



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

## Off-Leash Area Working Group

June 25, 2010, 9:00 am  
Room 222- City Hall  
Meeting Minutes



Robert J. DeRubeis  
Commissioner

**Attending:** Bob DeRubeis, *P & R Commissioner*, Ann Dorfman, *Citizen Representative*, Amy Koel, *DOLAC Chairman*, Candace Havens, *Interim Planning Director*, Carol Stapleton, *Recreation Manager*.

**Absent:** Susan Albright, *Alderman*, Wally Bernheimer, *P & R Commission*, Ralph Torres, *Animal Control Officer*, Carol Schein, *P & R*, Ted Kuklinski, *Citizen Representative*

**Also Attending:** Janet Ruttenberg, Intern from the University of Vermont

### 1. June 21 P&R Commission Meeting – Update

- Commissioner DeRubeis provided an update:
  - The use of Old Cold Spring Park off leash area has been extended to September 30, 2010, the same as the ordinance.
  - Claflin Park and McGrath Park have been tabled until September. The Commission is looking for additional information from OLAWG. The Commission did agree to hold a meeting in August if necessary. The September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline puts pressure on this group to provide information to the P & R Commission by September.
    - Information requested by the Commission:
      - OLAWG:**
        - provide a summary of anticipated intensity for various portions of day and week vs. arbitrary size of park
        - Fees for professional dog walkers
        - Restricted Hours for permitted activities
      - Aldermanic issues:**
        - Off street parking criteria/parking space ratio/dog park to lot size
        - Enforcement of traffic & unregistered dog use of park
          - User registration fees
          - Health
          - Limitations of Hours
          - Fencing and other improvement costs
          - Specific information from the Board of Aldermen in the new Dog Ordinance
    - This group may have to come forward with time restrictions. At Claflin Park the proposed hours may be 9am-3pm to avoid the bus stop issue and NNHS athletic practice. Ms. Dorfman stated the group needs to be careful in setting a precedent.
    - The Law Department checked the deed for Claflin Park there are no restrictions in the deed.
  - Ms. Koel introduced Janet Ruttenberg, an intern from the University of Vermont. Ms. Ruttenberg is available to help with data collection, area photos, flora and fauna inventory, park usage observation.
  - Ms. Ruttenberg stated she has 200 hours of Community Service she must complete by the end of the summer. Ms. Ruttenberg is studying Wildlife Protection and Management at the University of Vermont.
  - Ms. Dorfman recommended a survey done at the parks should be done by non dog owners as well as dog owners. Ms. Koel requested Ms. Dorfman e-mail a copy of the survey to Ms. Ruttenberg. Ms. Dorfman stated the survey should include a question asking if the person walked to the park or drove to the park.

- Ms. Ruttenberg asked which areas the group would like her to study. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis and the group decided on the following locations:
    - Claflin Park
    - McGrath Park
    - Norumbega park
    - Walnut Park
    - Hunnewell
    - Old Cold Spring Park
    - Braceland
    - Forte
  - Ms. Ruttenberg inquired if dog waste bags were available in the off leash area, she has done research and found Holland has dog waste bags made of paper to meet recycling requirements. Ms. Dorfman stated MIT has created a dog waste composter. Ms. Ruttenberg stated it is very difficult to compost dog waste due to the meat diet most dogs are on, vegetable diets produce waste that is easier to compost.
  - Ms. Ruttenberg commented she was a member of the NSHS track team and is familiar with Old Cold Spring Park. She does not remember any incidents between dogs and the track team.
  - Interim Director Havens commented the business aspect of the dog market has not really been discussed. Good things could come from this aspect of the off leash areas.
- 2. Norumbega Proposal**
- Ms. Dorfman stated the information meeting was held at Norumbega Park this past Saturday, June 19. The signs went up on Wednesday June 16, which may not have been enough notice. Not many people showed up for the meeting. Those that did show up liked the idea of an official off leash area.
  - Commissioner DeRubeis stated if the group includes the type of information requested by the P & R Commission to the Conservation Commission, the group will not be ready for the Conservation Commission meeting in July. Ms. Koel agrees.
  - Ms. Dorfman stated a person with good knowledge of the Norumbega proposal should present the proposal to the Conservation Commission. Interim Commissioner DeRubeis stated Ms. Dorfman and Mr. Kuklinski should present the proposal. Ms. Dorfman stated a group of supporters of the Norumbega proposal should be present.
  - Interim Director Havens inquired who spoke with Ms. Phelps at the Conservation Commission. Commissioner DeRubeis stated he has spoken to Ms. Phelps. Interim Director Havens stated she will speak with Ms. Phelps to verify the requirements for the proposal to go before the Commission and the concerns the Conservation Commission may have prior to the meeting so the group may address the concerns. Director Havens will also check the zoning laws and impact on the area.
  - The group decided to hold the Norumbega proposal until all required information and concerns are determined and addressed.
- 3. Ordinance**
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated the ordinance went before the Board of Alderman (BOA) on June 16. The ordinance has been extended to September 30, 2010. The BOA has requested additional information. Commissioner DeRubeis stated he will be working with the Law Department to provide the BOA with the information they have requested.
- 4. Next meeting**
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated on the Agenda for the 07-02-10 meeting will be:
    - Review of the Master Plan samples provided by Ms. Dorfman
    - Creating a mission statement
    - Update from Ms. Ruttenberg

Respectfully submitted,

*Robin McLaughlin, Secretary*