



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Off-Leash Area Working Group

May 14, 2010, 9:00 am
Room 222- City Hall
Meeting Minutes



Robert J. DeRubeis
Interim
Commissioner

Attending: Bob DeRubeis, *Interim P & R Commissioner*, Walter Bernheimer, *P & R Commission*, Amy Koel, *DOLAC Chairman*, Carol Schein, *P & R Open Space Coordinator*, Officer Ralph Torres, *Animal Control Officer*, Ann Dorfman, *Citizen Representative*, Lee McIntyre, *Citizen Representative*, Ted Kuklinski, *Citizen Representative*

Absent: Susan Albright, *Alderman*, Candace Havens, *Interim Planning Director*

Also Attending: Harry Sanders, *Resident*

1. Ordinance Update

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he spoke with Board of Alderman (BOA) President Lennon. President Lennon and the Board of Alderman are looking at the ordinance.
- Mr. Bernheimer commented he spoke with President Lennon and President Lennon understands the importance of the ordinance, but other Alderman may have concerns.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated part of the concern is with dogs on the athletic fields. There are athletic fields in a number of the proposed sites, if a park is ruled out for consideration, as an off leash area, due to athletic fields many parks would not be available. OLAWG needs to educate the public. Dogs will be restricted to specific locations in the different parks; dogs will not be authorized to run all over the athletic fields, there could be shared usage with restrictions.
- Ms. Dorfman presented a handout and stated the Town of Arlington recently passed an ordinance allowing off leash recreation in all the Arlington parks from dawn to 9am.
- Mr. Bernheimer requested OLAWG include a slide in the presentation that lists all surrounding communities that have legal off leash recreation areas.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis asked the group if there were any objections to the ordinance changes. Mr. Sanders asked if the language "or designee" should be included after "Parks & Recreation Commissioner" in the ordinance. Ms. Schein stated this language is in the City contracts and agreements. Ms. Dorfman asked if there was any reason not to add this language. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis will make the changes and add the language today.

2. May 17, 2010 Commission Presentation

- After discussion, Mr. McIntyre suggested the group present four parks, Claflin, McGrath, Old Cold Spring Park and Norumbega. Braceland Park was eliminated from the first round of discussions and will be discussed at a later date.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis asked the group for input on the presentation.
- Mr. Kuklinski inquired if there were going to be restricted hours at the sites.
- Mr. Bernheimer stated it is a good idea to broaden the usage.
- Ms. Dorfman suggested having more parks open from dawn to 9am.
- Mr. Bernheimer agreed this is a good idea, the dawn to 9am hours may please a lot of people and take pressure off OCSP. A slide should be included in the presentation stating the group is considering this idea. Mr. Kuklinski agreed and stated Arlington has set a precedent.
- Ms. Dorfman stated once an off leash area is legal it can be controlled.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis asked which sites could be open dawn to 9am. Mr. Bernheimer stated all 24 proposed areas. Ms. Schein stated the P & R Commission could not authorize this dawn to 9am proposal in conservation land. Mr. Bernheimer stated no schools should be included, that would leave 20 of the 24 sites could be open dawn to 9am.

- Ms. Dorfman inquired if Walnut Park could be presented on May 17. Ms. Koel stated Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he would not propose any parks in this first round of presentations that require fencing.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated as a side note, there is temporary construction fencing at Cabot Park and when the construction company is not using the fenced area it is being used by off leash dogs and it is working well as a fenced off leash area. This is something to consider going forward.
- Officer Torres commented for the hours of dawn to 9am there would be no enforcement between 6:00am- 7:30am. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis asked if cruisers would be available for emergencies. Officer Torres stated yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin McLaughlin, Secretary