



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Off-Leash Area Working Group

Friday, March 01, 2013

9:30 a.m., Room 202

Meeting Minutes

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

1. 02-25-13 P & R Commission Meeting

- The P & R Commission requested the Commissioner come back at the April 22 Commission meeting with recommendations for the issues at Cabot off-leash area.
- Alderman Albright asked if an intern would be available to collect data at Cabot off-leash area. Commissioner DeRubeis stated yes, he will speak with Ana Gonzalez in the Mayor's office to see if there are interns available.
- Mr. McIntyre requested a copy of the 02-25-13 meeting minutes; he did not hear the entire discussion clearly during the meeting. Ms. McLaughlin will send a copy to Mr. McIntyre when the minutes are complete.
- Mr. McIntyre commented Ms. Matero is not a direct abutter of the off-leash area; she is the next house over from the direct abutter.
- A request was made to measure all the noise at Cabot Park. Recommendations:
 - The city's noise ordinance should be reviewed
 - The types of noise should be identified and measured
 - Possibly an outside source should be utilized for measurement
- The group needs to investigate surfacing options. Joe Kenyon, representative of The Friends of Cabot Park Off-leash area ("Friends") offered assistance in looking into the options for surfacing. Mr. Yale Lansky, representative of the "Friends" asked the Commissioner how open the group is for assistance from the "Friends" group. Commissioner DeRubeis responded it is beneficial for the off-leash areas to have "Friends" groups and he is not opposed to input from the "Friends".
- Mr. Kuklinski referenced a recent article regarding the Boston Common rotating the off-leash area to different locations in the Common and asked if this could be done at Cabot Park. Commissioner DeRubeis recommended looking at an overview map of the area and the seasonal activities that occur in the park.
- Mr. McIntyre stated there was a suggestion to make the area a small dog park, but this would be a non-starter because small dogs can make just as much noise as the large dogs. The comment was also made that there has been 25 or more dogs in the off-leash area at one time. Mr. Lansky commented last summer he was at the off-leash area several hours a day and never saw 25 dogs in the off-leash area. Most dog owners would not want to be in the area with that many dogs.
- Mr. Kenyon commented he has had his dog for 33 days and there was heavy use of the off-leash area after 5pm. None of the users were asked about the usage before the hours were changed and wishes data was collected before the change was made. It seems Ms. Matero's word was taken as true by the P & R Commission.
- Alderman Albright stated other boards and committees have an "open mic" agenda item to allow residents three minutes to speak at the end of the meeting instead of having individuals as an item on the agenda.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented the decision was made in the middle of winter when it was dark at 5pm. There will be mediation for both sides of the issue.

2. Enforcement Update

- Commissioner DeRubeis has a meeting with Jason Roberts next Tuesday. Mr. Roberts is being offered the position of Off-Leash Recreation Specialist. The details, such as the uniform, etc., are to be decided over the next couple of weeks.

- Mr. McIntyre asked if the hours would be unpredictable and if Mr. Roberts would attend the OLAWG meetings. Commissioner DeRubeis responded yes.

3. New Business

- Mr. Sanders asked if the meetings were recorded. Commissioner DeRubeis stated no but he has no problem having the meetings recorded, Ms. McLaughlin can start recording the meetings next week. Mr. McIntyre commented as a citizen he has the right to be notified if the meetings are being recorded, by anyone else attending the meeting, or this would break the wire tapping law.
- Commissioner DeRubeis commented the group should revisit the MWRA sites, the area across from Oakley Spa on Washington Street, Edmands Park and NSHS area near the tennis court.
- Commissioner DeRubeis and Aaron Goldman met with Joy Reichling whose son was bit by a dog near the Beacon Street entrance last summer. The meeting went well and Ms. Reichling was happy a plan was in place to have an Off-Leash Specialist in the parks.
- Mr. Sanders suggested before moving forward the group review the criteria and include barking as a criteria.

4. Next meeting

- The next meeting is Friday March 8, 2013 at 9:30am in Room 202