

Animal Control Commission

September 20, 2021 at 5:30pm

**Bloomington Animal Shelter – Zoom Meeting
3410 South Walnut Street, Bloomington, IN 47401**

<u>MEMBERS</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>PUBLIC</u>
Sue Allmon -present via zoom	Kat Ennis – via zoom	Olivia Franklin – via zoom
Sita Cohen -present via zoom	Vicki Minder – in person	Grant Racop – via zoom
Chris Hazel -present via zoom	Jacquelyn Moore -via zoom	Olivia Oliver – via zoom
Valerie Pena -present via zoom	Lisa Ritchel -via zoom	
Nancy Riggert -present via zoom	Virgil Sauder - in person	
Laura Soto – not present		

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Nancy moved to approve the August 9, 2021 minutes as written.

Sita seconded.

Roll call vote: Sue: “yes,” Sita: “yes,” Chris: “yes,” Valerie: “yes,” Nancy: “yes.”

Motion passes 5-0-0.

II. NEW BUSINESS

i. Request to Declare Vicious – Harry Potter

Virgil explained that they are asking that this dog be declared vicious due to the severity of the bites. As part of the declaration, they are asking that the ownership be removed and the dog be euthanized given the severity. Virgil asked that the Commission keep these recommendations in mind and that the officer would now explain the circumstances of the case.

Officer Minder explained that she arrived at 2446 South Henderson, Crawford Apartments, on July 20, 2021 in response to a dog bite. When she arrived, she saw a pile of puppies in the middle of a bed, but no mother dog. When she asked Lonny Vanover also known as “Ghost” where the mom dog was he explained that he did not know and that friends had taken her because they were afraid animal control was going to take all the dogs. Lonny left and returned with the mom dog. He did not want to give Officer Minder the dog, so she explained to him that it was for quarantine if the dog is not current on rabies vaccination. Lonny and his girlfriend both stated that the dog was current, because she had previously been to the shelter as a stray. Officer Minder explained to them that she would be back the next morning to get the paperwork. She returned the next day with Officers Ennis and Romoser. Neither Lonny nor his girlfriend could produce any documentation. Officer Minder informed Lonny that she would be taking the mom dog and puppies the following day. When she arrived to get the dogs, the mom dog was missing again. Friends had taken her fearing she would not be returned. Officer Minder initially said that she would give the dog back prior to knowing the severity of the bite and before receiving a phone call from someone else claiming ownership. She continued and explained that the victim, Rodney Shea, had been taken by ambulance to Bloomington Hospital. Officer Minder reached out to the hospital to get a statement but was unable to find any information. A couple of days later she discovered that she couldn’t find any information at the ER because the victim had been airlifted to Methodist Hospital for reconstructive surgery on his face. Officer Minder then referred to the pictures of the victim. Officer Minder did impound the mom dog and puppies. Most of the puppies have since been adopted, but the mom dog, Harry Potter aka Jezebel remains at the shelter. The owner has

been a no show, he has popped up here and there, and Virgil has received calls from people claiming to be a wife or a girlfriend. The most recent call was today. Officer Minder did not recognize any of these callers.

Sita then asked for clarification on the dog owner and address. Officer Minder stated that she does not know. Virgil answered that the person claiming ownership is Lonny Vanover. He is the last person to claim ownership and was present at the time of the bite. One other person, Michael Griffen, claimed that she might be his dog, but that has not been confirmed.

Valerie asked Officer Minder what her interpretation of the dog's behavior was when she impounded her. Officer Minder answered that Lonny loaded Harry Potter in the van and that she did not handle her. When they got to the shelter, Harry Potter was kept in her crate and taken out of the van. No one handled her. Officer Minder stated that she is extremely aggressive. Sita asked if there has been any change in her behavior. Virgil explained that there has not been any change in how she presents herself in the kennel and given the severity of the bite, staff has not pushed the issue.

Nancy asked how old the puppies were when the incident happened. Officer Minder explained that they were five days old and that they were placed with the mom in the shelter. Virgil added that initially the puppies were housed with the mom for the quarantine, but after finding out about the severity of the bite, they were placed in foster homes to get early socialization with people.

Chris then asked about the previous incident. Officer Minder confirmed that Harry Potter, who is around two years old, was brought in as a stray on June 19, 2020. Chris asked if there were any other issues or complaints, and Officer Minder stated that there were not. Valerie followed up and asked if she was observed to be aggressive during this first incident. Officer Minder answered that she was not and that actually Officer Ennis remembered her being very friendly and named Jezebel at the time. Sita asked again for clarification on the ownership. Virgil interjected and explained that they believe that it was the same dog but there is no actual proof. There is no microchip or photographic proof, just recollection.

Officer Ennis explained that she was there with Officer Minder the day Harry Potter was picked up. She stated that she had nothing to add other than her experience with her potentially as Jezebel. She was friendly with a very different personality than her current one. Sita asked if she thinks that is due to the puppies. Officer Ennis explained that would be difficult to tell as it could be situational due to either the puppies, the living change or the ownership change. Nancy then asked if Harry Potter's aggressive behavior was consistent during her stay. Virgil answered that she presented aggressive behaviors in the kennel. A kennel setting can be stressful, so they did try pharmaceutical intervention as well as stress relief to level out her hormones and stress levels. There has been no change to date. Sita asked if she could be taken outside or walked. Virgil answered that since she has not shown any improvement and given the severity of the incident, he has not felt comfortable exposing his staff to that. Valerie summarized that at this point in time she is unadoptable. Virgil confirmed. No one from the public was present for this case.

