

Comments submitted with the petition

Comments:
Thanks for your organization.
I am writing to express my strong opposition to the recent petition advocating for Edmands Park to be designated as an off-leash dog area. Living directly across from the park for the past five years, my family's experience with the current situation involving unleashed dogs has been profoundly negative, significantly limiting our use of this public space.
Despite the park's proximity to our home, we have only felt comfortable visiting Edmands Park few times due to recurring encounters with unleashed dogs that bark at or chase us. These experiences are particularly distressing as both my wife and daughter are allergic to dogs and have previously been bitten. When we have addressed our concerns with pet owners, we are often reassured that their dogs are friendly, a response that fails to acknowledge the unpredictability of animal behavior and our genuine fear.
The proposal to officially allow dogs to roam freely within Edmands Park is alarming and feels like a direct disregard for families like mine who will feel unsafe and unwelcome in their own neighborhood park. It would force us to entirely avoid this area, thus depriving us of a valuable community asset.
We urge the city to consider the implications of such a policy on all residents, including those who are apprehensive about or unable to interact safely with dogs. We advocate for maintaining strict leash laws, or at the very least, designating specific times or zones within the park for off-leash activities to ensure that the park remains accessible and enjoyable for everyone.
Thank you for considering the voices of all constituents. We hope for a decision that upholds the safety and inclusivity of our community spaces.
Safety is important.
NO off leash dog park. We often worries aboutour kids got bite by the unleashed dog from that park.
We need to be able to walk in the woods without being confronted by off-leash dogs.
It is not safe for children and dogs. We highly suggest that require all dogs must be leash in public places.
I do not want an off lease dog park. many dogs have been injured by off leash dogs in this park already.
My son is extremely afraid of dogs (even on leash) and refuses to go into the Park now because so many dogs are (illegally) off-leash and running without human supervision/control. If the dogs were better monitored for on-leash, we would be able to use the Park that is only 1 block from us!

Although not abutting Edmands Park, I enjoy walking in the park and do not want the park designated as an off-leash area.

Off-leash dogs will be running around our neighborhood. I live a block away.

Please no off leash dogs in Edmands Park

I live near Edmands Park and enjoy walking through it from time to time. When my children were young, they explored the woods, climbed trees, and ran through the trails. We appreciate having this space available to us for walking and generally enjoying nature. I love seeing dogs there and the camaraderie of dog owners but would like to enjoy the trails unobstructed by off-leash dogs.

We have a small dog and he is often anxious around dogs off of their leash.

I would like to keep the park as it is thank you

have had three dogs in past, and will have one in sept. still want dogs leashed. am 72 and worry about dogs jumping on me and making me fall.

My wife saw three coyotes together in Edmands Park last year.

I also love animals but believe in the best interests of all involved that dogs should be leashed and under the control of owners while walking in the woods. The area is large and dogs can run through areas — including wetlands— where owners cannot retrieve them. I've had people come into my backyard seeking their dog who was off-leash. In fact, I would appreciate enforcement of the current "no off-leash" law. There is a local Newtonville dog park that is quite nice which allows for canine socialization and exercise.

I've been jumped on by dogs, and my son refuses to go near the park due to the uncontrolled dogs. I live 3 minute wak away and have been unable to use the park with my family.

Thank you!

Agree that off-leash inhibits many people from using the park.

Dogs being off leash in Edmands Park requires constant vigilance for safety and enjoyment and is prohibitive for a lot of people to use the park. Currently I have to keep telling people to please put their dogs on a leash for everyone's safety and enjoyment; removing leash requirements would be a disaster to put it bluntly.

For everyone's safety, we oppose the off-leash proposal designating Edmands Park as an off-leash area

I'm a parent of two small children. I'd like to feel confident that they will be able to walk through Edmands Park without being at risk of being bitten by a dog. I was bitten a few years ago (not at Edmands Park) by a dog. It's not right that the residents of Newton would have to wonder whether they're safe in a neighborhood park.

Edmands Park is a unique asset to the community. As a mother of two young children, I would never take them to an off-leash dog park for safety reasons. An on-leash park can be enjoyed by everyone. An

off-leash park puts dogs first and excludes many in the community.

It's terrifying to be with small children and have uncontrolled off-leash dogs suddenly run up to them/you. There's no way to enjoy a park like that if you're constantly looking out for dogs.

It is safer for people and dogs to remain on leash in and around the park. The park is not enclosed. Dogs off leash can easily leave the park and enter abutting private yards and local streets, where they pose a hazard to others and themselves.

The park works well now as designated as leashes required.

While I do not support 100% off leash in Edmands park, have very limited hours (or days) of off leash been considered? Say maybe two hours a day on certain days ?

An off-leash dog park at Edmands Park will risk injuries or worse to humans. Already we have dogs in our backyard monthly that escape Edmands Park from dog owners unable to control their dogs and not following the rules. Please keep dogs on leash at Edmands Park to keep people safe.

Please keep neighbors safe by keeping dogs on leash. Too many dogs are already running around our property and our neighbors, having run away from their owners in Edmands Park. Please keep us safe.

