

PROPOSED CHANGES TO DOG BYLAW--HIGHLIGHTS

Problems being addressed by proposed changes:

- The current bylaw does not require owners to pick up after their dogs. Dog waste is currently deposited on playgrounds, playing fields, cemeteries, conservation trails, downtown sidewalks, and in catch basins/storm drains. The waste remains in areas where children play. Owners who collect the waste in a dog waste bag frequently don't properly dispose of the bag. Piles of the bags have been found at random locations at playgrounds, conservation land, cemeteries, and at the end of the outfall pipe of the Town's storm drain system.
- The current bylaw requires dogs to be on a leash or "under the control" of the owner. The latter is very loosely interpreted and difficult to enforce. There are frequent large gatherings of dogs running freely at the same time, and professional dog walkers use Concord's parks for dogs to exercise and run freely. The summer camp activities and gatherings are disrupted, and parents complain about dogs interfering with children playing on the playground equipment. We've heard complaints from parents and grandparents who are no longer able to safely use the playgrounds with their children and grandchildren due to the number of dogs not under control of the owners. Dogs running freely at the cemeteries have interfered with funeral services. Dogs run freely on conservation trails, disturbing other trail users. Dogs running freely often dig holes at the playgrounds and fields, making hazardous depressions, and interfere with mowing/field maintenance activities.
- Currently, enforcement is limited to the Dog Officer or Police Officers, who are generally not witnesses to violations. The proposed bylaw opens this up to the possibility in the future of other staff being trained and authorized to issue tickets to violators.

Issue	Current Dog Bylaw	Proposed Dog Bylaw
Licensing & Vaccinations	Required by state law & referenced in bylaw. Late fee stipulated in fee schedule.	Licensing period, vaccination requirements and date for imposition of late fee delineated in bylaw. Sections of state law specifically referenced.
Dog Waste	Not addressed in bylaw—no requirement to pick up after dogs.	Owners/keepers required to remove and properly dispose of dog waste from areas other than an owner's property.
Leash/Owner's Control	No leash requirement except within the confines of cemetery property. "No owner of a dog shall permit such dog to be outside the confines of the property of the owner unless the dog is held firmly on a leash or is under the control of its owner."	Language strengthened to "...held firmly on a leash or under effective and direct voice control of its owner or keeper." Persons walking 4 or more dogs on public ways, trails or other town-owned property shall have all dogs leashed. Dogs must be leashed while on a public sidewalk or at a public gathering, including organized athletic events, parades, fairs, etc.

Issue	Current Dog Bylaw	Proposed Dog Bylaw
Cemetery Property	Dogs must be on a leash.	No dogs allowed on the sections of cemetery property that are utilized & maintained for graves, including the paved cemetery roadways, with an exception made for when a dog attends an owner's funeral.
Children's Playground Areas	Dog must be on leash or under the control of its owner.	Dogs not allowed within any public children's playground.
Emerson Field—Summer Camp Activities	No specific restrictions.	Dogs must be held on a leash at Emerson Field from late June to late August from 9 am to 4 pm due to summer camp activities.
Digging Holes or Causing Damage to Town-owned land or property.	No specific restrictions.	Digging holes or otherwise causing damage to any Town-owned land or property is not allowed, including interfering with mowing and field maintenance activities.
Service Dogs	No mention of exemption of some sections of bylaw for service dogs.	Three sections of the proposed bylaw do not apply to dogs properly trained as service animals to assist persons with disabilities—Sections 3i, 3j and 3k.
Enforcement	Limited to Dog Officer or Police Officers.	Enforcement would be done by Animal Control Officer, Police Officers, or other staff trained and designated by the Town Manager.