

Excerpt - September 12, 2006 Minutes - SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA CITY
COUNCIL MEETING

5:00 P.M.

11.5 PUBLIC HEARING – INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS, RESTRICTIONS, PROHIBITIONS, AND DEFINITIONS OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS OR VICIOUS ANIMALS AND A COMPANION RESOLUTION TO INSTITUTE FEES FOR NEW PERMITS TO BE ISSUED TO ANIMALS DETERMINED TO BE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS OR VICIOUS
5:00:16 PM

City Attorney Brien Farrell made the staff presentation for a proposed ordinance regulating the requirements, restrictions, prohibitions and definitions of potentially dangerous or vicious animals, also outlining the proposed fees for permits for those animals deemed potentially dangerous or vicious. He detailed the fines and insurance required before releasing a dangerous dog, which could potentially be banished from the city. Bob Garcia, County Dog Control officer, explained dogs are declared potentially dangerous for, among other things, fighting with another dog.

Councilmember Sawyer requested that warning signs be posted on site and special tags be issued. Councilmember Rabinowitsh requested that such dogs be prohibited from being left alone with a child.

PUBLIC HEARING 5:16:22 PM

Michael Hilber described the recent attack he had suffered outside his home from two unleashed pit bulls, and requested that the City's ordinance be stronger than the County's. He had suffered financially as a result of medical bills as well, and supported the liability insurance and financial responsibility being placed on the dog owner. He also requested fines and not releasing back any dog until all bills are paid.

Kay Tokerud agreed with the previous speaker, particularly enforcement of financial responsibility.

Anne Seeley asked that it be crafted in a way that would not require the damaged party to go to court for restitution.

Jack Osborne stated the problem is not big enough to warrant government interference.

Unidentified recommended enforcement of leash laws.

Hearing no further testimony, Mayor Bender closed the public hearing at 5:32:10 PM.

Councilmember Martini stated support but felt the ordinance did not go far enough; Councilmember Sawyer concurred; Vice Mayor Blanchard requested strengthening the

ordinance; Councilmember Rabinowitsh agreed, suggesting requiring signage, tags and provision for restitution; Councilmember Pierce concurred; Mayor Bender felt the permit fees should be increased to create a responsibility and financial investment for owning a dangerous dog. Vice Mayor Blanchard questioned the release of a dog after an attack.

Mr. Farrell responded that the California Constitution already sets forth provisions for restitution, and that destruction is typically requested for dogs causing significant injury, although judges often allow them to go back under certain restrictions. He stated that he would return the ordinance containing the requested enhancements at a future meeting.

No Council action was taken on this item.