



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**Off-Leash Area Working Group**  
**January 15, 2010**  
**9:00 am**  
**Room 222- City Hall**  
**Meeting Minutes**



Robert J. DeRubeis  
Interim  
Commissioner

**Attending:** Susan Albright, *Alderman*, Robert DeRubeis, *Interim P & R Commissioner*, Candace Havens, *Interim Planning Director*, Fran Rice, *P & R Commission Chairman*, Officer Ralph Torres, *Animal Control Officer*, Amy Koel, *DOLAC Chairman*, Lee McIntyre, *Friends of Cold Spring Park*, Ted Kuklinski, *Newton Conservators*, Carol Schein, *Open Space Coordinator*, Carol Stapleton, *Recreation Manager*, Ann Dorfman, *Citizen Representative*, Robin McLaughlin, *Secretary*

**1. Members of Off Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG)**

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis welcomed the new members of the Off Leash Area Working Group (OLAWG), Ted Kuklinski, the Newton Conservators, Ralph Torres, Newton Police Animal Control Officer, and Lee McIntyre, Friends of Cold Spring Park.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he has spoken with the Law Department and the OLAWG meetings are public meetings. Notices of the meetings will be posted.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis asked for suggestions of adding additional members, keeping in mind the group size should not become unwieldy.
- Ms. Dorfman stated her concern is that the process should remain open to dog owners from the start.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated Ms. Dorfman and Mr. McIntyre represent the dog owners. The owners may not be at the table but they are well represented.
- Ms. Dorfman stated she does not represent dog owners. Dog owners have been flying under the radar. Ms. Dorfman stated she represents a system that allows protection of people and places.
- Mr. McIntyre stated it is a new day now. Dog owners are interested.
- Ms. Schein requested the group not use the term “dog park”, but instead use the term “off-leash areas”. Dogs are allowed in all City parks on leash. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis agreed.

**2. Web Page Update**

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated a new web page is being created on the Parks & Recreation Department web page, and should be available by next week. The webpage will include the members bios, the agenda and minutes from each meeting, and the survey can be linked to the website. The e-mail address to contact OLAWG is [parks@newtonma.gov](mailto:parks@newtonma.gov).
- Officer Torres recommended a link to the dog licensing and rabies information because a lot of owners do not know where to find this information. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis will add these links to the web page.
- Mr. McIntyre recommended taking down the current off-leash proposals from the website. Though the locations may be good locations the current proposals should not be grandfathered in. All members agreed. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis will have the proposals removed from the web page.
- Mr. McIntyre recommended the rules for the Cold Spring off-leash area be posted along with the ordinance. The members agreed and Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he will have the rules and ordinance posted to the web page.

### 3. Development of Criteria

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated there seems to have been some confusion on the assignment he gave the group at the last meeting to determine criteria. There are two phases in determining criteria for off-leash areas:
  - Phase 1 = Criteria for what makes a green area acceptable for use as an off leash area
  - Phase 2 = Criteria for off leash areas
- Ms. Dorfman asked what rules out an area to be used as an off leash area.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated we would have to look at other communities to review what they have as OLA criteria. Alderman Albright, Ms. Schein, Ms. Stapleton, and Ms. Koel stated they have done research on other communities and have the information available. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis requested the information be forwarded to Ms. McLaughlin.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis commented the criteria submitted by the members will be categorized into either Phase 1 or Phase 2. When the criteria are determined possibly two people from OLAWG will be assigned to attach the criteria to available green spaces.
- Ms. Koel has a person willing to take pictures of possible OLA.
- Mr. McIntyre suggested the group gather a list of parks currently being used by dog owners. These dog owners would have valuable information on sites that may or may not work as OLA. Nahanton Field seemed like a perfect location until the dog owners discussed their concern about the ticks in the field.
- Ms. Stapleton commented the Conservation Commission may have ideas on conservation areas.
- Interim Planning Director Havens commented one conservation issue is the dogs scaring off the wildlife. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis requested Interim Planning Director Havens request parameters from the Conservation Commission for OLA.
- Mr. Kuklinski stated the Conservators have put together a booklet that includes a variety of information on conservation land throughout the City. This booklet could be used as a resource for information.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated Ms. McLaughlin will e-mail the list of Phase 1 & Phase 2 criteria to the members and requested the members review and prioritize the list.
- Alderman Albright recommended the size of OLA be part of phase 1.
- Ms. Dorfman submitted a draft she received from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Ms. Dorfman is working with the DCR to develop OLA requirements.

### 4. ADA Requirements

- Ms. Schein has not received a response from the City's Law Department but Interim Commissioner DeRubeis has spoken with them.
- The Law Department is looking at what other communities are doing and how many ADA compliant OLA would be required.
- Alderman Albright commented different communities follow different guidelines.

### 5. New Business

- The next OLAWG meeting will be Friday, January 22 at 9am in Room 222 at City Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Robin McLaughlin*