



Setti D. Warren
Mayor



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Off-Leash Area Working Group

June 18, 2010, 9:00 am
Room 222- City Hall
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Bob DeRubeis, *Interim P & R Commissioner*, Carol Schein, *P & R Open Space Coordinator*, Ann Dorfman, *Citizen Representative*, Ted Kuklinski, *Citizen Representative*, Amy Koel, *DOLAC Chairman*

Absent: Susan Albright, *Alderman*, Candace Havens, *Interim Planning Director*, Wally Bernheimer, *P & R Commission*, Fran Rice, *P & R Commission*, Ralph Torres, *Animal Control Officer*, Carol Stapleton, *Recreation Manager*

Also Attending: Harry Sanders, *Resident*, Eve Cohen, *Resident*, Claudia Morris, *Resident*

1. Ordinance Update

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he appeared before the Programs & Services Committee on June 16. The changes to the ordinance were reviewed. The biggest change to the ordinance is the P & R Commissioner will bring forward the off leash area proposals. Alderman Yates asked what the process is for bringing forward an area and asked why it was not in the ordinance. The Law Department does not believe the process should be included in the ordinance because the process is always evolving.
- Ms. Dorfman stated other cities and towns ordinance are simple and short.
- Ms. Koel stated Ms. Lawlor from the Law Department wrote the revised ordinance.
- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis reviewed the ordinance amendments submitted by Alderman Yates:

AMENDMENT 1: Purpose is to allow consideration of sites owned by the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation and other non-municipal public agencies. Text: In the first sentence of Section 3-30 (b) (1), delete the words "under owned by the city". In the first sentence of (b) (2), delete the words "under the control of the city". In the second sentence, delete the word "municipal".

- The Board of Aldermen did not agree with this amendment.
- Ann Dorfman stated the area the group previously evaluated near Fire Station #4 is MWRA land. The MWRA does not permit use of their space. In speaking with the DCR, the DCR did not agree the MWRA has permitted use. The concern was who would maintain the area if used by another entity. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated he is not opposed to maintaining an area if it is being used as an OLA, but a license agreement would be required.

AMENDMENT 2: Purpose is to make a correction.

Text: In the last sentence of (b) (2), change "designate" to "delegate".

- The Board agreed this was a typo and will be corrected.

AMENDMENT 3: Purpose is to treat all ball fields the same.

Text: In Section (b) (4), insert the words "and softball" between "baseball" and "fields". Move "and" to after "Richardson Field" and add after it "(vi) Robert Braceland Playground in Upper Falls."

- The five major little league fields are excluded for consideration as off leash areas. The Board of Alderman requested a list of the 72 areas OLAWG has previously evaluated. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis explained elementary schools were taken of the first round of proposed areas.

AMENDMENT 4: Purpose is to clarify when fencing is necessary.

Text: In second sentence of (b) (1), replace "they deem appropriate" with "it is necessary to confine the dogs to the unleashed area."

- Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated the language regarding fencing is already included in the ordinance. The mixed model was explained to the Board, some areas will be fenced others will not be fenced; there may be hourly/seasonal restrictions. Mr. Kuklinski stated the group must hold firm on the mixed model. It appeared the Board was looking for recommendations from OLAWG.

AMENDMENT 5: Purpose is to spell out that unleashed dogs shall be confined to unleashed areas.

Text: Add to section (a) "(12) the topography and natural or manmade barriers, or new fencing on the site will keep dogs confined to the unleashed area."

- Alderman Yates commented this was the make or break amendment for him but the rest of the Board did not agree.
 - Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated the Board of Alderman tabled the ordinance awaiting more information and he will work with the Law department to revise the ordinance. The current ordinance is extended through September 30, 2010.
- 2. June 14 P & R Commission Presentation**
- Ms. Schein reviewed the P & R Commission Meeting presentation. The Commission voted to table both Claflin Park and McGrath Park awaiting additional information from OLAWG. There were abutters from both parks in attendance. The concerns were parking, dog waste, changing the neighborhood park, having a dog park where children play.
 - Ms. Koel stated a lot of the people present were new to the issue and accused the group of not being transparent. The group needs to develop a mission statement. The group will always get push back; and will have to be proactive in advertising the meetings.
 - Mr. Kuklinski stated he wrote a letter for the Conservators newsletter to explain what OLAWG is doing.
 - Ms. Dorfman stated the group needs a framework for people to refer to. Ms. Koel stated the group has a vision and framework, a mission statement is needed. Ms. Dorfman restated the group needs a framework/master plan for the process to work and be understood. Other cities have master plans that appear to work. Ms. Schein asked if Ms. Dorfman if she could provide an example of another cities master plan. Ms. Dorfman will provide an example.
 - Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated over the summer the group can take a look at all of these issues, but it is important the group stay on task and continue to move forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin McLaughlin, Secretary