Sue made a motion to declare Harry Potter Vicious.

Sita seconded.

Roll call vote: Sue: "yes," Sita: "yes," Chris: "yes," Valerie: "yes," Nancy: "yes,"

Motion passes 5-0-0.

Valerie stated that she has been a part of this organization for over 17 years, and she can only remember one other time that they had to make this decision. In other cases they felt that the animal in a different environment or in a different setting with a different situation had a good chance at being rehabilitated and adopted. But, in this case, Valerie trusts the expertise from the shelter and their recommendation for her ownership be revoked and for her to be euthanized.

Sita moved that Harry Potter's ownership be revoked.

Nancy seconded.

Roll call vote: Sue: "yes," Sita: "yes," Chris: "yes," Valerie: "yes," Nancy: "yes,"

Motion passes 5-0-0.

Sita asked if Emily Herr, from the shelter's behavior program, has been around this dog and determined that she would not be able to help. Virgil answered that she has not been able to get the dog out. One of the scales used to look at bite cases is the Association of Professional Dog Trainers, Ian Dunbar's Dog Bite Scale. According to this scale, given the multiple bites, the level of the bites and the depth of bites, this dog would be considered extremely dangerous with euthanasia recommended.

Sita moved that Harry Potter be euthanized for public safety.

Sue seconded.

Roll call vote: Sue: "yes," Sita: "yes," Chris: "yes," Valerie: "yes," Nancy: "yes,"

Motion passes 5-0-0.

Jacqui explained that generally the findings would be sent immediately to the owner, because an owner has the option of an appeal. She is unsure, however, if she has a confirmed person or an address. Virgil agreed and added that he will reach out to the individuals who have called on the owner's behalf as a last attempt.

III. REPORTS

i. Animal Care and Control Report

Virgil reported that intake numbers in August were lower than in July. This has given staff time to catch up from summer overcrowding issues. The month started full but ended in a good place with adoptions. Valerie referred to the statistics and commented on the huge drop. Chris asked if more animals are being returned that were adopted or purchased during quarantine. Virgil answered that intake seems to be normal and surrenders typically consist of older animals or animals between the ages of 6 months to 1.5 years old. Valerie asked if the euthanasia numbers were due to space or due to health and other circumstances. Virgil answered that the dog number was due to other circumstances such as aggression or health. This time of year, the cat number is due to kittens that start fading. If a positive change is not possible with invention they are euthanized rather than letting them suffer to only die later. To conclude Virgil stated that the euthanasia numbers are not due to space because they have been able to utilize the foster program and adoption promotions. Virgil added that there has been a large number of wildlife calls specifically bats likely due to the students returning to rentals. Also there have been a high number of deer calls due to deer being hit by cars.

Virgil then introduced Kat Ennis as the newest animal control officer. He explained that she is well known at the shelter, as she was previously an animal care technician with excellent dog handling skills. Valerie welcomed Kat aboard.

ii. MCHA Update

Sue explained that the MCHA decided today to move the Run for the Animals to a virtual event for public safety due to COVID and because the county moved to code orange. More information on this event will be available soon. The pantry is open to everyone as needed. Clinic appointments are booked six weeks out. The show rate has improved since the institution of a few measures to encourage clients to attend their appointments. Nancy asked how they are doing this and Sue answered that they have a policy that encourages attendance. They also have a waiting list, so if someone cancels, another client can get the spot. If they no show, there is outreach to remind them of the responsibility to follow up with the clinic. Those individuals are noted. They are not banned, but the MCHA is trying to use the opportunity to educate and explain that they took a spot that someone else could have used.

iii. AMC Update

Valerie reported that this month's meeting was cancelled.

V. ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Valerie explained that they have been working on the ordinances. Specific sections have been assigned and the members have been working on those in cooperation with the Animal Management Commission. Valerie gave a huge shout out to Sita who has taken on the first section handling the definitions.

Virgil referred to the wildlife issue that was discussed in the spring and asked the members to check the wildlife page under Animal Control. He would like feedback and suggestions for improvements. He also asked the members to check out the wildlife take force document and specially focus on the questionnaire and responses received. He would like feedback on this as well.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Valerie reported that Olivia Oliver wrote a message in the zoom chat:

"I am covering this meeting for a reporting class so if those who spoke would mind spelling out their full names/titles whenever you get a chance or at the end of the meeting, that would be extremely helpful. I'm also very sorry you had to make the decision about Harry Potter tonight. I hope all of her puppies do well and find their homes!!"

Virgil stated that he would provide his email in the chat and help her with the above request.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Sita moved to adjourn.

Chris seconded.

Roll call vote: Sue: "yes," Sita: "yes," Chris: "yes," Valerie: "yes," Nancy: "yes,"

Motion passes 5-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.