

The Times *of Huntington, Northport & E. Northport*

Dogs can now stroll through most Huntington parks

by [TBR Staff](#) - August 25, 2017

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Owners will be required to keep companions on a leash



Stock photo at top; file photo above from Stephen Jimenez; photo at left by Sara-Megan Walsh Dog owners in the Town of Huntington can now walk their dogs on leashes in most parks. Stock photo

By Sara-Megan Walsh

The dog days of summer are here as Huntington residents and their canine companions are now welcome to enjoy a stroll in most local parks.

Huntington Town Board voted unanimously at their Aug. 15 meeting to amend town code to allow on-leash walking of dogs at town parks.



Dog owners in the Town of Huntington can now walk their dogs on leashes in most local parks, like those at Frazer Drive Park in Greenlawn. File photo from Stephen Jimenez

“It is the highlight of my day to take my dog for a long walk,” said Ginny Munger Kahn, president of the Huntington-based Long Island Dog Owners Group. “I don’t want to do it just in my neighborhood on the street, but I want to be able to walk my dog in a beautiful public park. It’s been frustrating over the years on Long Island as many towns don’t allow it.”

The town code changes now permit on-leash walking of dogs in town parks and trails on a leash that’s 4-to-6 feet in length.

Dog owners are required to immediately pick up and dispose of any waste. It will remain illegal for dog owners to bring their canine companions into the more developed areas of town parks: all playgrounds, picnic areas, courts and sports fields, campgrounds, near educational area programs and all town beaches with the exception of paved areas and boardwalks.

The exceptions to the new changes are that no dogs will be allowed at Huntington’s Heckscher Park or Centerport’s Betty Allen Twin Ponds Nature Park.

Huntington spokesman A.J. Carter said that based on recommendations made by the Huntington Greenway Trails Advisory Committee in a letter dated May 24, town board members excluded Heckscher Park due to its continuous public events and the nature park due to its primary use as a fishing site, as casting of lures could pose safety risks.



A sign at Frazer Drive Park in Greenlawn tells visitors a list of rules

for walking dogs in Huntington parks. Photo by Sara-Megan Walsh

The decision to exclude Heckscher Park, one of the more widely used town parks, was not unanimous.

“We thought that Heckscher Park would greatly benefit from the presence of leashed dogs as it would deter the geese from fouling the grass there,” Munger Kahn said. “Unfortunately, the town was not ready to make that change yet.”

She pointed out that Northport Village had similar issues with a population of Canadian geese making a mess of Northport Village Park, which based on her personal experience has been largely resolved by allowing on-leash canines and their companions to stroll the grounds.

“We hope that once the policy is put into effect and proven successful that we will be able to revisit the issue with the town,” Munger Kahn said.

The push for changes to Huntington’s park regulations started as a request made by the trails committee in early 2016 for uniform park standards.

“It was kind of crazy to have some parks in the Town of Huntington allow on-leash dogs and the vast majority of town-owned parks not to allow dogs on a leash,” Munger Kahn said. “This was confusing to people. The thought was if we adopted standards, a policy more closely aligned with Suffolk County’s policy, it would make enforcement easier.”

The town co-owns 10 parks with Suffolk County, including Knolls Park, Hilaire Woods Park, Fuchs Pond Preserve, Paumanok Wetlands Preserve, Elwood-Greenlawn Woods, Breezy Park and Lewis Oliver Farm. Under county code, licensed dogs were permitted on trails in all county parks on a leash not more than 6 feet in length. The new laws approved by Huntington now fall more in line with the county code.