



## Legal & Legislative Committee

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 7:00 PM  
 City Council Chamber, 1st Floor  
 562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176

### MINUTES

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Manjula Karamcheti Vice Chair  
 Cal Finocchiaro  
 Elizabeth Kowal  
 Kimberly Vandiver  
 Brad Freeman President, Ex Officio Member  
 Maya Jamaledidine Chair

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Karamcheti at 7:01 PM

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Manjula Karamcheti	Vice Chair	Present	
Cal Finocchiaro	Ward 6	Present	
Elizabeth Kowal	At-Large	Present	
Kimberly Vandiver	Ward 5	Present	
William Bradley Freeman	President, Ex Officio Member	Present	
Maya Jamaledidine	Chair	Absent	

Non-voting members also in attendance:

Jason Chen  
 Christopher Park  
 Devin Romanul  
 Ryan Williams

#### II. MINUTES APPROVAL

A. Legal & Legislative Meeting November 24, 2025 7:30 PM

Motion to Approve the minutes by unanimous consent without reading made by Vice Chair Karamcheti

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Manjula Karamcheti, Bradley Freeman, Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Kim Vandiver
<b>NAYS:</b>	None
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Maya Jamaledidine

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion to Open public comment made by Vice Chair Karamcheti at 7:04 PM  
There were no comments on the floor or via Zoom  
Motion to Close public comment made by Vice Chair Karamcheti at 7:04 PM

When: Jan 20, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)  
Topic: Legal & Legislative Meeting

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:  
<https://cityofmelrose-org.zoom.us/j/95331852026?pwd=v0tkdTjEGOes0s0AF67eHG0agls8B4.1>  
Passcode:828534  
Webinar ID: 953 3185 2026

### IV. ORDINANCES

- A. **(ID # 2025-613):** Revise the existing Animal Leash Law to REMOVE this language :  
The Animal Control Officer may, at his/her discretion, waive the provisions of Subsection A if a determination is made that the owner or keeper has a valid reason to have the dog unleashed or untethered for training, exhibition or show purposes.  
[Amended 8-21-2017 by Ord. No. 2018-4]

Motion to Recommend to full council made by Councilor Vandiver  
Seconded by President Freeman  
All were in favor and motion passed

<b>RESULTS:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>TO:</b>	City Council
<b>AYES:</b>	Manjula Karamcheti, Bradley Freeman, Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Kim Vandiver
<b>NAYS:</b>	None
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Maya Jamaledine

#### Comments on Discussion:

- Councilor Finocchiaro stated that this ordinance came about since some residents and some dogs have been attacked by unleashed dogs. It is necessary to remove this wording to allow the police to enforce the leash law. Rob Carrillo from the Parks Department supplied a memo expressing his support of this ordinance change. Councilor Finocchiaro read the memo and it was added to the Item ID as an attachment. Chief Faller recently provided some feedback asking if there could be an exemption for law enforcement canines in training and exhibition.
- Councilor Vandiver commented that we have issues generally speaking with enforcing our ordinances and we need to get the language correct.
- Councilor Finocchiaro stated there have been incidents where the police and parks department have tried to enforce the current leash law and certain residents are aware of this loophole, which then prevents enforcement. Removing this language will allow them to enforce it.
- President Freeman consulted with the Health Department and found that it's not very prevalent to have permission for an unleashed dog. Only 1 resident in 4 years has applied to have an unleashed

dog. So it's appropriate to remove this language to remove ambiguity for enforcement and to determine how it's enforced.

-Councilor Kowal agrees with updating the language and asked who is responsible for enforcement, expressing concern that the ordinance won't "have teeth" without proper enforcement. Is it the police or the health department? We need to revisit this along with other ordinances that don't have clear paths of enforcement.

-Councilor Williams supports cleaning up the ordinance and says there is a need to avoid residents bending the rules, especially on a repeat basis. Currently either the Animal Control Officer or Police Chief are named to get involved when residents are fined for a violation.

