

Animal Control Commission

December 9, 2024, at 5:30pm

**Bloomington Animal Shelter – Hybrid Zoom and In Person Meeting
3410 South Walnut Street, Bloomington, IN 47401**

MEMBERS

Sue Allmon – present in person
Sita Cohen – present in person
Chris Hazel – present in person
Brandt Ludlow – present in person
Valerie Pena – not present
Laura Soto – present in person

GUESTS

Casey Groomer – present via zoom
Ali Ferrerio – present in person
Joseph Ferrerio – present in person
Joanna David – present in person

STAFF

Kat Ennis – present via zoom
Lisa Ritchel – present in person
Virgil Sauder – present in person
Aleksandrina Pratt – present via zoom

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Laura moved to approve the **October 14, 2024**, minutes as written.

Sue seconded.

Motion passes, 5-0-0.

II. NEW BUSINESS

i. Ticket Appeal – Groomer

Officer Ennis received a call on November 1, 2024, around 8pm that a dog was tied up to a road sign at Bennington and Park Ridge. Officer Ennis recognized the dog as a dog that was brought into the shelter a couple days prior and was put on the waiting list for surrender. Officer Ennis researched and found that the dog was owned by Casey Groomer. Officer Ennis called her that night in the field to inform her and get more information. The shelter front desk staff also called Ms. Groomer the next day. After not hearing back for several days, Officer Ennis went to her apartment and issued a citation for abandonment. Officer Ennis referred to a Facebook post from the same night and same area where someone saw a person with a white bulldog that was tied to a street sign. The person who made the post went back thirty minutes later and the dog was still tied to the pole but the person was gone. Officer Ennis provided a copy of this post. Ms. Groomer later reached out to Animal Control and explained that she was trying to rehome her dog via the breeder. Ms. Groomer sent an email per Officer's request for an alibi with hand written times of her activities and pictures that did not have time stamps. Officer Ennis then contacted the breeder Grace Peach for more information. Ms. Peach did confirm that Ms. Groomer contacted her needing to rehome Bo and they agreed on a time to meet someone. Ms. Peach

picked up Bo from Ms. Groomer's apartment to take him to a dog park for a meeting, but was unable to get him out of the car due to his fear aggression. Ms. Peach explained that she needed to take him back and would try again the next day. Officer Ennis added that this dog went up for adoption and has since been adopted.

Casey Groomer then explained her side of the story. She emphatically stated that she received no phone calls on November 1, 2024. Ms. Groomer next stated that she never agreed to meet Grace Peach anywhere but that she was coming to her home to pick up Bo. In text messages Ms. Peach told her that she had a home for him regardless of the outcome of the visit. Ms. Groomer confirmed that Bo was aggressive when Ms. Peach came to pick him up and that he growled and lunged at her. Ms. Groomer confirmed that Ms. Peach did bring him back so she then reached out to other people to try to rehome him. During this time she also got a new phone so did not have any of the text messages. Ms. Groomer stated that she did not tie the dog up to a post and added that there were two hours between when Ms. Peach returned the dog and the Facebook post. Ms. Groomer stated that she needed him out of the house because he lunged at her daughter and did not care who took him. She did not know who she gave the dog to, but their name was something like Schoolboy on Snapchat.

Laura moved to uphold the abandonment ticket.

Chris seconded.

Motion passes, 5-0-0.

ii. Potentially Dangerous/ Dangerous – “Rocky”

Laura explained that Ms. Ferrerio is a client of hers at the Monroe County Humane Association, so she will be abstaining.

Officer Ennis explained that she was called about an incident that occurred at Winding Brook Circle. Two owners were out with their dogs, a Rhodesian ridgeback named Willard and a Great Dane named Rocky. The owner of victim dog Willard was out walking him and came around a corner where Ms. Ferrerio was talking with a neighbor while holding her dog Rocky. Per Willard's owner's statement, Rocky became reactive towards Willard who responded. Rocky then charged Willard, knocking Ms. Ferrerio down in the process, and the dogs got into an altercation. Willard's owner tried to get Rocky off of her dog by any means and in the process, Willard's collar came off. The dogs were separated and stayed apart. The resulting injuries included two punctures across the shoulder blades. The owner took him to Vet Check who sedated him and found that three layers of damage was done due to shaking. The wounds were lanced surgically resulting in twenty-two staples and stitches. Officer Ennis later spoke with Ms. Ferrerio who advised that Willard was reactive to Rocky, she was pulled down and Rocky did pick the dog up. Ms. Ferrerio stated that Rocky let go as soon as she called and returned to her. Officer Ennis acquired a third party statement from Keith, the person with whom Ms. Ferrerio had been talking. He stated they were by the garages where the bins are located. He did indicate that he is a little uncomfortable with Rocky. He stated that once Ms. David saw Ms. Ferrerio, she went to turn away and run, but Rocky charged her, Ms. Ferrerio flew into the air and let her dog go. Ms. David began to hit and kick Rocky. Another neighbor pulled in at this time and assisted Ms. David to get Rocky off of Willard. Then Rocky let go and took off running. Officer Ennis added that several people from the neighborhood have called stating that Rocky is a potential danger to the community. No previous incidents were reported to Animal Control. Animal Control also received letters and emails on Rocky's behalf from MCHA and Mad 4 My Dog. The owner has decided to walk Rocky with a muzzle for now on as a

precaution. Ms. Ferrerio originally considered euthanasia due to his age/health and the stress of a ten day shelter quarantine.

