

ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2018

<u>MEMBERS</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>PUBLIC</u>
Sarah Nickel	Julia Eppley	Donna Bontz
Tom Rea	Barbara McKinney	Nathaniel Black
Nancy Riggert	Jim Pritchard	Briana Bontz
Rebecca Warren	Lisa Ritchel	Mercedes Hohenberger
	Virgil Sauder	Sara Ostrander
		Eleanor Berman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Nancy moved to approve the February 20, 2018 minutes. Tom seconded.
Motion Passes, 4-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

i. Request to declare Potentially Dangerous – Bontz
Officer Pritchard explained that on February 1, 2018 he was notified of a bite that was fatal that occurred at the Ferguson Dog Park five days prior on January 25, 2018. He first spoke with Sara Ostrander, the owner of Blanch, a 15 year old miniature poodle, who stated that they were at the dog park in the small dog area. Officer Pritchard explained that there are 3 dog areas: small, medium and large, but he is not sure how well they are marked. Sara stated that Briana Bontz brought her dog, Chief, a large 1 year old Labrador/Malamute, into the area. Chief then went for Blanch, grabbed her and started shaking her. The owners separated the dogs, and Sara picked up Blanch, who was bleeding a great deal. Sara then transported her to College Mall Vet where she succumbed to her injuries. Officer Pritchard next contacted Briana Bontz who stated that she had taken Chief to the dog park and thought he would be okay with smaller dogs because she had been working with him on it. Briana did admit that Chief has a high prey drive, but thought that he would be okay. As soon as she put him in the area, Chief went and grabbed Blanche and started shaking her. Briana said that they were able to separate the dogs and then exchanged information. Briana later found out that the poodle had died at the vet's office. Brianna brought Chief into the shelter for quarantine and he remained there until February 5. Chief is current on his rabies vaccination at this time.

Briana started by stating that she was not in the small dog area. She explained that there are three dog areas at the dog park: the first is unlabeled and has agility equipment, the second is the small dog area, and the third is the common area. She stated that she and Chief were in the common area. Briana also said that she went to the hospital where Blanche was taken and stayed there all evening. She was told that Blanche had a punctured lung and some broken ribs and was put down by the vet. Briana explained that she and Nathaniel adopted Chief on December 20, 2017 from the animal shelter. The incident happened a month later on January 25, 2018. On that day, Chief had been playing at the dog park for a while. It was the busiest she had ever seen it. Sara told Briana that her dog was 14. Briana told Sara that she could yell for her and grab Chief if he started to pay too much attention to Blanch. Later Briana saw Chief sniffing and following Blanch, so she started walking over to them. After looking down at a Great Dane, she looked up and saw that Chief was walking around with Blanch in his mouth. Briana ran over and grabbed him. He didn't let go at first, so she put him in a head lock and eventually he let go. A guy at the park caught Blanche and was bitten by her. Blanch was then returned to her owners, and she also

bit them. Briana has this report. Briana stated that Chief is a very happy, excited dog who likes people and other dogs. He had been to the dog park around 10 times prior to the incident with no aggression issues. He has also been to Rowdy Rovers, a play group for high energy dogs, over 5 times with no aggression issues. Briana provided paperwork from Rowdy Rovers. There Chief enjoyed playing with some smaller dogs that matched his energy level. Briana thinks that Chief has a size threshold and mistook Blanch, a very small pom-a-poo, for a rabbit or toy. Since adopting, Briana and Nathaniel have been working on training and socializing Chief, as the shelter advised. They also met with the head trainer at Mad 4 My Dog to confirm that they were on the right track. Since the incident, they have been focusing on self-control and the commands “drop it” and “leave it alone.” They also do not let Chief play with squeak or stuffed toys anymore. Madison Swinney, their main trainer at Mad 4 My Dog, told them multiple times that Chief was a good player and a good dog. They feel that Chief has made a great deal of progress in the past three months.

Mercedes Hohenberger, a friend, explained that she has played with Chief many times and agreed that he has made a lot of progress since adoption. She said that his owners have been working with him consistently and he is maturing. He is still very playful but is less rambunctious.

Nathaniel explained that he was at work, so didn't see the incident, but states that Chief is not aggressive, just young, playful and excited. When Chief sees a squirrel he loses his mind.

Briana's mom, Donna, explained that Chief spent a week with her in Illinois around Christmas. She agrees that he does need training, but is not aggressive. She has also spent time with Chief in Indiana. He is still playful, but not aggressive.

