

City Enacts Controversial Leash Rules

Dogs living in Cambridge, Mass., are allowed to roam a park off leash, others are not.

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The city of Cambridge, Mass., has launched a controversial program under which dog owners living in the city are allowed to let their canines roam a sprawling 300-acre park, while non-residents have to keep their dogs leashed.

The new rules also require all dogs to keep off mowed, grassy areas at Fresh Pond Reservation.

Park rangers are enforcing the new measures, which were set by the city's water department. Those who don't follow the rules could be prohibited from using the reservation, according to Sam Corda, water department managing director.

Corda said the new rules are designed to help reservation staff manage the increasing number of dogs at Fresh Pond Reservation and protect the city's drinking supply. The reservoir's a source of city water.

However, although the water department has already made up brochures with guidelines for the medallion program, the rules are technically not on the books yet.

The Cambridge City Council's Ordinance Committee held a hearing about the changes in February, and the City Council must vote on whether to approve the new measures. As of early March, no date had been set yet for a Council vote.

If given final approval, Cambridge residents would have to apply for a free medallion that allows off-leash privileges for pooches, and registered canines would have to wear the medallion in a visible location on a collar or harness in order to be off-leash at the reservation.