

**Minutes of the Newburyport Parks Commission
October 17, 2016**

Call to order at 6:05 p.m.

A quorum was present.

In attendance: Kim Turner, Karen Popken, Ann Lagasse

Also In attendance: Lisë Reid, Mike Hennessey, Councilor Sharif Zeid, Councilor Jared Eigerman (see sign-in sheet for additional attendees)

NEW BUSINESS

Issues

Off Leash at Perkins Park

Commissioners discussed a petition to designate Perkins Park as an off leash area. **The topic was tabled pending further review with site owner National Grid and potential survey of residents.**

Dexter Lane Gate Closure

Director Reid reported that city officials had locked the gate access to Bradley Fuller Athletic Facility off of Dexter Lane for reasons of public safety based on an excess of street parking for athletic field activities. The Parks Commissioners had previously ruled that the gate be left open to allow pedestrian access to the facility. Commissioners discussed the closure and listened to resident requests to make the closure temporary. **Motion to keep the gate locked until substantial completion of the Fuller track renovation project by Commissioner Lagasse, seconded by Commissioner Turner. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

Lower Atkinson Common

Commissioners discussed Community Action's use of city property to store a trash dumpster, park a school bus and provide tenant parking. **The topic was tabled pending further research of Community Action's property deeds and plot plan.**

Commissioners reviewed a Parks Department request to relocate the gate at Pioneer Fields at Lower Atkinson so that it is further from Merrimac Street. **Motion to approve gate relocation as requested by Commissioner Popken, seconded by Commissioner Lagasse. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

Off Leash at Woodman Park

The commission discussed a proposal to designate a portion of Woodman Park as an off leash area. **The topic was tabled pending a resident survey.**

Trash Can Relocation

Commissioners considered a request to move the following trash cans:

- Clipper City Rail Trail can located north of Washington Street to the shad south of Washington;
- Three cans at Atkinson Common to locate them closer to the walkway in locations that would be more amenable to their use.

Motion to approve moving trash cans as requested by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Popken. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.

PARKS DIRECTOR UPDATES

Current Projects

Director Reid reported that a tree inventory at Moseley Woods has been completed by Bartlett Tree Service. The inventory found the city owns 5.1 million dollars in tree assets at the park and made prioritized recommendations for tree work.

MEETING MINUTES REVIEW

Commissioners asked for amendments to the August 2016 minutes. **Motion to approve August 2016 minutes as amended by Commissioner Popken, seconded by Commissioner Lagasse. So voted on a unanimous voice vote.**

BUDGET/EXPENDITURES REVIEW

Commissioners approved bills for 9/1, 9/15, 10/1 and 10/15 warrants.

Meeting adjourned 8:08 p.m.

10-17-16

NAME	ADDRESS
Sharif Zeid	ward 1 Cnclr.
MARK CURRY	145 Handel Place
KEVIN CONNOR	1 Dexter Lane
Colleen McElhinney	197 High Street
LARRY GIUNTA	WARD 5 COUNCILOR
KERRI STEERAN PERRY	COMMUNITY ACTION
Deborah Lunt	Community Action
Arthur Sayer	Support for Parks - The S. Fairly
Linda Hanscom	18 South Pond, Newbury
Jefford	8 Beacon Ave

DOG PETITION for PERKINS PARK

As members of the Joppa Flats neighborhood, over the years we use Perkins Park for many reasons, one of which is to play with our dogs off leash such as frisbee throwing, tennis ball chuck-it, or just tossing a baseball or stick. The new leash laws do not allow us to do any of those activities anymore. That is win-lose at best. We think there can be a better win-win solution. People who have jobs or people with kids need to do relatively short dog exercise sessions and then get back to their work. Time is important to them and transporting their dogs to other parks is not practical whatsoever [and dangerous to walk across High Street from Joppa]. So the dogs lose and the many neighborhood pet owners lose. So it's really lose-lose for them. It doesn't have to be that way.

So we recommend going back to a no leash park. [If not possible, we propose some free time in the morning and evening, say 6 am to 9 am and then 6 pm to 9 pm, where we can let our dogs exercise and we can just talk with other fellow Joppa neighbors if we chose.] Of course, if there is a conflicting event at that time we will put our dogs on leash. Our goal is to have a local community park that neighbors collaborate and help the city clean up the debris left mostly by humans using the park [water bottles, shirts, beer cans, stale food, etc.], which are a danger to pets as well as humans. So let's work together to make Joppa Park a collaborative neighborhood place that we can be proud of. It was that way - for some of us as long as thirty [30] consecutive years. That is a long track record of dog play-time collaboration that was eliminated by the new city leash laws.

