

## Belmont eyes banning dogs from Sargent Park, leashed or not

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BELMONT — Selectmen will hold a public hearing at their next meeting on June 16 on a proposed ordinance change which will ban dogs from Sargent Park.

Jane Breton, Parks and Recreation Director, requested the change be made due to concerns for the health of the children using the town park.

"Kids are sitting on the ground where the dogs have been. When you think of how much a mess it has been and how unsanitary it can be you can see why I'm asking for a change."

Currently dogs on a leash are allowed in the park and the department has animal waste bags at entryways but some users are not complying with state law that provides that they pick up dog waste.

Breton observed that a change in the law will make it easier for park attendants to keep dogs out of the park.

Ruth Mooney, chairperson of the Selectboard, said that she agreed with the proposed change in the town ordinance. Town Administrator Jean Beaudin said that she would have the language of the proposed ordinance change ready for the June 16 meeting and the public hearing.

Selectmen also heard a request from Steve Paquin, town building inspector, for a part-time assistant for his office.

Paquin said that his office has been inundated with requests for building permits in the last two months with 10 new commercial buildings, numerous single-family buildings and at least 27 property violations. He said that the commercial buildings require visits at least twice a week and that he is facing at least 85 annual inspections as well as inspections of five junkyards.

"I'm falling behind on the paperwork in my office and need a temporary part-time office assistant," said Paquin.

Mooney asked Paquin if he was confident that he could handle the field work and he said that he was but had no idea how long the spike in demand for his services would continue.

Beaudin said that she had talked with Paquin about the situation and was looking for funds within the budget which could be used for a temporary position and also for a person who could serve in a temporary position.

Selectmen decided to request more information from the Shaker Regional School District on a request that the town share the \$58,000 cost for reclaiming and paving roadway near the Belmont Middle School.

Mooney suggested that she was amenable to a 50-50 split with the school district on costs of the project pointing out that "it all comes out of the same pocket" but Selectman Ron Cormier Jr. said he was opposed, pointing out that it was the responsibility of the school district.

"It's poor planning on their part" said Cormier, who maintained that the school district had been made aware of the Belmont downtown project and could have become involved with the town at that time.

Selectman Jon Pike asked if the estimated cost of the project was correct and what the scope of work for the project was.

"I want to hear more about the entire project before we make a decision," said Pike.

Mooney said she would obtain more information about the project before the next meeting of the selectmen.