Sara explained that she and Eleanor adopted Blanch as a senior dog around 3 years ago. They had taken her to the dog park previously and watched her carefully because she was small and deaf. During the incident, Sara remembered that Chief had come over to Blanche when she was sniffing the ground. Chief lifted his paw towards her, she turned around and then he bit her. Sara doesn't remember how much time passed, but Briana had Chief and Sara got behind him and pulled him by the haunches. Chief dropped Blanche and then a guy picked her up. Sara took Blanche from him and took her to the vet. Sara added that their other dog, a 40 lb. mixed breed was also at the dog park and confirmed that they were in the common area.

Eleanor then explained that she did not witness the incident, but came afterwards and saw Sara holding Blanche who was bleeding. Eleanor drove them to the vet and learned that Blanche's rib cage was crushed and her chest cavity was punctured. Eleanor explained that they put her down because it was the humane thing to do. Eleanor provided the bill from the veterinarian. She continued to say that she understands training and rescuing dogs, but believes that you can't train out unpredictability. She disagrees that Chief mistook Blanche for a stuffed animal and believes that he knew what he was doing. She feels that Chief's behavior is unpredictable and she doesn't want anyone else to have to go through what they are still going through.

The committee then discussed the incident and the potential declarations. Virgil read the definition of PD Level II, which ends with “an animal which causes severe injury or death to a domestic pet or livestock.” Rebecca asked Briana what kind of enclosure Chief has. She explained that they do not have a fence, but take him on long walks and put him on a 70 foot guide wire when they are out in the yard with him. Julia explained that Chief's cautionary flags

were “high arousal level,” “dog selective” and “no cats,” based on shelter findings. Rebecca was concerned that Chief had been to 4 Rowdy Rovers after the incident.

Sarah moved to declare Chief Potentially Dangerous Level II plus a recommendation that he not be in play groups with anything under 50 lbs. Nancy seconded.

Motion passes 4-0-0.

Rebecca explained the requirements and recommendations of this declaration. Briana was very concerned that she wouldn't be able to use the guide wire.

ii. Meeting Location

Rebecca reported that Virgil has proposed to move the next ACC meeting to the new community room at the animal shelter. Virgil explained that the downside to this is that parking lot is not likely to be done by then. Tom recommended waiting until the parking lot is completed and Rebecca recommended to revisit this next month.

ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL REPORT – Julia Eppley and Virgil Sauder

i. Shelter Statistics

Virgil sent out the stats to the commission. They are similar to other years, but the adoption numbers were a little low. It may be due to the fact that the shelter was closed for 5 days due to the construction.

ii. Updates

Julia reported that February was Adopt a Rabbit Month, and they had reduced adoption fees. The community room will be completed in the next few weeks. They are currently working with city IT to decide the best way to communicate with the staff in the new facility. Currently there is no intercom system. They have also been discussing the benefits of closing the shelter to the public one day a week, possibly Mondays, to reallocate the staff, so they more available on the higher adoption days. Having been in the new building for a month, there are some positives and some things still in flux. The cats and a good portion of the dogs seem to be much more comfortable. Julia has spoken with some of the dog walkers who say they like the kennels and the way the dogs are separated into rooms. Cats seem to be getting sick less frequently and less severely. Also, now that “check-in” is divided into a grooming room, a med prep room, and two different intake rooms, staff time and space has been freed up and those parts of the job are easier and more efficient.

MCHA UPDATE – Rebecca Warren

i. General updates

Rebecca reported that the MCHA has purchased equipment for full service grooming and is in process of installation. Dr. Breese has come on as a part time veterinarian a couple times a month. Dr. Funk is coming back as a part time veterinarian in May on Tuesdays. There may be additional mobile clinics. One will be in May or June at the Walnut Street Pike apartment complex. The remodeling should be completed in the next few weeks and Rebecca is very excited to have an office again. Tails on the Town will be on April 21 at the convention center. These ticket are available online and Rebecca will send the link to the commission. Clinic is very busy and is at capacity. Rebecca recently toured a clinic in Cincinnati, which has been around for 5 years, that was a “train wreck.” She is very proud at how quickly the MCHA has implemented a high quality, accessible clinic to the community.

AMC UPDATE – Virgil Sauder

Virgil reported that the AMC is still looking for a veterinarian. They did have a nice discussion about the potentially dangerous ordinance. Ken Buzzard had prepared a nice spreadsheet using the definitions that helped look for any holes, inconsistencies or redundancies in the wording. Virgil will forward this spreadsheet to the Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

Virgil reported that the 3 Tenner dogs are doing great and that their coats look great. Their trial is on March 24. Sarah said that they all seem much happier and nicer. Julia added that Rocky was neutered and he had his masses removed. They also get quiet visit time and enrichment.

No public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 6:54.