

## What are a club delegate's responsibilities?

The club delegates to DFOW perform a very important duty for their club. They are the ones that must disseminate the information provided by DFOW to their club's members; sometimes an immediate response is required.

Years ago, newsletters and other pertinent information had been mailed to member clubs. This is no longer an option. Local legislative matters happen quickly—sometimes with less than 24 hours notice. DFOW requires two club delegates to be on the DFOW yahoo email group. This is our only means of communication with our club and individual members.

There exists a patchwork of local community animal and zoning rules in our State. Changes to local ordinances can happen quickly; before anyone even knows that they have been considered. For too many years, dog people have not paid attention to what is going on in their communities and rules and regulations have been put in place regarding your ability to keep your dogs. These rules and regulations are typically put into code because of neighborhood disputes or the actions of a few irresponsible pet owners. Within the last few years when we have been asked for help, DFOW has given information to local municipal officials that have considered changing their existing animal codes. We believe that grass roots efforts by responsible animal owners to educate elected officials can help them make informed decisions regarding code changes. This is where the club delegates come into play.

When DFOW is alerted to a possible code change, we send out an alert on the Yahoo list. Delegates must immediately get this information to their club members. As DFOW does not have access to individual club rosters, we do not know if there are members in the community considering animal code changes. In one recent case, DFOW was alerted only 6 hours before the meeting was taking place. It has been our experience that if responsible animal owners appear at the initial meeting and are polite and give expert advise, the elected officials are more inclined to not react in haste by creating a burdensome code change. This is the primary reason that we must use an email system; there is typically no time to compose, print, then USPS mail alerts.

DFOW requires two delegates with email access to insure that if one of the delegates is out of town or is having computer problems, someone can still get important information to their club members.

Delegates are also the voice of their club when it comes to voting matters. If there is legislation being considered at the State level, DFOW will gather all of the information regarding a bill. That information will be shared with our membership. The membership will vote as to our position on a bill. This position will then be put on the State of WI ethics website. For this type of situation, we will try and hold two meetings—the initial meeting will cover the bill's contents and possible ramifications for dog owners. At the second meeting we will take a vote on our position. This gives the delegates time to share the information with their club members and for their club to give them their voting decision.

Delegates should also give regular reports at their club meetings regarding DFOW business. They should also provide their club newsletter editors with DFOW event information and volunteer requests. Delegates should also notify their club members when a new newsletter is posted on the DFOW.net website.

**Thank you to all of our club delegates who are providing such an important service to their clubs!**