A strong sense of community is the heartbeat of any vibrant, livable city. When residents connect with new friends and neighbors, they weave a social fabric that fosters trust, belonging, and mutual support. These relationships transform a collection of buildings into a shared home, where people look out for one another, celebrate together, and collaborate to solve local challenges. By building friendships and forging connections, individuals not only enrich their own lives but also contribute to a city's resilience, safety, and overall well-being -- making it a place where people don't just live, but they truly thrive.

Over the past several years, we have been fortunate to have met a collection of new friends and neighbors at Hidden Valley Park and on the adjacent school grounds. We would have never met these new friends if it weren't for our shared use of the local park and our shared interest. None of us have young children. None of us use the soccer field, none of us use the swing-sets or the climbing equipment. But we do share a love of our well-trained dogs who enjoy regular exercising. And we enjoy the public park and appreciate that the city supports it with our property tax dollars.

In the early evening hours over the past 10 years, we have taken our well-socialized sheepdog there to exercise with a ball on the public grounds. We never visit the park when there are students present, soccer teams, children, or picknickers. We are courteous and considerate of others, self-aware, and responsible in every way. Our sheepdog is behaved and trained. We carry poop bags and a tennis ball. We strive to be the best neighbors we can be, at all times.

Over the past several months, a full-scale offensive on our park by Sonoma County Animal Control officer Anthony Faas has resulted in numerous tickets (of \$300-\$500 with no warnings) for unleashed dogs. Every person has been a senior citizen. Some have been ticketed for having a leash in excess of six feet. Some have simply put their leash down for a moment to tie their shoe. One gentleman was ticketed for having his small dog on his lap while sitting on a bench, relaxing in the park. Seniors have been ambushed, castigated, yelled at, and ordered to stop in their tracks. We've also witnessed this armed officer hiding in the adjacent woods with binoculars, ready to pounce with his large physical presence, guns, and onerous fines. Our sense of community has been replaced by an environment of fear and hostility.

It's worth noting that this complaint-based patrol unit has received only one complaint – and that was for a dog at large, an escapee on the loose. Not a pet. There have been no complaints about us, or our friendly and responsible neighbors.

Also, this same fear and overreach is occurring at Doyle Park and at Franklin Park. There are scores of residents uniting on Facebook groups (an unfortunate replacement for a once thriving community space) who are all reporting the details of this overreach, sharing that they all feel under siege. Brian Whipple and Anthony Faas are both keenly aware of the fear this assault and overreach has brought on the community. They've visited the Facebook groups personally.

The net is that sadly, we don't go to Hidden Valley Park anymore. Neither do our neighbors. We can't. Our sense of community is gone. Our ability to share these city resources has been taken. And the chilling effect of this aggressive and armed patrol is palpable. Driving by Hidden Valley Park in the late afternoons, we see an empty field – void of community. The only sign of life is often a white Animal Control truck, parked right at the entrance, and Anthony Faas hiding somewhere in the woods – military style. It's a hostile and intimidating sight. And it's surely not supportive of a "vibrant, resilient and livable city." It is an assault on our neighborhood and community.

Those of us without children, picnicking, or soccer interests deserve access to this neighborhood resource too. And we'd appreciate it without fear, without being terrorized, and without verbal and financial punishment from overly aggressive and rude Sonoma County Animal Control officers. There is no equity in this situation. It's just not fair.

Summary: Our ask is not a large one. As there is currently a 6am-8am window at the

park for neighbors to bring their well-behaved dogs off-leash for exercise, can we kindly ask for an afternoon window as well? Can we add a 5pm-7pm window (or 4pm-6pm in the winter) so that we can all use this community resource? Just two afternoon hours is all we ask.

Our group of community members would appreciate an opportunity to meet and discuss how we can help achieve this two-hour window.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding,

Roy Gattinella



Roy Gattinella

Chair, Business Department

Faculty Coordinator, Business Marketing Program

Maggini Hall / 1st Floor

[linkedin.com/in/roygattinella](https://www.linkedin.com/in/roygattinella)



Subject:
Date:

[EXTERNAL] ANTHONY FAAS
Friday, March 28, 2025 8:04:01 AM

Hello Ms. Santos, I am again sending you a letter I sent earlier this month as I did not hear back from you and the issues with Animal Control Officer Anthony Faas have persisted and escalated. His behavior is absolutely unacceptable, instilling fear and loathing within our elderly community.

I am writing to bring to your attention two critical, interconnected issues affecting the quality of life in our city: the urgent need for expanded off-leash hours for dogs and the alarming conduct of Animal Control Officer Anthony Faas.

A Rogue Animal Control Officer is Creating a Hostile Environment

Our community is being terrorized by an Animal Control officer who has completely lost the plot. Anthony Faas is aggressively targeting responsible dog owners, issuing exorbitant fines—ranging from \$300 to \$500—for minor infractions. His methods are extreme and predatory. Residents have reported him hiding in bushes with binoculars, lurking in the shadows, and waiting to ambush unsuspecting community members as if they were criminals. This behavior is inappropriate, unnecessary, and deeply damaging to the sense of safety and trust in our city.

