

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

February 22, 2005

BE IT RESOLVED:

WHEREAS, a number of dog owners in Newton have requested that the Board of Aldermen consider amending the dog leash law to allow, on a trial or other basis, dogs off leash at appropriate locations throughout the city, if possible, under appropriate conditions, and/or at appropriate times; and

WHEREAS, many Newton residents have expressed concerns that dogs off leash pose risks to health, safety, and the peaceful enjoyment of public spaces; and

WHEREAS, residents of Newton have expressed concern that Newton's dog leash law is not working effectively to protect adequately the interests of residents generally and dog owners and their dogs specifically; and

WHEREAS, a number of other communities in Massachusetts and elsewhere have instituted, on a trial or other basis, measures to permit dogs off leash at specified locations, with or without fences, and/or during specified hours; and

WHEREAS, specific concerns have been expressed about allowing dogs off leash in areas where children customarily play, such as schoolyards and small neighborhood parks and playgrounds, or in conservation areas;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Newton Board of Aldermen, that

1. the Board of Aldermen establish a Special Task Force to study whether and how the existing dog leash law should be amended, on a trial or other basis, to allow dogs off leash in Newton at certain places, times, and environments, and under what conditions, and, if so, the places, times, environments, and conditions therefor;
2. based on the results of its study, said Special Task Force shall make recommendations to the Board of Aldermen for any amendments to the dog leash law, on a trial or other basis, for consideration by the Board;
3. said Special Task Force shall conduct its study in whatever manner it deems appropriate, including, but not limited to, early consultation with the Conservation and Parks and Recreation Commissions about criteria and/or areas for consideration during the Special Task Force's study, as well as consultation with the School Department about special concerns about school playground sites, and the holding of such meetings or public hearings as the

Special Task Force deems appropriate, all in order to provide to the Board the fullest possible information about such topics as

- the functioning of the present dog leash law;
 - environmental, health, and safety impacts of dogs off leash, including the effects of other dog-related ordinances;
 - enforcement of measures allowing dogs off leash and related ordinances, including personnel, funding, and fines for violations; and
 - the experience of other communities with respect to measures allowing dogs off leash.
4. the membership of said Special Task Force shall consist of:
- 4 citizens (1 each from Wards 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8), to be appointed by the President of the Board of Aldermen, from recommendations by the aldermen from such wards;
 - 2 aldermen (1 each from Wards 1-4 and 5-8), to be appointed by the President of the Board of Aldermen;
 - 1 member of the Newton Parks and Recreation Commission, to be designated by the Commission;
 - 1 member of the Newton Conservation Commission, to be designated by the Commission; and
 - an Animal Control Officer of the Newton Police Department, to be designated by the Chief of Police.
5. the members of the Special Task Force shall choose the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Special Task Force;
6. this resolution shall be forwarded to the Special Task Force as its charge from the Board of Aldermen; and
7. during such study by the Special Task Force the existing Newton dog leash law shall remain in full force and effect and shall be enforced even-handedly throughout the city.

This Resolution adopted by an 18 -2 (Ald. Gentile and Gerst opposed; Ald. Johnson, Merrill, Salvucci, and Schnipper absent) vote of the Newton Board of Aldermen this day of February 22, 2005.

(SGD) EDWARD G. ENGLISH, City Clerk