

QUEENS NEWS

EDITORIAL

Don't stray from the law

THE CITY'S DOGS had their day last week when the Board of Health voted a change in the health code to bring it into line with the practice of letting pooches run free in some city parks between 9 p.m. and 9 a.m.

The vote made sense, though it was rendered something of a formality by a judge's ruling last month that the Department of Parks and Recreation could set its own policy in the matter. At the same time, state Supreme Court Judge Peter Kelly noted that the city should try to avoid conflicting regulations.

The Board of Health ended that conflict last Tuesday, but the disagreement between dog owners who want to let their pets run free and park patrons who feel threatened by them is likely to continue.

The Parks Department has shown good judgment in picking spaces large enough to accommodate dogs and dog-shy humans at the same time.

Dog owners should leash any triumphant feelings the new rule might engender, however. As is the case with many aspects of city life, the shared use of the parks has more to do with mutual respect and consideration than it does with the letter of the law. The law now leans toward dog owners, but so does the responsibility to make it work.

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