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## **Tybee council debates dogs' return to beach**

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The Tybee City Council engaged in a calm discussion Thursday night about taking a major step toward allowing dogs on the beach.

Councilman Paul Wolff proposed a set of rules detailing a limited number of hours and locations for dogs to be on the island's public beach. The rest of the council members said they liked the idea - but, before any details are discussed, they want to know the health implications.

"I want to make sure we aren't creating a health issue," said Councilman Charlie Brewer.

So the council voted to ask the Chatham County Health Department, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and three veterinarians what could happen if dogs are allowed back on the beach. The answers are supposed to be returned to council in a month.

"Dogs on the beach would give residents and visitors quality time with their pets and will allow Tybee to compete with other beach communities for tourism dollars," Wolff said.

It was the second consecutive meeting dominated by dog issues.

Two weeks ago, the council voted, 5-1, to take the dog park out of Memorial Park and not move it to Jaycee Park, enraging people around the island.

Resident Sandi Postle, in a widely distributed e-mail, praised Wolff for voting to keep the dog park.

"The rest of this group is scum as far as I am concerned," she wrote.

The topic came up again Thursday when Wolff offered a motion to delay the dog park's demise another 60 days. It is supposed to be gone in two weeks, as outlined in the council's vote two weeks ago.

Dog park supporters have scheduled a meeting and a get-together at the dog park from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday to discuss what to do about the park.

As for the beach, Wolff proposed limiting dogs to morning hours and evening hours - and only in certain areas. His proposal is similar to Hilton Head Island's rules.

But he also devised a fee schedule and colored collars, which Hilton Head does not have, so enforcement officials can clearly identify which dogs are legally on the beach.

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