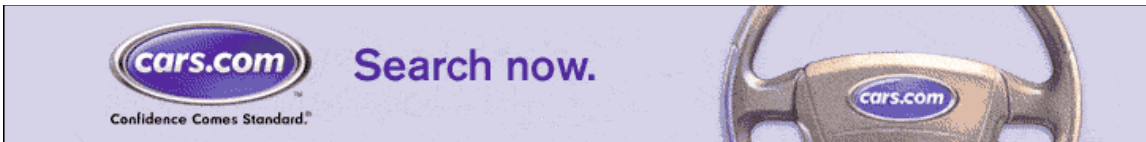




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Dog owners protest higher leash law fines

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They propose off-leash hours, which some council members support

By Brent Jones | brent.jones@baltsun.com
April 17, 2009

About 100 dog owners gathered Thursday night at Riverside Park Pavilion in [Federal Hill](#) to protest the \$1,000 fines for owners who allow their animals outside without a leash.

Animal control officers began issuing the costly citations this month. The amount is 10 times the previous fine for first-time offenders.

City Councilman Edward L. Reisinger held an open forum where he and Councilman [William H. Cole IV](#) listened to dozens of dog owners, who called the new fines "excessive" while arguing for off-leash early-morning hours in city parks.

The City Council approved the increased fines last year as part of a larger measure to raise fines for a variety of animal control violations. Reisinger said the original bill was to protect dogs from abuse and that the leash law was part of that bill. He told the crowd that he is co-sponsoring legislation to be introduced Monday to revamp the law and lower the fine to \$250 for first-time offenders.

"My office got quite a few number of e-mails and phone calls stipulating that the fine was too high, and I can understand that," Reisinger said. "The answer isn't large fines. The answer is that the city needs to have more dog parks."

Since March, the city has cracked down on dogs without leashes, staging several raids.

Beth Krasucki, who lives on Covington Street a block from Riverside Park, said she was given a citation April 5 after a friend walked her dog without a leash in the park.

"It was like a sting operation."

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It was like a sting operation," Krasucki said. "We plan on fighting this completely. I mean, \$1,000? ... And there had been no information going around to even alert us of this."

Environmental Court.

Dog owners can appeal fines in

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spent hundreds of hours interviewing **Dr. Andrés Alonso**, attending public meetings where he was present and accompanying him on visits to schools and events after he was named CEO of Baltimore City schools in June 2007.

Read her three-part series, which ran Feb. 8-10 in *The Baltimore Sun*, and read Alonso's **live chat on the InsideEd blog**.

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