Worse still, his demeanor is antagonistic and unnecessarily aggressive. He does not live in this community, he does not represent the values of this community, and his actions have made many people—particularly elderly residents—feel unsafe in public spaces. This is unacceptable. He must be removed from his position immediately.

Thousands of Residents Deserve Fair Access to Parks

Our city is home to thousands of responsible dog owners, yet there are almost no public spaces where they can safely allow their dogs off-leash without the looming threat of excessive fines and harassment. Your job, as city leaders, is to make this community a welcoming and enjoyable place to live—it's time to enact new ordinances to support that mission.

Currently, a small concession has been made for off-leash hours—6:00 AM to 8:00 AM in a handful of parks. While this is a step in the right direction, it is also impractical for the vast majority of residents. Many people's schedules do not allow for such early outings, and frankly, most dogs are not even awake at that hour.

What We Are Asking For

1. **Expansion of Off-Leash Hours:** We request that the existing off-leash hours be **extended to include 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM** at all parks where morning off-leash hours have already been approved. This is a reasonable, balanced solution that ensures both dog owners and non-dog owners can enjoy our shared spaces.
2. **Immediate Removal of Anthony Faas:** His conduct has crossed the line from enforcement into intimidation. He has been reported for targeting and harassing elderly residents and peaceful dog owners, issuing unjustified citations, and treating the public with blatant hostility. His removal is necessary to restore public trust and safety.

Addressing Potential Concerns

I understand that some concerns may arise regarding off-leash dogs. Let's address them directly:

- **Dog Aggression:** We all acknowledge that a small number of dogs can be aggressive. However, the overwhelming majority of dog owners are responsible and manage their pets appropriately. Aggressive incidents are rare and are not a valid justification for banning all dogs from enjoying off-leash time. If the concern were aggression alone, we would be banning problematic individuals from public spaces—not issuing city-wide restrictions.
- **Dog Parks Are Not a Solution:** Many might suggest that dog owners simply use designated dog parks. However, dog parks are well-documented to be unsafe environments for canine socialization. Any experienced dog owner or trainer will tell you that enclosed, high-energy spaces are a recipe for conflict and injury. Off-leash play in open park spaces is safer and healthier for dogs.
- **Dog Waste:** If the concern is waste management, then stricter fines for failing to pick up after one's dog would be a

- **Public Safety:** If some residents prefer to avoid off-leash dogs, they have the option to visit the many, many other parks or plan their visits outside of designated off-leash hours. This is how public spaces function in a shared society—through compromise and respect.

This is About Community, Not Just Canines

At its core, this issue is about nurturing a thriving, connected, and joyful community. Off-leash hours allow residents to connect with each other, form friendships, and strengthen the fabric of our city. This isn't just about rules and regulations—it's about creating a place where people want to live, work, and stay.

I urge you to take swift action on both of these matters. Addressing these concerns is an easy win for the well-being of our city and its residents. We are simply asking for fair and reasonable access to public spaces and the removal of an officer who has abused his authority.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Laurel Misuraca

From:

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Dog-walking in Santa Rosa Parks

Date:

Wednesday, April 2, 2025 12:41:03 PM

Date: April 2, 2025

Dear City Council Members, County, Supervisors, City, Managers and Animal Control managers.

Our family has lived in Santa Rosa for 43 years. Our three kids have gone to Santa Rosa public schools and have enjoyed city and school supported sports and parks throughout their childhood in this beautiful jewel of a city.

i write to you today in support of the large community of dog owners who depend on the availability of parks and trails to keep their pets healthy and safe. In the decades we have owned dogs here, in Santa Rosa, I have never seen a dangerous or aggressive dog who was not controlled by their owner. I worked for 30+ as an Emergency Physician at Community Hospital and subsequently Sutter ER and never saw an injury to a patient from dog aggression that was not provoked in some way by the patient. On the contrary, I have witnessed the camaraderie and inter-personal connections that have come from owners and their dogs while allowing their pets to play and socialize in city parks.

Now we are witnessing an over-aggressive program to terminate peaceful and controlled dog walks by Animal Control in the parks. I believe most dog-owners are only seeking a one or two hour window in one or two Santa Rosa parks at designated times that would not conflict with those who wish to use the parks without dogs. This could easily be in the very early or later hours in which most picnickers or athletic games are not scheduled.

I realize you are doing your best to provide the benefits of Santa Rosa to all of us. Our request is to allow off-lease playtime for well-disciplined dogs who exhibit reliable recall and have no prior aggressive history.

Thank you again for taking time out of your very busy days to hear our position on this. We have been socializing our dogs in this way for many years and feel we have responsibly proven its safety and benefit.

Respectfully Yours,
Alan Baron, MD

[Redacted Signature]

From:

Subject:

Date:

[EXTERNAL] Hidden Valley Park and Animal Control Overreach

Thursday, April 3, 2025 2:27:55 PM

To: Brian Whipple (Animal Control), Jen Santos (BOCS), SR City Council, James Gore/Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, SR Board of Community Services

I am writing in support of the requests made to you by both Roy Gattinella and Dr. Alan Baron.

