



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Off-Leash Area Working Group
January 22, 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*, 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. Web Page Update

- The web page is up and running, including the survey. The survey can only be completed once per computer I.P. address.
- OLAWG needs to get the word out to the public the survey is available.
- Ms. Dorfman recommended putting fliers in the water bills that are being sent out. Ms. Dorfman stated the group needs input from the dog owners and they should be targeted aggressively. Ms. Dorfman submitted a flier sample.
- Ms. Koel commented Ms. Dorfman makes a good point, but sometimes what people say they will do and what they actually do are two different things.
- Alderman Albright stated DOLAC received a good response sending out fliers when DOLAC was recruiting volunteers.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis suggested having a link on the main page of the City's website. All members agreed these are good suggestions. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis will follow up with the IT department to create a link to the survey and with the Water Department to check on the process of sending out fliers with their water bill mailings.

2. Development of Criteria

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he had received the criteria from the group members with their priorities listed. Some members prioritized the categories other prioritized the criteria. The list seemed to be a little confusing. The group agreed. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis requested the group come up with 15 criteria.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated the criteria should be more general than specific.
- Ms. Dorfman agreed each park will need to be evaluated individually.
- Ms. Koel agreed the criteria should be kept general. Criteria may apply differently to each open space.
- Mr. McIntyre stated there will need to be trade offs and agreed the criteria should be general but the language should be correct.
- The group developed the following general criteria:
 - ADA Compliance
 - Conservation Impact
 - Aesthetics Impact
 - Consideration of Abutters
 - Parking
 - Park Access
 - Size
 - Impact on other Uses
 - Site Characteristics
 - Distribution
 - Current Usage
 - Enforcement

- Alderman Albright asked if enforcement is an implementation issue. Not one of the other communities reviewed had enforcement as criteria.
- Ms. Schein asked Officer Torres if he needs to have the ability to drive to an off-leash area. Officer Torres responded he walks to most locations.
- Ms. Dorfman suggested the group meet with the communities about enforcement.
- Mr. McIntyre stated this is a good list based on the feedback from the past year and a half.
- Ms. Dorfman inquired if cost should be one of the criteria and stated for example the Deer Park could be used as one big off leash area if there was money to add parking, etc Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated cost is a Phase 2 criteria.
- Alderman Albright commented the City has 80,000 residents we should not commit to one big dog park.
- Mr. McIntyre stated the distribution of OLA may not be even.
- Interim Commissioner asked the members for approval of the list of Phase 1 criteria. All members agreed to list.
- Mr. McIntyre stated the proper verbiage should describe the Phase 1 criteria.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis will have the current criteria assigned to the new list created by the working group and distributed to the group before the 01-29-10 meeting for review. The group will need to define how many of the criteria must be met for a green space to be considered for an OLA.
- Ms. Koel recommended the group members review the information distributed on OLA's in other communities before next meeting.
- Ms. Schein asked what the goal is of OLAWG. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated the goal is to determine criteria and attach the criteria to available green space.
- Ms Schein inquired how many dog owners are in Newton. Officer Torres stated 2,500 licensed and up to 8,000 unlicensed dog owners.

3. ADA Requirement

- No updated information from Law Department

4. Timeline

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis distributed 8"x11" maps of each ward to the group members and stated once the criteria has been determined the group may break up into groups of two to apply the criteria to the available green spaces.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he will keep meetings to one hour but the group may need to meet more often. The OLAWG has a short window to make progress.

5. New Business

- Interim Commissioner accepted questions from the public. Harry Sanders of Edmands Park stated he has been following this process and commented there is no business model. The group needs to look at what the initial impact is on the OLA users. The Edmands Park community is energized in a positive way, such as in park care; last week the community reported a down tree on the park trail. Is stewardship an option?
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated stewardship would be open for discussion once a site is chosen.
- MS. Koel stated the Edmands community has made it very clear they do not want an official OLA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin

Action Items:

Item	Person	Completed
Request a link be posted on City website main page to Dog Owner Survey	Bob	
Check process of submitting fliers in water bill mailings	Bob	Yes
Assign general criteria to verbiage in spreadsheet–distribute to group	Bob	