Ali Ferrerio presented her side of the story. Rocky now wears a muzzle and has always been walked on a gentle leader or a harness and always on leash. Rocky has been to the Dog House eighty-one times with no incidents and has been to Mad 4 My Dog for training. Rocky lives with cats and dogs. Ms. Ferrerio also fosters for the shelter so puppies have been in the home. There have been no incidents in almost twenty years with her dogs except for one who was a foster she adopted. Rocky completed his quarantine, his shots are up to date and the fee was paid. She provided notes from neighbors and from the MCHA on behalf of Rocky. Ms. Ferrerio explained that she remembers a slightly different version of the incident. She actually tripped on a curb which is a known hazard of which the HOA is aware. She provided photos of the curb that was painted yellow. Ms. Ferrerio was standing and talking to her neighbor Keith, was relaxed, and did not see Ms. David coming around the back. Ms. David's dog started jumping up and down, Rocky turned and saw this and then both dogs were reactive and Ms. David's dog slipped his collar. Ms. Ferrerio tried to turn but caught her foot on the curb. She shared that she needs a knee replacement but that she was not pulled down, she tripped. Rocky did run to the dog either to correct it because it was off collar or because he was worried because she was on the ground. Rocky grabbed the dog by the scruff of the neck and picked it up. She told him no, let it go, and come and Rocky returned to her and she took him home. Keith told her later there was no blood, so she thought everything was okay until the officer came to her house the next day. She added that there were some stories and misinformation circling the neighborhood about the incident. Ms. Ferrerio feels very badly about what happened and is very sorry.

Joanna David shared that her dog Willard, who is nine, is doing a lot better. It was very hard and she spent several weeks sleeping in the living room by his side. Recovering took a long time, but he is now wagging his tail and going on walks. She did not see any blood either, but after about thirty minutes, Willard went to shake, but cried and fell down. She found one puncture and contacted Vet Check who asked if the other dog was current on vaccination. Ms. David knocked on the other dog owner's door for vaccination information, but no one answered. She never saw the owner again until this meeting. At Vet Check, Willard was shaved and put under and the veterinarian saw several layers of damage underneath. The veterinarian stated that Willard was shaken at least seven times while being held in the mouth of the other dog. Ms. David advised that Rocky pulled Ms. Ferrerio down, she did not trip. Ms. Ferrerio was not able to control her animal. Ms. David described the struggle explaining that she forcibly was pulling her dog by the leash as hard as she could all while trying to push the other dog away from her dog. As soon as Rocky let go, that is when her hands flew up and Willard's collar popped off. Ms. David added that she announced their presence, cleared her throat and went very wide to avoid them, but Ms. Ferrerio was not paying attention. She would have normally gone the other way. Ms. David stated that this was unprovoked and her dog was not jumping or reactive, but was aware. Ms. David referred to a previous incident when her dog's collar did pop off and it got close to Ms. Ferrerio's dog. Ms. Ferrerio told her if it was her other dog, it would be a different story. Ms. David concluded by stating that other people in neighborhood are concerned and have had negative experiences.

The Commission discussed and Sita read the definitions of Potentially Dangerous and Dangerous. Sita noted that this was a first incident and the owner is now using a muzzle, but this dog is clearly potentially dangerous. Sita does not feel he is dangerous at this point, but does feel the muzzle is necessary. Brandt agreed and added that unfortunately a dog of that size is a potential problem. Virgil

noted that Alex pointed out that the difference between Potentially Dangerous and Dangerous is the egregiousness of the situation.

Sue moved to declare Rocky as Potentially Dangerous with all the Potentially Dangerous restrictions with the additional requirement of a muzzle whenever the dog is outside of its own home or outside of its own backyard.

Brandt seconded.

Motion passes, 4-0-1, with Laura abstaining.

iii. Suggested updates to BMC 2.12.010(4) – Animal Control Commission powers and duties

Virgil explained that a couple months ago he brought some suggested updates to the Bloomington Municipal Code which outlines the Animal Control Commission duties to Council and they are looking for review and feedback. This revision adds: (d) In carrying out its duties, consider public health and the safety of residents, as well as ecosystem health and services. This addition was made specifically to deal with deer. Sue shared that she was fine with the additions.

iv. Set meeting dates for 2025 – 2nd Monday of the Month at 5:30 with the exceptions of September and October which will be the 3rd Monday of the Month

Sue moved to continue in 2025 meeting on the 2nd Monday of the Month at 5:30 with the exceptions of September and October, due to Federal holidays, which will be the 3rd Monday of the Month.

Chris seconded.

Motion passes 5-0-0.

III. REPORTS

i. Animal Care and Control Report

Virgil reported they are hopeful for a busy adoption month. A non-profit organization called International Art Project agreed to sponsor all adoptions for this month. The shelter is again partnering with B97 to spotlight some long term animals. The statistics from January to November show a 7% increase in intake from 2023, but still 530 less animals than in that time period in 2019. The live release rate is still 95% with 91% of dogs and 87% of cats in the adoption program getting adopted. The foster program has shown great expansion with 56% of all animals in shelter going through program. Animal Control calls have increased 7% and this trend will likely continue in 2025.

ii. MCHA Update

Sue reported that they had a really beneficial Giving Tuesday and raised just shy of their \$10,000 goal. Clinic has been non-stop with clients, mostly fee reduced. They have a waiting list so are looking to increase veterinarians. They are already working on the Tails on the Town which will be Carnival themed again and will be held at the Woolery.

iii. AMC Update

Virgil shared that there was nothing to report other than losing the veterinarian on the Commission. County Animal Management has been short an officer for the last few months.

IV. ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Sita noted that her term as Chair will be over soon and she would love for someone to step up to have the opportunity.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Laura moved to adjourn.

Chris seconded.

Motion passes, 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:39pm