I am an attorney and a 50 year resident of Santa Rosa. I have practiced criminal law for that time period throughout the State of California and beyond. My wife and I are members of the dog owners group referenced in the letters of the aforementioned gentlemen, and were the recent victims of the overzealous enforcement actions of Animal Control Officer Anthony Fass. We were cited for having no dog license, despite showing the Officer our dog's current license and rabies vaccination tags, which were on his collar. We were additionally cited for an unrestrained dog (a 25 lb., 2 year old Schnoodle), to whom we were throwing a tennis ball on the huge, unoccupied grassy field behind the Hidden Valley Elementary School, at 5 P.M. on a Saturday afternoon! My wife and I were the only persons present on a field that regularly accommodates two simultaneous soccer matches. We subsequently received a notice in the mail demanding a \$560.00 fine! When I appeared in Court on the matter, showing proof of the license and explaining the circumstances surrounding our dog play, the case was summarily dismissed. It obviously never should have been brought in the first place.

As described in the previous letters, our group has been meeting for many years around 4:30 to 5:00 P.M., almost every afternoon, at the Hidden Valley Park. Our well behaved dogs frolic unleashed with one another, under our supervision and voice control, while we share an enjoyable and amiable hour with our friends. It provides a wonderful opportunity both for ourselves and our dogs to enjoy the splendor of the park, and to chat and socialize in a healthy, idyllic environment with our friends and neighbors. This has become a cherished part of our day, and we wish it to continue without the fear and threat of unwarranted "police" action and draconian fines. Accordingly, my wife and I are joining in the request that a special time be designated for unleashed, supervised dog play at Hidden Valley Park, and other specific parks where dog owners regularly gather. It is our understanding that this is presently allowed at Hidden Valley Park between 6:00 and 8:00 A.M., but it is generally too dark and too cold at those hours for our largely senior group. We would suggest the hours of 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. during Standard Time Periods, and 5:00 to 7:00 P.M. during Daylight Savings Periods.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jack and Gaylene Montgomery

From:

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Letter to Santa Rosa City Council

Date:

Wednesday, April 2, 2025 5:27:37 PM

April 2, 2025

Dear Jen Santos, Brian Whipple, City Council Members, County Supervisors, City Managers and Animal Control Manager,

Hello, my name is Jane Baron.

My family moved to Santa Rosa 42 years ago, we purchased land and built our home in Montecito Meadows. My husband was an ER physician at Community Hospital/Sutter for 40 years and I had a graphic design business and taught at SRJC. Our three children attended Hidden Valley Elementary School and all graduated from Santa Rosa High School and went on to Pomona College, UCLA and Cal. All are professionals whose young lives were guided and shaped by the nurturing community spirit of Santa Rosa. I mention this as a prelude to explain the reason I have felt compelled to write my **first ever** letter to Santa Rosa City Council expressing angst, disappointment and a lack of vision with the recent developments that are occurring daily in our very precious city parks; specifically Hidden Valley Park.

My husband and I have two Vizslas, medium sized active dogs who are an integral part of our current family; this tight-knit family includes neighbors and their dogs living within walking distance to Hidden Valley Park. This group cherishes the time we have spent on warm breezy afternoons and crisp, early mornings playing frisbee and ball throwing with our dogs; drinking coffee and catching up with the latest local news. It has been a simple and quiet activity in one of the smaller community parks in Santa Rosa. HVP has a city-wide reputation as an immaculate park that is maintained and kept clean by the dog owners and neighbors who live nearby. One neighbor who lives contiguous to the park walks over twice daily with his trash bucket and picks up trash and cleans park benches and tables, he has done this for over 12 years with his small 14 year old dog trotting by his side. (Last month he was ticketed for his dog being off-leash) We have all rallied to pick up chards of broken beer bottles and dozens of tossed fast food wrappers and cigarette butts to keep this park special. Everyone benefits from this extra effort.

This description is important to note because this world has recently been upended by the presence of a new animal control officer who has created a fear-based and aggressive demeanor; hiding behind bushes with binoculars hell bent on issuing as many outrageously priced off-leash tickets as possible. This is **not** because there have been complaints of unruly, ownerless dogs on the loose but the motive is driven to write 300 to 500 dollar tickets, generating income for the city of Santa Rosa. Is this the goal for the city whose motto is "The City Designed For Living..." This 'officer' is armed and aggressive to residents like us who have lived and worked our entire lives in Santa Rosa.

It was my understanding that Santa Rosa many years ago had established a 'time zone' for off-leash voice-controlled dogs in certain parks in the mornings before 8 am. My question to you; is this true and could we establish a similar two hour window in the late afternoons. As citizens of Santa Rosa we pay our property taxes to help support a healthy and safe lifestyle for all of us. An aggressive 'animal control officer' creates a sense of distrust and fear in the citizens he is working for. The fear is palpable and the parks are empty of much of what made them so delightful....people and their dogs. I am requesting the City Council to consider a reasonable sharing of this park space so that all of the neighbors can enjoy the beauty of these public areas and honor the work and money it takes to maintain them.

Sincerely,

Jane Baron