Some of us were the original volunteers that made Joppa Park what it is today - we want to reclaim that neighborhood park spirit that made it a great park. Please remove the dog leash regulation or at least enough time in the morning and evening for us to play with our dogs off-leash. Dog frisbee and dog ball toss has always been a human-animal sport in a neighborhood park, not a civil violation. When you remove good guys & gals usage the only people that show up are bad guys who enjoy the privacy for bad reasons. That is not a good strategy.

Signatures:

MARK & JENNI GURRY
Checkoway C
Linda Harrison

14 Shadel Dr, NBAT, MA
8 Beacon Avenue
23 Lincoln
18 South Pond St

Jammy H. Reardon
Feb 17

Jennifer Ambrose

Janet A. Batis

Gloria Clement

Alyse Buland

Nancy Reeder

Magorin V. Kellan

Leonard H. Stamm

Michael J. Toney

Cheryl E. Hays

Eric Hays

23 Beacon Ave NBPT

8 Beacon Avenue, NBPT

26 Withington St. Newbury

24 Beacon Ave, NBPT

6 S. Pond St. NB

29 Beacon Ave, NBPT

41 Marlboro St

20 Union St.

20 Pine St. Newbury po.

20 OAK ST. Newbury

20 OAK ST Newbury

14 Shandele Drive

Hi!
Return to Beacon

DOG PETITION for PERKINS PARK

As members of the Joppa Flats neighborhood, over the years we use Perkins Park for many reasons, one of which is to play with our dogs off leash such as frisbee throwing, tennis ball chuck-it, or just tossing a baseball or stick. The new leash laws do not allow us to do any of those activities anymore. That is win-lose at best. We think there can be a better win-win solution. People who have jobs or people with kids need to do relatively short dog exercise sessions and then get back to their work. Time is important to them and transporting their dogs to other parks is not practical whatsoever [and dangerous to walk across High Street from Joppa]. So the dogs lose and the many neighborhood pet owners lose. So it's really lose-lose for them. It doesn't have to be that way.

So we recommend going back to a no leash park. [If not possible, we propose some free time in the morning and evening, say 6 am to 9 am and then 6 pm to 9 pm, where we can let our dogs exercise and we can just talk with other fellow Joppa neighbors if we chose.] Of course, if there is a conflicting event at that time we will put our dogs on leash. Our goal is to have a local community park that neighbors collaborate and help the city clean up the debris left mostly by humans using the park [water bottles, shirts, beer cans, stale food, etc.], which are a danger to pets as well as humans. So let's work together to make Joppa Park a collaborative neighborhood place that we can be proud of. It was that way - for some of us as long as thirty [30] consecutive years. That is a long track record of dog play-time collaboration that was eliminated by the new city leash laws.

Some of us were the original volunteers that made Joppa Park what it is today - we want to reclaim that neighborhood park spirit that made it a great park. Please remove the dog leash regulation or at least enough time in the morning and evening for us to play with our dogs off-leash. Dog frisbee and dog ball toss has always been a human-animal sport in a neighborhood park, not a civil violation. When you remove good guys & gals usage the only people that show up are bad guys who enjoy the privacy for bad reasons. That is not a good strategy.

Signatures:

Constance Maass	Union St	Mary G. A	Beacon Ave
Chris Reed	Union St	TUNA SAVA	Beacon Ave
Christy Reed	Union St	CHARMAINE McDermott	Beacon Ave
Christy Reed	Beacon Ave	Jean Ford	Beacon Ave

DOG PETITION for PERKINS PARK

As members of the Joppa Flats neighborhood, over the years we use Perkins Park for many reasons, one of which is to play with our dogs off leash such as frisbee throwing, tennis ball chuck-it, or just tossing a baseball or stick. The new leash laws do not allow us to do any of those activities anymore. That is win-lose at best. We think there can be a better win-win solution. People who have jobs or people with kids need to do relatively short dog exercise sessions and then get back to their work. Time is important to them and transporting their dogs to other parks is not practical whatsoever [and dangerous to walk across High Street from Joppa]. So the dogs lose and the many neighborhood pet owners lose. So it's really lose-lose for them. It doesn't have to be that way.