-Councilor Finocchiaro stated they are considering doing a social media campaign using the Police Department and Administrative Department to remind residents of this law and to educate them on the change in wording.

-Councilor Vandiver proposed adding signage to parks. There are currently signs and maybe they can be enlarged and include more language.

-Councilor Finocchiaro suggested an amendment to include additional language to Section 93-6D stating that law enforcement canines are exempt. Councilor Williams assisted in stating that language.

-Vice Chair Karamcheti suggested bringing it to full council as they could consult with the police department to get the language correct.

-Councilor Vandiver suggested keeping it in committee for a few weeks until the language is complete.

-President Freeman stated that if kept in committee, it will expire according to the 45 day rule since it was filed in December.

-Councilor Williams suggests passing it as is. The language can be changed at the next L&L meeting if necessary.

-Council decided to vote on the ordinance in its current wording.

- B. **(ID # 2026-10):** Amending Chapter A, Article II, Section 210 of the Administrative Code of the City of Melrose to expand the authority of the Historical Commission to include regulatory authority as necessary for demolition review.

Motion to Recommend to full council made by Councilor Finocchiaro

Seconded by Councilor Kowal

All were in favor and motion passed

<b>RESULTS:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>TO:</b>	City Council
<b>AYES:</b>	Manjula Karamcheti, Bradley Freeman, Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Kim Vandiver
<b>NAYS:</b>	None
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Maya Jamaledine

## V. ADJOURNMENT

The City of Melrose does not discriminate based on disability and is committed to hosting accessible meetings and events. Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the

City of Melrose or to attend meetings, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Polina Latta  
platta@cityofmelrose.org.

Motion to Adjourn by unanimous consent made by Vice Chair Karamcheti at 7:19 PM  
Meeting was adjourned

**§ 93-6. Leashing requirements. [Amended 5-20-2002 by Ord. No. 02-324]**

- A. No person shall own or keep in the City, outside the confines of the owner's or keeper's property, any dog that is not held firmly on a leash.
- B. **REMOVE this language :** The Animal Control Officer may, at his/her discretion, waive the provisions of Subsection A if a determination is made that the owner or keeper has a valid reason to have the dog unleashed or untethered for training, exhibition or show purposes. **[Amended 8-21-2017 by Ord. No. 2018-4]**
- C. Violation of this section shall be punishable as follows:
- (1) First offense, unaltered or altered: fine of \$50.
  - (2) Second offense, unaltered or altered: fine of \$100.
  - (3) Third offense: \$150.
  - (4) Apprehension: \$10.
  - (5) Confinement: \$10 per day.
  - (6) Kennels: \$100.
  - (7) Seeing eye dogs: no fees.
- D. Exemptions. Dogs will be permitted to go without leashes only within areas designated as "off-leash dog areas" as determined by the Board of Park Commissioners in accordance with § 173-17, provided that: **[Added 6-4-2012 by Ord. No. 2012-180]**
- (1) All dogs are leashed prior to entering and upon leaving the off-leash dog area.
  - (2) All dogs must be accompanied by a guardian who must remain with his/her dog(s) at all times while using the off-leash dog area.
  - (3) Guardians are legally responsible for their dog(s) and any injuries caused by their dog(s).
  - (4) Guardians may bring no more than three dogs to the off-leash dog area at one time.
  - (5) Guardians must dispose of their dog's fecal matter in accordance with § 93-8.
  - (6) The following dogs are forbidden from entry into the off-leash dog areas:
    - (a) Dogs in heat.
    - (b) Dogs less than six months of age.
    - (c) Dogs without municipal licenses and up-to-date vaccinations.

(d) Aggressive dogs. Any dog that engages in fighting or that does not respond to voice

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1. **Editor's Note: The line "Adoption: all fees and expenses" which immediately followed this subsection in Ord. No. 02-324 was deleted per instructions from the City as superseded by Ord. No. 02-102. See § 93-11.**

command.