I am strongly against the effort to designate Edmands Park off-leash

I have been jumped on by dogs while walking in the park and am wary of bringing my grandchildren to the park. I frequently see dogs running across Blake Street which puts dogs and their owners at risk. I'm concerned about environmental effects of large numbers of dogs and dog excrement roaming the park.

I do not agree with allowing dogs unleashed in Edmands park. It's already bad enough dog owners illegally unleash their dogs already. Living in a property abutting Edmands park I have already had situations where dogs ran on to my property, dogs running into the street almost getting hit by cars because they were illegally unleashed. As a resident who has lived on this property since the 1980s I have watched this park become less and less welcoming as more Newton residents have grown to use this place to let their dogs run unleashed illegally. I used to walk in the park to enjoy the woods and look at the scenery as a child. Now as parent I will not allow my children into that park because of not picking up after their dog who was probably unleashed. All the city is doing is making the City of Newton a target from a liability stand point by making this park unleashed. The near by school often bring young children to the park to learn about nature as I did as a child however I do not agree with the liability you are putting on the educators. I will say this, about 20 years ago a neighbor had a Doberman who attacked another dog because they were unleashed. There are already dog parks set up in the city which is fenced in which requires owners to pick up feces. Dog owners illegally unleash their dogs already and do not pick up the feces, making it legal for them to unleash their dog will encourage that behavior.

I lived at this address since the 1980's, and have seen dog owners leashed their dogs going into the parks. In recent years some dogs have run out of the park into our neighborhood running down the street unleashed. If Edmonds Park is turned into a dog park it would not be welcoming to others who wants to enjoy a walk in the park. Dogs should be leashed even when they are in the park. I do not agree with Edmonds Park being turned into a dog park.

There are coyotes and other wild life in the park this is another concern to take into account

We live in front of one entrance of the park. It happened several time that, while my young children were playing in the backyard, an off-leashed dog came running by. Couple of them even entered inside my house, while the backyard door was open! This happens on a time when Edmands Park is not an off-leash area. I can't imagine what would happen if the proposal is implemented. Also, even though we live right in front of it, we very rarely enjoy a stroll inside it because the majority of dogs is off-leash. Again, it

is disrespectful and unpleasant to walk around with young children in this unsafe environment. Not to mention that it is very difficult to clean after a an off-leash dog in a wood (I speak with experience).

I live one house away from the park and enjoy walking in the woods with my kids or walking through the woods to get to another street. We often have off leash dogs run right up to us which makes me nervous

Having lived in Newton for over 20 years, I strongly recommend that the city establish a fenced area specifically for dog owners who wish to let their dogs off leash, located away from residential neighborhoods. Edmands Park, which is near our community that includes both elderly residents and young children, should require dogs to remain on leashes at all times for safety and peace of mind.

I oppose the proposal to make Edmands Park leash-free. This is a safety hazard. Thank you.

While I do not abut the park, I am only a few houses from the entrance.

Our dog passed away this winter. He was always walked on a leash. I don't see any possibility for enforcing the rules that the off-leash advocates propose to implement.

I was attacked by two dogs at Edmands Park 2 yrs back but didn't bother to report it because I didn't expect anything to be done about it.

The opening sentence of the pro-off leash proposal states: "For decades, the primary visitors of Edmands Park have been dog owners who, despite the leash law, enjoyed allowing their dogs off-leash inside the park."

I suspect that the very reason the park is occupied principally by off-leash dogs and their owners is that the park is potentially scary, hazardous, and unwelcoming for anyone that desires to take a walk in a public park without the potential encounter with an unfamiliar animal. The pro-off leash coalition may therefore be correct in saying that the off leash dog owners have successfully discouraged any other potential users of the park.

My children are teenagers now but raising them across the street from Edmands Park I was quite uncomfortable, as were they, with the idea of entering the park knowing that an unleashed dog could be around any corner, over any hill, behind any tree.

This should not be the price of using a public park in the City of Newton.

What is apparent in the pro-off leash proposal is the notion of "safe" dogs vs "dangerous" dogs which is a luxury known only to those dog owners and their fellow walkers.

The pro-off leash coalition proposals for self-policing are well intentioned but it does not change the fact that turning the park fully off leash will exclude many.

All said, I respect that Edmands Park is a unique public option for off leash use, and I would welcome specific hours for off leash use, well signed, and strictly enforced.

Off leash in an urban environment like ours is never a good idea.

Many people use the park off-leash safely but it would be good to retain the ability to ticket or in some way deter those that allow their dogs to behave in a way that poses a harm to others.

We used to walk in the park as we live nearby, but we have been jumped on by unleashed dogs so many times, we no longer walk there.

Thanks for doing this. I'm a senior and the Park is my favorite walk!

I don't bring my dog to this park anymore because the number of off leash dogs makes it unsafe. I do have concerns that there is inadequate enforcement currently.

NO to making Edmands a leash-free zone: Dogs run freely, illegally, now in Edmands Park. Maybe 1 in 30 is on a leash. To designate and advertise Edmands as an off-leash area would invite, I think, a very large influx of users. Older walkers and small children need to be able to use the park in safety. Water and wildlife need to be protected from roaming dogs---whose owners lack consideration and good sense.