

## RESULTS, 2018 VILLAGE GREEN PET SURVEY

### Report by the Village Green Ad Hoc Task Force on Pets September 15, 2018

Village Green owners and residents have voiced their opinions on pets, through the first Village Green Pet Survey. The survey consisted of 8 yes/ no or fill-in-the-blank questions, and one open-ended question: (#9: "Any additional comments or questions?").

A concerted effort was made to place the survey into the hands of each owner and resident, and ample time was allowed to get the surveys completed and returned to the office. We believe that the surveys are representative of the opinions of all Village Green residents and owners.

132 valid surveys were received in the office, and numbered. There are 629 condo units in Village Green. The 132 surveys received represent 20.9% of the owners/ residents of Village Green.

Following the Discussion of the Results in the section below, is a section showing Raw Numbers, followed by Suggestions Made by Respondents, Survey Availability and Distribution; Tallying and Coding of Responses; and a final section on Attitudes and Points of View.

#### **Discussion of the Results**

The number of pet owners to non-pet owners broke down to half and half. Fifty percent own pets, compared with 50% who are non-pet owners. Of the 66 pet owners, 51% own cats, 41% own dogs, and 8% have other pets. However, when asked the actual number of pets owned of the 66 pet owners, the number of pets rose dramatically.

When the question was asked as to the actual number of dogs, the number reported was 29. However, of the 40 stated cat owners, the total number of cats owned was 64, or 1.6 cats per cat owner. (One cat owner may have skewed the result somewhat, as that respondent has 12 cats!)

Eleven percent said they received complaints about their pets, most of which were for barking and noise, followed by odor/ feces issues.

However 29% of respondents had made complaints about other people's pets. Again, the most common complaints were for noise/ barking (29%), followed by odor/ feces issues (16%); followed by 30% who made various complaints of "cats in my patio/ feces/ damage" (5), rules violations (5), and other complaints: dog off-leash, cat noise, units having too many pets, pets running around upstairs, a cat on a roof, and an aggressive dog.

As to Village Green-issued dog tags, 36% were in favor; 40% were opposed, and 24% were not sure. Only 15% were willing to pay for an ID tag; while 26% were not, and 24% were unsure. The rest were non-pet owners.

Respondents let their views be known as to the level of enforcement of pet rules in the Green. 41% thought that the current level of enforcement was "*about right*"; while 27% thought it was *too little*; 14% thought there was *too much* enforcement, and 16% were *not sure*.

A hot-button topic has been the difference in enforcement against wandering off-leash cats in the Green, versus enforcement of rules against dogs in the Green. A strong majority thought that rules should not be enforced equally against dogs and cats. That view was reinforced by

the comments in response to #9, especially viewing the responses to A, B, and C together. The question was: "Should the rule regarding keeping animals leashed and/or enclosed in homes be enforced equally against dogs and cats?" The responses were: 50% said "No"; 34% said "Yes", and 15% were unsure.

Question 8: (*What type of unit do you live in?*) was to ascertain demographics. 29% lived in upper units; 33% in lower units; 33% had townhomes and no bungalows were listed. 6% declined to answer.

#### Question #9 "Additional Comments":

The plea made most often was for "more / better enforcement of the rules": (28), with additional 10 statements to "respect the rules".

Contrasted against that was the plea to "relax the rules" (22), and "allow dogs in the inner Green" (20).

However, 14 respondents said "don't allow dogs inside the Green" and 17 said to "keep the rules as they are".

The difference in treatment of cats and dogs was addressed by many in the open-ended question: 13 said that dogs and cats should be treated equally, while 15 said that dogs and cats should be treated differently, plus an additional 14 who said cats should roam free, and 8 who said that cats naturally roam.

#### **Raw Numbers:**

132 Surveys were tallied. The following are responses to questions #1 through #8 in raw numbers.

1. *Do you have any pets?*      **Yes: 66**                      **No: 65**
- a) *If yes, type of pet owned:*      **Dog: 32;      Cat: 40      Aquarium: 4;      Other: 3**
- b) *How many?*      **Dogs: 29;      Cats: 64      Other: 8**
2. *Have you ever received complaints about your pet?*  
    **Yes: 11;      No: 63;      Don't have a pet: 25;      No answer: 2**
- a) *If yes, what type of complaint?*      **Noise: 5;      Odor: 2;      Aggressive: 1;      Other: 5**
3. *Have you ever complained about a neighbor's pet?*      **Yes: 37;      No: 90;**  
    **No Answer: 1**
- a) *If yes, what type of complaint?*      **Noise/ barking: 18;      Odor/ defecation: 7;**  
    **Aggressive animal: 5;      Other: 13 (see next page for description)**
4. *Do you think that animals in the Green should be required to wear V.G.-issued ID tags to distinguish them from outside animals?*      **Yes: 47;      No: 53;      Not sure: 31**
5. *Would you be willing to pay a nominal fee for a Village Green-issued ID tag for your pet?*      **Yes: 23;      No: 39;      Not sure: 16;      No pets: 70;      No answer: 1**

6. *How do you feel about the current level of pet rules enforcement?*  
**Too Little: 35; Too much: 18; About right: 53; Not sure: 20;** No Ans: 3
7. *Should the rule regarding keeping animals leashed and/or enclosed in homes be enforced equally against dogs and cats?*  
**Yes: 44; No: 66; Not sure: 19;** No answer: 2
8. *What type of unit do you own/ live in?*  
**Upper: 38; Lower: 43; Townhouse: 43; Bungalow: 0**  
 No answer: 8

Question #3: (Have you ever complained about a neighbor's pet?)... "OTHER": Descriptions of complaints against others, in descending order of frequency.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Dogs barking:                      | 6 |
| 2. Cat in my patio / feces/ damage:   | 5 |
| 3. Rules violations (various)         | 5 |
| 4. Pet running around upstairs        | 2 |
| 5. Dog off-leash                      | 2 |
| 6. Aggressive dog/ injury             | 2 |
| 7. Attacked by a cat                  | 2 |
| 8. Cat on cat noise/ interrupting cat | 2 |
| 9. Unit has too many pets             | 2 |
| 10. Feces issues                      | 2 |
| 11. Cats roaming around:              | 1 |
| 12. Cat on roof                       | 1 |

Question #9 "Any additional comments or questions?"

