



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Off-Leash Area Working Group

Friday, January 04, 2013

9:30 a.m., Room 202

Meeting Minutes

Attending: Commissioner DeRubeis, Alderman Susan Albright, Lee McIntyre, Amy Koel, Carol Schein, Carol Stapleton

1. Review & Update

• Enforcement

- Commissioner DeRubeis scheduled a meeting with the new president of the Police Union to inform him of the Off-Leash Recreation Specialist position. The P & R Department is moving forward to hire a person for this position.
- Ms. Koel asked if there is a timeframe for hiring for the position. Commissioner DeRubeis is planning to have a person hired by the spring time.
- Braceland Playground & Claflin Playground are closed for the sledding season until March 15.

• Cabot Park

- Cathy Mateo, abutter to Cabot Park stated nothing has changed at the off-leash area since the last time she attended the OLAWG meeting. There is constant noise from barking dogs. Ms. Mateo would like the off-leash area closed.
- Mr. McIntyre commented he has contacted the off-leash community and they have begun to monitor and self-police the off-leash area. Signs have been posted in the area requesting respect for the neighborhood. Ms. Mateo stated nothing has changed.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented the group has discussed changing the hours. Alderman Albright agreed the issue needs to be addressed.
- The group came to the consensus to change the hours at the Cabot off-leash area as follows:
 - ✓ Open weekdays 7:00am- 5:00pm
 - ✓ Open weekends 12:00pm-5:00pm
- Ms. Koel commented additional sites should be discussed for those dog owners who use the off-leash areas before and after work.
- Commissioner DeRubeis stated the hours will go into effect once the new signs are posted. The hours will be revisited in the spring once day light saving changes and the enforcement officer has been hired.

• Cold Spring Park

- Commissioner DeRubeis commented he attended the December 2012 Newton Highlands Area Council meeting to address the off-leash area at Cold Spring Park. The group has agreed to research natural barriers for the off-leash area instead of a permanent fence structure. The second issue is off-leash dogs on the trails. Enforcement will help with this issue.
- Beth Lewinger, abutter of Cold Spring Park commented a fence around the off-leash area will discourage other park users and a natural barrier will not contain the dogs because dogs lead with their nose. There continues to be off-leash dogs on the trails. The park was renovated with a federal grant and a dog park is a violation of the guidelines within the grant.
- Mr. McIntyre stated in 2008 the Department of Interior determined an off-leash area is an acceptable recreation activity.
- Ms. Lewinger would like dog's on-leash and off-leash banned from Cold Spring Park.

2. Next meeting

- The next meeting is Friday January 11 at 9:30am in Room 202