



Robert J. DeRubeis
Commissioner

Off-Leash Area Working Group

Friday, September 14, 2012

9:30 a.m., Room 202

Meeting Minutes

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

Also Attending: Paula Spies, Newton Community Ed, Jean Marie Patriacca, Harry Sanders

1. Newton Community Ed - First Aid For Pets-Paula Spies

- ✓ Ms. Spies from Newton Community Ed reviewed a course being offered this fall:
First Aid and Emergency Response for Pet Owners
 - Available to everyone 16 years and older
 - Certificate for course completion available upon request.
 - Newton North High School
 - Dates: 11/8 & 11/15 7:00-9:00 pm
 - To register or for more info contact us at www.newtoncommunityed.org or call 617-559-6999

2. Edmands Park - off-leash area proposal – Public Discussion Only- No Vote

- ✓ Commissioner DeRubeis reviewed the discussion from the meeting on 09-07-12 regarding Edmands Park. The discussion included the present status of the Park and the concerns regarding the off-leash area proposal.
- ✓ This week the discussion should include possible scenarios, hours and days of the week.
- ✓ Commissioner DeRubeis asked Animal Control Officer Torres the status of Edmands Park. Officer Torres stated there is a lot of off-leash activity in Edmands Park. There has been a lot of verbal warnings and some education. Officer Torres asked if the proposal is for a specific area or for the entire park. Commissioner DeRubeis stated that is part of this discussion today and asked Officer Torres if he had a recommendation. Officer Torres suggested the meadow off Blake St near the Mill St. entrance.
- ✓ Commissioner DeRubeis stated one of the concerns with Edmands Park opening as an off-leash area is parking. Officer Torres commented when Edmands is crowded with off-leash dogs there are no parking issues, most of the people using the park must walk to Edmands. Mr. McIntyre asked if the majority of the people use the open area. Officer Torres stated some use the open area and some use the trails. Mr. McIntyre commented it sounds like a similar situation to Old Cold Spring Park.
- ✓ Ms. Patriacca stated trying to keep the dogs in the meadow would cause more dogs to go running into abutter's yards. Most dogs pass through the meadow and head down the trails. The open meadow is used in the winter for sledding.
- ✓ Mr. McIntyre commented OLAWG should be careful with the parameters set for the off-leash area. The group needs to find out how the users are using the park and possibly defer to how it is being used. Maybe consider not including Edmands in the off-leash program.
- ✓ Ms. Patriacca commented the park is being used as it was gifted. Just because OLAWG put Edmands on a list, does not mean it should become an off-leash area, it is not fair. What is the long term goal?
- ✓ Ms. Schein asked Ms. Patriacca what about the people who cannot use Edmands because of the off-leash dogs.
- ✓ Alderman Albright commented this issue is the same as if there were speeders on Mill St and the traffic council decided to meet about the issue to stop the speeders, would

it be right for the speeders to not follow the law because they had not hurt anybody by speeding?

- ✓ Ms. Patriacca stated she takes offense of the implication that the users of Edmands are into lawlessness, the users are using the park how they use it. Alderman Albright commented it is against the law to be off-leash in Edmands Park.
- ✓ Mr. McIntyre commented OLAWG has heard one side, why impose the park. If the day comes when tickets are given would the users of Edmands Park react?
- ✓ Commissioner DeRubeis commented enforcement has to be part of this process. People like the park as it is but they will get ticketed. In the future there will be an uptick in citations. People will claim harassment but it is not harassment.
- ✓ Ms. Koel commented shared usage is a consideration for all open space. In official off-leash areas the users feel empowered having the medallion because they can call Officer Torres if there are any problems.
- ✓ Commissioner DeRubeis stated next week OLAWG has to make a decision as a group regarding Edmands. And also review the position of the off-leash recreation specialist.

3. Next meeting

- ✓ The next meeting is Friday, September 21 at 9:30am in Room 202

Respectfully Submitted

Robin McLaughlin, Secretary