



# CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

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## Community Relations and Recreation Committee

March 6, 2023

5:30 p.m.

City Hall – Executive Conference Room

Community Relations, Office on Aging, Public Properties, Public Relations, Recreation  
Programs, School Relationships

Council members

Chair: Davida Russell | Vice Chair: Janine Boyd | Member: Gail Larson

## Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Hearing
  - a. *Ordinance 028-2023*: Dogs in Public Parks (history of the creation of this ordinance attached)
4. Committee Agenda Items
  - a. Cain Park overview of events (Erin Miller, General Manager)
  - b. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board report (Peter Titas, Chair)
  - c. Commission on Aging report (Peter DeGolia, Chair)
  - d. Cleveland Heights Schools relationship (Joe D'amato, Athletic Director of Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District)
  - e. Libraries (Katina Davis, Youth Services Associate, Noble Neighborhood Branch)
  - f. Parks and Recreation overview on programs (Kelly Ledbetter, Parks and Recreation Director)
  - g. Community and Public Engagement (Mike Thomas, Community Relations Director)
  - h. 10 min open discussion if time permits.
5. Adjournment

2/22/2023

ORDINANCE NO. 028-2023 by Councilwoman Russell

“To permit leashed dogs in the City’s Parks under specified conditions”

## **Rationale and History**

Cleveland Heights residents and visitors habitually walk their dogs in our public parks even though there is an ordinance prohibiting animals in public parks, with the exception of Cain Park. The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board recommends allowing dogs in all of the parks. There have been no reported incidents involving dogs in the parks in recent memory.

There are many advantages to allowing leashed dogs and their people in public parks. They create connections between people, creating community; they bring more activity to the parklands, which results in more care; and activity also creates a sense of safety.

1. Until 2013, animals were prohibited in Cleveland Heights public parks:

### 505.06 ANIMALS PROHIBITED IN PUBLIC PARKS.

(a) No person shall take, lead or have in his possession any animal in any public park located within the City.

(b) Whoever violates this section is guilty of a minor misdemeanor.  
(Ord. 94-2019. Passed 11-4-19.)

2. In October 2013 an exception was made for Cain Park only:

“Cleveland Heights City Council recently approved a verbal agreement with a local citizens group to allow leashed dogs at the park permanently. The decision comes after a six-month pilot program during which dog owners were allowed to bring their four-legged companions to the city-owned park for the first time since before 1973, when a representative from the city's law department said dogs were banned.” (Full Cleveland.com article [here](#))

3. 2022.07.19 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board voted unanimously to request that City Council allow leashed dogs in all of the public parks.

4. 2022.08.01 The issue was discussed at the Community Relations and Recreation Committee, (video [here](#)) and Ms. Russell intended to move it to legislation

5. 12/13/2022 - Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting notes

Attending: Deby Auerbach-Brown, Adam Dew, Alex Pesta, Peggy Spaeth, Tom Hodgkiss-Lilly, Pete Titas, Lenora Cruz Price

Councilperson Davida Russell, Mayor Seren, CHUH Athletic Director Joe D'Amato

“Suggested wording for Dogs and Parks:

2/22/2023

- Make sure legislation matched the intent of the discussion
- Increase safety in the park
- Draft legislation - Councilwoman will introduce”

6. 2023.02.21 Legislation brought to Council who sent it back to Community Relations and Recreation Committee for public discussion (full text [here](#))