



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Off-Leash Area Working Group

February 19, 2010

9:00 am

Room 222-City Hall

Meeting Minutes



Robert J. DeRubeis
Interim
Commissioner

Attending: Bob DeRubeis, *Interim P & R Commissioner*, Lee McIntyre, *Friends of Cold Spring Park*, Officer Ralph Torres, *Animal Control Officer*, Walter Bernheimer, *P & R Commission Member*, Amy Koel, *DOLAC Chairman*, Carol Schein, *P & R Open Space Coordinator*, Carol Stapleton, *Recreation Manager*, Ted Kuklinski, *Newton Conservators*, Ann Dorfman, *Citizen Representative*

Absent: Susan Albright, *Alderman Candace Havens*, *Interim Planning Director*, Fran Rice, *P & R Commission Member*

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

- 🐾 Interim Commissioner DeRubeis commented he evaluated the River Street Playground and does not believe this would be a feasible OLA. The playground is an open area but there is not a lot of space. While evaluating the space, using the updated form, some ratings of three's did come up (three being the best rating). This exercise demonstrates how individuals using the criteria while evaluating a green space may view the space differently, how does the group get around this.
- 🐾 Mr. Bernheimer stated there is a lot of green space available in Newton and the group should winnow down the list by using the groups collective knowledge of the different areas.
- 🐾 Interim Commissioner DeRubeis asked how the group eliminates a green space.
- 🐾 Ms. Schein suggested eliminating a green space by size; River St. Playground is not a good size for an OLA, the River Street playground is less than an acre and half of the park has play equipment.
- 🐾 Mr. Bernheimer inquired if the group has determined the appropriate size for a fenced area.
- 🐾 Ms. Dorfman stated it is difficult to evaluate an area not knowing what a dog park is. What are we trying to accomplish.
- 🐾 Ms. Schein stated that is the dilemma of this entire issue.
- 🐾 Mr. Bernheimer inquired if there is a list of all unofficial OLA's. Mr. McIntyre stated this is one of the criteria, but he does not know all the parks or unofficial sites.
- 🐾 Ms. Dorfman inquired what OLAWG should do if we decide people cannot use an area as an OLA.
- 🐾 Mr. Bernheimer stated currently people walk their dogs to areas near their home. If this group thinks we can force people to get in their cars and drive to an area, we are kidding ourselves.
- 🐾 Mr. McIntyre, playing devils advocate asked why is that OLAWG's responsibility. That is a tough thing to do. OLAWG is responsible for creating official OLA's.
- 🐾 Mr. Bernheimer stated even if the group picks 12 green space for official OLA's and encourages the public to use these areas and allow the area to be self-policed we will not change human behavior. The parks with unofficial OLA's with 10-15 dogs are the issue.
- 🐾 Mr. McIntyre stated the group needs to determine where the unofficial OLA's are currently located.
- 🐾 Ms. Dorfman stated there are also areas not being used as unofficial OLA's that could be used as OLA's.
- 🐾 Interim Commissioner DeRubeis asked how we figure this out.
- 🐾 Ms. Koel commented the criteria should be developed while looking at the parks.

- 🐕 Mr. McIntyre suggested the group use the list of parks received this week. The criteria are good for areas under consideration not for areas that are eliminated.
- 🐕 Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he wants to be sure the reasons why a park is eliminated or considered for an OLA are clear and available to the public.
- 🐕 Ms. Dorfman stated the policy needs to be articulated. Currently she is part of a group of dog owners who are vulnerable, targeted and criticized even though they have been responsible dog owners.
- 🐕 Mr. McIntyre stated the next step is to test the criteria by performing evaluations. But the group cannot evaluate 100 sites some sites need to be ruled out.
- 🐕 Interim Commissioner DeRubeis directed the group to identify parks already being used as unofficial OLA's, using the list of green space managed by the Parks & Recreation Department.
- 🐕 Mr. Bernheimer stated we will also need a list of Public Works green space and Conservation green space.

Ward	Park	Unofficial OLA	Ward	Park	Unofficial OLA
1	Forte Park	Y	5	Angier School Playground	N
1	Boyd Park	Y	5	New Cold Spring Park	Y
1	Lincoln-Eliot Playground	Y	5	Old Cold Spring Park	Y
1	Carleton Park	Y	5	Emerson Playground	Y
1	Charlesbank Park	N	5	Hyde Playground	N
1	Hunnewell Playground	Y	5	Warren Lincoln Playground	Y
1	Pelligrini Playground	Y	5	Braceland Playground	Y
1	Stearns Park	Y	5	Richardson Playground	N
1	Coletti-Magni Park	N	5	Zervas School Playground	N
1	Veterans Memorial Park	N	6	Newton Centre	Y
1	Walnut Park	N	6	Mason Rice Playground	Y
2	Halloran Sports Complex	Y	6	Crystal Lake	Y
2	Gath Pool	N	6	Levingston Cove	Y
2	Bullough's Pond	N	6	Cronin's Cove	Y
2	Cultural Center	Y	6	Newton Highlands Playground	Y
2	Claflin Playground	Y	6	Thompsonville Playground	Y
2	Cabot Park	Y	6	Newton Centre Green	N
2	NNHS	N	6	Weeks Park	Y
2	Edmands Park	Y	7	Burr Park	Y
2	Ed Center	N	7	Chaffin Park	Y
2	Elmwood Park	Y	7	Farlow Park	Y
2	Lowell Park	Y	7	Eliot Memorial Park	N
2	Washington Park	Y	7	Ward Park	Y
3	Tom Torchia Playground	Y	7	Ward School Playground	Y
3	NCSC Playground	Y	7	Webster Park	N
3	Franklin School Playground	Y	8	Countryside School Playground	Y
3	McGrath Park	Y	8	Brown & Oak Middle School Playground	Y
3	West Newton Commons	Y	8	Solomon Schecter Playground	N
3	Capt. Ryan Park	N	8	NSHS	Y
3	Wellington Playground	Y	8	Memorial Spaulding Playground	N
3	River St Playground	Y	8	Nahanton Park	Y
4	Burr School Playground	Y	8	Kennard Park	Y
4	Hamilton Playground	Y			
4	The Cove	Y			
4	Lyons Park	N			
4	Islington Oval	Y			
4	Pierce School Playground	N			
4	Williams School Playground	N			
4	Ford Playground	N			

2. New Business

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he will be meeting with Dan Atkinson from the Newton Tab to discuss Off Leash Areas.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robin McLaughlin

Action Items from 02-19-10 Meeting:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Date to be completed</i>
Obtain a list of Public Works green space	Robin	02-26-10
Obtain a list of Conservation green space	Ted K.	02-26-10