So we recommend going back to a no leash park. [If not possible, we propose some free time in the morning and evening, say 6 am to 9 am and then 6 pm to 9 pm, where we can let our dogs exercise and we can just talk with other fellow Joppa neighbors if we chose.] Of course, if there is a conflicting event at that time we will put our dogs on leash. Our goal is to have a local community park that neighbors collaborate and help the city clean up the debris left mostly by humans using the park [water bottles, shirts, beer cans, stale food, etc.], which are a danger to pets as well as humans. So let's work together to make Joppa Park a collaborative neighborhood place that we can be proud of. It was that way - for some of us as long as thirty [30] consecutive years. That is a long track record of dog play-time collaboration that was eliminated by the new city leash laws.

Some of us were the original volunteers that made Joppa Park what it is today - we want to reclaim that neighborhood park spirit that made it a great park. Please remove the dog leash regulation or at least enough time in the morning and evening for us to play with our dogs off-leash. Dog frisbee and dog ball toss has always been a human-animal sport in a neighborhood park, not a civil violation. When you remove good guys & gals usage the only people that show up are bad guys who enjoy the privacy for bad reasons. That is not a good strategy.

Signatures:

Missy Melby Marlboro
~~AAH HOF~~

Amy Sara 7 Beacon Ave

DOG PETITION for PERKINS PARK

Off-lease Hours at Perkins Park

Andrea Egmont

Sent: Monday, October 17, 2016 10:19 AM**To:** anndykes@gmail.com; KPop@comcast.net; alagasse79@gmail.com; Michael Hennessey; duffykt@gmail.com; ssawyer@designconsultants.org**Cc:** Lise Reid; Margot Petler; Patricia Moore

Dear Park Commissioners,

I am unable to attend your meeting tonight as I have another meeting but wanted to reach out today about one of your agenda items.

As the Director of Youth Services, I have great concern regarding expanding off leash hours to Perkins Park. As you know, Perkins is our summer home. We appreciate the use of the park and have tried to work with Lisë to be good tenants. We run two programs there throughout the summer with nearly 300 participants. However, even without an off leash rule, we have dealt with individuals letting their dogs run- be it in the tennis court or on the field.

This is an issue of safety for us both in concern with waste left in play areas but also having unleashed dogs and children in shared spaces. Dogs are animals and even the best behaved dog can be considered a threat around the unpredictable behavior of children. Also, we do not trust that the general public will always adhere to posted hours. We have already found individuals to be rude to our staff, who cannot be expected to act as dog police while overseeing their program. The larger concern is the concern of dog waste. The field at Perkins is not passive recreation, it is the outfield of a baseball diamond that is also heavily used by the Pioneer League, also.

I am, personally, a big advocate of off leash areas, but I believe the neighborhood already has the option to run dogs at Marches hill. The two parks .5 miles apart. While I understand the desire of the neighborhood, I ask that you consider prioritizing this park for recreation.

I am happy to speak to any of you today if you are interested or would like more information from me. I will be in the office most of the day.

Andrea Egmont, MS, CPRP
Director of Youth and Recreation Services
Newburyport Youth Services

Office: 978-465-4434 X1351
NBPT Rec Center
40 Milk Street
Newburyport, MA
www.Newburyportyouthservices.com

Confidentiality Notice: This email transmission, and any documents, files, or previous email messages attached to it, may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient, or a person responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution or use of any of the information contained in or attached to this message is strictly prohibited. If you have received this transmission in error, please immediately notify the sender by email or telephone and destroy the original transmission and its attachments without reading them or saving them. Any attachments to this message have been checked for viruses, but please rely on your own virus checker and procedures. Thank you.

Jennifer Galoski
13 Lincoln Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
978-255-1382
jgaloski@yahoo.com
October 12, 2016

Parks Commission
City of Newburyport
60 Pleasant Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

RE: Perkins Park Off-leash Petition

Dear Parks Commission:

I have become aware of a petition which was circulated last month in the South End, specifically the area immediately surrounding Perkins Park. The impetus for the petition was a dog owner who got ticketed at the park for an unleashed and unlicensed dog. It is my understanding that the petition is a request for "off-leash" hours to be allowed at the baseball field at Perkins, "when no one is there." I cannot stress strongly enough my opposition to this request, nor can I fully express my disappointment at the lack of consideration for the rest of the population that uses the park, children in particular. Dogs are already an issue at the park. The last two weekends I brought my kids to the playground and other families were there with their unleashed dog and they did not put the dog on the leash when I arrived with my 10-month old and 4 year old. My son has been told by a dog owner to go back into the playground area because they were going to let their dog off their leash and the dog, "will get excited if you are here." The City has provided more than enough options for dog owners, and dog owners already take advantage of the lack of resources for enforcement of the rules.

