



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Off-Leash Area Working Group
February 12, 2010
9:00 am
Room 222-City Hall
Meeting Minutes



Robert J. DeRubeis
Interim
Commissioner

Attending: Susan Albright, *Alderman*, Bob DeRubeis, *Interim P & R Commissioner*, Lee McIntyre, *Friends of Cold Spring Park*, Officer Ralph Torres, *Animal Control Officer*, Amy Koel, *DOLAC Chairman*, Carol Schein, *P & R Open Space Coordinator*, Carol Stapleton, *Recreation Manager*, Ann Dorfman, *Citizen Representative*

Absent: Candace Havens, *Interim Planning Director*, Fran Rice, *P & R Commission Member*, Walter Bernheimer, *P & R Commission Member*, Ted Kuklinski, *Newton Conservators*.

1. Development of criteria for feasible green areas-Phase 1 - Review green space evaluations

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis commented there seemed to be some confusion regarding which number rating system to use with the criteria evaluating a green space. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis recommended the rating would be done using number 1, 2 & 3, with number three being a positive rating. At the bottom of the page would be a feasibility number with a list of possible issues in the green space for an OLA.
- Alderman Albright commented the more OLA established parking may not be an issue, some of the criteria could be less important in certain areas.
- Ms. Koel commented some of the criteria are related.
- Ms. Schein commented she had trouble with the enforcement criteria because it was not clear what Officer Torres requires to enforce an OLA. Officer Torres commented access to the area is important.
- Ms. Stapleton commented each individual may have a different interpretation of the criteria.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated the criteria are all subjective. This group needs to be more specific and less subjective.
- Mr. McIntyre stated the group needs more information than just a number rating. Each green space will be unique and have its' own benefits and issues.
- Interim Commissioner agreed and recommended adding a space for comments on the evaluation form.
- Ms. Koel stated the numbers are a reasonable gateway to what Mr. McIntyre is talking about.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated the next step will be to determine how many criteria will be required in evaluating a green space.
- Alderman Albright stated the group has collected information from other communities and requested the communities be contacted and asked:
 - ✓ How they use the criteria
- Mr. McIntyre commented the narrative for each park is important; some negotiation goes on during the evaluation process.
- Ms. Dorfman presented a form she created to evaluate the Newton Centre green space. The form included a detailed breakdown of criteria, i.e. fenced. Ms. Dorfman stated she could not evaluate with out the option to choose if the area should be fenced or not.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated this would be more of the Phase 2 evaluation.
- Alderman Albright stated there may be layers to the criteria.
- Mr. McIntyre recommended an alternate model:
 - ✓ Evaluate site numerically
 - ✓ Add additional narrative

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis commented if the individual performing the evaluation is not aware of the activities taking place in the green space how valid is the evaluation. For example the evaluation done by Ms. Dorfman of Newton Centre Green does not take into account this space is a heavily permitted for baseball use and would not be a feasible OLA.
- Ms. Koel inquired if the group can have a brief description of each park.
- Alderman Albright inquired if all the parks are permitted. Interim Commissioner responded no. Alderman Albright requested if a list is available of permitted green space.
- Ms. Schein stated another example is Weeks Field. Weeks has a lot of turf maintenance performed, the field is irrigated and aerated, the Parks & Recreation Dept members are aware of this but not everyone else in this group.
- Ms. Dorfman stated the group needs to clarify the goal of what we do with the people already using their neighborhood parks as unofficial OLA's.
- Mr. McIntyre commented after a conversation with the Mayor the goal of OLAWG is to create as many OLA as possible and discourage areas that may not be feasible. The group respects the fact there are unofficial OL areas and we do not want to take away what is valued by the neighborhood.
- Ms. Dorfman stated she would like to determine the problem and try to solve the problem.
- Alderman Albright stated the current evaluations on the green space are to look at the criteria. Rating the green space will happen further down the road in this process. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis agrees.
- Alderman Albright recommended adding an area to the form to note issues/concerns.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated we have made progress and we need to continue moving forward. If we end up with 80 possible green space that look good on paper then we move on to Phase 2.
- Ms. Koel commented carrying capacity should go under the size criteria.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated at the next meeting the group will review the areas evaluated using the updated form. Alderman Albright recommended evaluating a feasible green space and a space that may be problematic.
- Ms. Koel stated the evaluations will change the criteria.

2. New Business

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis reviewed the dog owner survey results. Currently there have been 198 responses from the survey. The group needs to get the word out about the survey.
- Alderman Albright recommended sending a notice out with the PTO e-newsletter.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin

Action Items from 02-12-10 Meeting:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Date to be completed</i>
Call other communities to ask how they utilize the criteria they have developed.	Robin	02-19-10
Provide list of permitted green space to the group.	Robin	02-19-10
Provide a list of Parks to the group with brief description.	Robin	02-19-10
Update green space evaluation form, including a space for comments	Robin	02-19-10
Contact PTO- inquire how to send dog owner survey info out with e-newsletter	Robin	02-19-10