The comments that were most often repeated were, in descending order of numbers:

- |     |                                  |    |
|-----|----------------------------------|----|
| X   | More / Better Enforcement        | 28 |
| U   | Relax the Rules                  | 22 |
| H   | Allow Dogs in the inner Green    | 20 |
| V   | Keep the rules as they are       | 17 |
| B   | Treat dogs and cats differently  | 15 |
| T   | (Complaints of) Feces issues     | 15 |
| A   | Treat dogs and cats equally      | 13 |
| Y   | Respect the Rules                | 10 |
| C   | Cats (naturally) roam            | 8  |
| W   | Rules violations (Complaints)    | 8  |
| J/K | Barking Dogs                     | 8  |
| P   | Allow more pets                  | 8  |
| O   | Dogs too big                     | 6  |
| E   | Cats should stay inside          | 5  |
| F   | Cats in my patio/ feces/damage   | 4  |
| R   | Raise the weight limit           | 3  |
| S   | Dog/ cat running around upstairs | 2  |
| N   | Aggressive dog/ injury           | 1  |
| AA  | Pet owner rude                   | 1  |
| CC  | Non pet owner rude               | 1  |

### **Suggestions Made by Respondents**

1. Nicely designed pet waste receptacles (bins) should be placed at each court driveway entrance.... To be picked up each time waste is collected.
2. Require soundproofing if the pet owner is in an upper unit.
3. Create a peer review group to discuss rules and attempt to get compliance informally with those against whom violations and complaints have been filed.
4. Signs should be posted on the outer perimeter of all 4 sides of VG (stating that dogs are not permitted inside the Green, except to enter/ exit.)
5. There were various suggestions to allow limited access of dogs to defined areas of the Green, and to allow limited dog walking on inner Green in the evening and night, especially during the Pacific Standard Time months.
6. Give a handout to violators who walk their dogs through the Green “I am attaching a copy of the section on pets from the Handbook. You will notice under Article 15.7 (Common Area Restrictions) that that you may not cross through the center of the Green..... I hope this will help you avoid the \$100 fine.”

### **Survey Availability and Distribution**

The pet surveys were sent to all addresses, by placing them inside the July 2018 issue of the *Highlights* newsletter, which were hand-delivered by the Court Council Representatives.

On the front page of the Highlights, was a 5” x 2-1/2 “ color ad, with a headline, “Share Your Opinions and Observations About the Pet Rules”, regarding an open meeting on pets on July 28, 2018 sub-header on page 1 that announced that the survey was inside the issue.

The Task Force opted to receive the surveys anonymously. The purpose of anonymity was to encourage truthful responses without consequences that included possible fines.

Surveys were distributed in early/ mid July, and respondents were given an August 20<sup>th</sup> deadline to submit them in the laundry rooms and in the management office mail slot. Surveys were also distributed at the open Pet meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup> to those who had not yet responded.

### **Tallying and Coding the Responses**

Working in teams of two, volunteers manually tallied responses to the closed-end questions 1 through 8. The open-ended question (#9) allowed respondents to comment in their own words.

All responses to question #9 were listed and read for content and for patterns of concerns. A list was developed of recurring phrases that could be tabulated and quantified.

### **Attitudes and Points of View:**

Many respondents were free with their opinions about themselves and those whose views they oppose.

Generalizing by pet owners:

There were a number of generalized expressions about those whom some respondents felt were “against them.” For example: *“The vast majority of our residents are responsible caretakers, and they are only segregated in this way because of a tiny cantankerous and vociferous handful of residents.”*

More: *“Some VG people are on a witch hunt to report animal activity that is trivial. Dog/animal owners should be celebrated.... We rescue strays on the green and find them homes. Why is this kindness being persecuted?”*

Another: *“Some residents are aggressive in their need to enforce antiquated rules. It makes me angry that we cannot have dogs enjoy the green with us as we clean up after them.”*

Generalizing by non-pet owners:

Non pet owners did some generalizing, as well. Example: *“Pet friendly people always turn away from enforcing the rules. Most pet owners use the Green as a park and are not concerned about doing the right thing.”*

Also, *“This is not a pet park.”*

Another: *“The pet meeting was typical of selfish pet owners. To compare an animal to a child is insane. To have your pets (2) declared service animals to disregard established rules is self-serving.”*

Also, *“A number of pet owners appear to have taken the position that they are aggrieved parties, burdened by unnecessary and burdensome rules...”*

Finally, there were those who were more circumspect:

Another: *“While I will defend an owner’s right to own a pet, I (will) also defend my right not to be bothered by someone else’s animal hanging around my unit.”*

Also, *“Sadly non-compliant pet owners that go unchecked is unfair to those pet owners who are in compliance.”*

Finally, *“Every organization needs to have rules. It’s likely that VG has no more (or fewer) rules than any other similar association.... Rules enforcement here is cumbersome... in an organization as large as ours. There are no police. Security... cannot be everywhere at once. Most enforcement pits neighbor against neighbor, which does not make for a pleasant environment—but there’s not much than can be done except hope that everyone learn and respect the rules.”*

Respectfully Submitted:

Village Green Owners Association  
AD HOC TASK FORCE ON PETS

Diann Dumas  
Chair  
September, 2018