**City of Melrose**  
**Parks Department**  
**100 Slayton Rd. Melrose, MA 02176**

As Superintendent of Parks and Open Spaces, I support the decision to revise the existing Animal Leash Law by removing the discretionary language that allows the Animal Control Officer to waive leash requirements for training, exhibition, or show purposes. While discretion can be valuable in limited circumstances, this provision creates ambiguity in enforcement and increases the potential for inconsistent application of the law within public parks and open spaces.

Our department is not opposed to the presence of dogs in parks; however, our foremost responsibility is to ensure the safety, comfort, and equitable use of public open space for all residents. Unleashed dogs—regardless of training intent—can present safety concerns for children, seniors, wildlife, and other park users, as well as create uncertainty for individuals who may be uncomfortable around dogs. Clear and consistently enforced leash regulations help reduce conflicts and promote a predictable, safe environment for everyone.

Thank you,  
Rob Carrillo  
Superintendent of Parks and Open Spaces



## CITY OF MELROSE

Legal Department

**Shannon T. Phillips**  
*City Solicitor*  
[sphillips@cityofmelrose.org](mailto:sphillips@cityofmelrose.org)

City Hall, 562 Main Street  
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176  
Telephone (781) 979-4184

To: Mayor Jennifer Grigoraitis  
From: Shannon T. Phillips  
Subject: Amending Chapter A, Article II, Section 210 of the Administrative Code (Historical Commission)  
Date: January 6, 2026

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### **Amending Chapter A, Article II, Section 210 of the Administrative Code of the City of Melrose as follows:**

#### **§ A-210. Historical Commission**

State law reference: MGL c. 40, § 8D.

A. Established. There shall be a Historical Commission consisting of seven members.

B. Authorities and responsibilities. The Historical Commission preserves, protects, and develops the historical and archaeological assets of the City. The Commission may conduct research for places of historic and archaeological value. The Commission may, subject to appropriation and approval by the Mayor, advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets which it deems necessary for its work. The Commission, for the purpose of protecting and preserving such places, may make such recommendations as it deems necessary to the Mayor and, subject to the approval of the City Council, to the Massachusetts Historical Commission that any such place be certified as a historical or archaeological landmark. The Commission surveys and compiles a listing of all historical sites and buildings within the City, public and private; determines the functions and structures of all historical organizations within the City; and holds correlative seminars with historical organizations. It further determines the requirements for repair, reconstruction, and protection of historical landmarks, **is responsible for conducting demolition review as set forth by City ordinance**, and assists and cooperates with public commissions in the conduct of public historical events. The Commission has all of the other powers, duties and responsibilities that are given to historical commissions by the General Laws.

C. The Historical Commission is an advisory multiple-member body of the City, and a regulatory multiple-member body only insofar as is necessary to conduct demolition review per City ordinance.



# CITY OF MELROSE

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JENNIFER GRIGORAITIS

*Mayor*

City Hall, 562 Main Street  
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176  
Telephone - (781) 979-4440

To: Melrose City Council  
From: Mayor Jen Grigoraitis  
Re: Amending Chapter A, Article II, Section 210 of the City's Administrative Code  
Date: January 7, 2026

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Please accept this memo in line with Section 5-1<sup>1</sup> of the City Charter regarding Order 2026-10 Amending Chapter A, Article II, Section 210 of the City's Administrative Code

As a result of the recent passage of a Demolition Review Ordinance (Order 2025-571) as adopted by a vote of the City Council on December 1, 2025 an amendment to the City's Administrative Code needs to be made, allowing the Historical Commission to have the regulatory authority over the demolition delay process as contemplated by the ordinance. The changes to the administrative code are outlined via the memo from the City Solicitor attached to Order 2026-10.

Please note as part of the process outlined in Section 5-1 of the City Charter, the City Council shall hold at least one public hearing on the proposal and does not have the authority to Amend this Order.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ecode360.com/35250804#35250805>