In the unlikely event that this request would be considered, I offer the following points:

1. March's Hill is an off-leash park which is located **one-half mile** from Perkins Park and the petition author's residence. This is a 2 minute drive (if you can't walk a half-mile) or maybe an 8-minute walk. This seems like a perfect situation; however, I was told by that ticketed dog owner that, "no one is going to put their dog in the car and go there;"
2. According to the rules of off-leash areas, dogs are not allowed on the athletic fields. This petition, if allowed, would reverse those rules and could result in the City having to allow off-leash hours at all town athletic fields;

3. It is unclear if the Activity and Use Limitation associated with the contamination left on the property would allow this type of use due to a dog's propensity to dig;
4. Perkins field is used regularly by the Pioneer League baseball, softball, and adult pickup games;
5. Perkins field is used for the Newburyport Youth Services summer camp program, specifically the outfield area where the petitioners want their dogs to "exercise;"
6. Residents use the outfield for various family activities; lacrosse, football, kites. Children play games in the grass, do cartwheels, roll down the grass hill and into the field, etc.;
7. In the winter, the hill is used for sledding, especially for the smaller kids. The kids would be sledding through a lot more yellow and brown snow (just like at March's Hill);
8. Dogs are already walked and let off-leash at Perkin's baseball field and in the playground area. Allowing off-leash hours will significantly increase the dog traffic resulting in even more dog urine and feces on the field and, as you know, picking up dog feces doesn't mean nothing is left behind. Feces smear and dog urine kills grass; and
9. For emphasis, March's Hill is off-leash from dawn to dusk and is located **one-half mile** from Perkins Park.

Every dog owner would claim to be a responsible dog owner. Unfortunately, the term "responsibility" is subjective. A vehement proclamation of dog owner responsibility is often followed by a qualifying statement like, "but sometimes they get excited off the leash and jump..." or "occasionally I'm caught without a bag..." When my son is told to go back into the playground because a dog is going to be taken off the leash, is sending the child away responsible or is the dog owner irresponsible for knowing that their dog gets excited but they take the dog off the leash while children are at the park? Dog feces gets left behind when a dog owner finds themselves without a bag but, "I'll pick it up a few hours later when I walk her again." Are they irresponsible for leaving dog feces behind but then a few hours later they suddenly become responsible if they return and, by some luck, no one has stepped in it?

Responsibility consists of being fully aware of the rules, carefully considering your situation, what you are willing and able to do, and then living by those rules and the decisions you make. It is not bringing your pet to some else's property, private or public, to relieve themselves and expecting that picking it up, now or later, is good enough. And it is not expecting that the rest of the neighborhood should sacrifice the park so you don't have to walk your dog 10 minutes earlier or sacrifice your own fenced, grassy yard.

Humans before dogs.

Respectfully,

Jennifer L. Galoski

[Newburyport MA] Perkins Off-leash

Jennifer Galoski [jgaloski@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, October 17, 2016 10:16 AM

To: Lise Reid

Attachments: ctp.pdf (85 KB)

lreid,

Someone has sent you a message using your contact form on the Newburyport MA site.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <http://www.cityofnewburyport.com/users/lreid>.

Message:

Hi Lise.

I haven't received a response to my email last week regarding the Perkins Off-leash petition which appears to be on the agenda for the Parks Commission tonight. Through a Google search, I was able to find an email address for one Commissioner and sent my opposition letter to his attention; however, he was on vacation last week. I don't know if he received my email or if he'll be attending tonight's meeting. See the attached PDF. The most important (and easiest) portion are the numbered items. The rest is my watered-down version of the background of the petition and my response to the audacity of the petitioners to expect that their desire for a more convenient location for their dog to relieve themselves should take precedent over all the other humans and programs that use the park. What could be more convenient than their own backyard and a dog park a 1/2 mile away?

My husband is planning to attend to voice our opposition, although he is a bit calmer than I am. He'll be dropping our oldest off at CCD (Immaculate Conception) for 6pm and will likely have to leave by 7pm to pick our son up. As we appear to be outnumbered by dog-owners in our neighborhood (and maybe the City as a whole), I want to ensure that we have an opportunity to voice our concerns and demonstrate the absence of a reasonable, logical, and responsible basis for allowing dogs off-leash at Perkins. Some of these same concerns also apply to Woodman Park, although I don't have as much practical or historical knowledge of that park or how the residents utilize the park on a daily basis.

Thanks.

Jen Galoski

=====
Message sent by: Jennifer Galoski (jgaloski@yahoo.com)