



Animal Control Advisory Board
TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN

Lawrence Memorial Hall
2 Jabish Street, P.O. Box 670
Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007

Date: June 30, 2016

Time: Meeting Convened 6:30 pm

Meeting Adjourned 7:23 pm

Place: Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall

Present:

Chrystal Greenleaf, Board Member
Carol Kasabian, Board Member
Jim Luippold, Board Member/Secretary
Nicole Miner, Chairperson
Audrey Safford, Board Member
Anna Fenton, Animal Control Officer
Janet Lipscomb, Animal Control Officer
Christian Airoidi, Dog owner
Catherine Reed Complainant

Reporter from the Springfield Republican
Two of Airoidi's friends

Meeting convened at 6:30 pm with an official quorum.

Prior to the meeting from 6:05 to 6:25, the entire Board was invited outside to see Airoidi's two pitbulls. Airoidi's girlfriend led the two dogs out of their car and all Board members were able to interact with the dogs. It was noted during the meeting that the two dogs were very strong, pulled at their leashes but were well managed by Airoidi and his girlfriend. Gungar, the male pitbull, was by far the most aggressive but not in any way to cause fear to anyone. The female, Ellie, was very responsive to Airoidi's commands.

First order of business was for Nicole Miner, chairperson, to re-read the minutes of the 9/29/2015 meeting that the Board had with Airoidi to see if he had, in fact, come through with the Board's request on neutering Gungar, to get updated info on Gungar's medication, to see if that medication helped his separation anxiety and to get info on Airoidi's attempts at restraining his dog. It was noted that Airoidi has come through with all of the Board's requests. .

Miner then read the complaint against Airoidi from Belchertown resident Catherine Reed who stated that a friend of hers was walking her dog and her own dog past Airoidi's house when the two pitbulls broke through the kitchen door of Airoidi's kitchen which is in the process of being

renovated and pinned both Reed's dog and her friend's dog on the ground.. Reed stated that she did not witness the incident but that both her dog and her friend's dog suffered trauma from being pinned down by the two pitbulls and suffered bruises which were verified by Reed's vet at Lichtenberg Vet in Amherst. Reed stated that Airoidi's dogs were vicious and dangerous and asked that they be removed from the town. She also asked that Airoidi make recompense of \$314 to cover vet bills and the cost of replacing a pair of her friend's eye glasses lost during the incident..

Anna Fenton, Animal Control Officer , noted that it is illegal to ask that a dog be removed from a Massachusetts town

Miner also read the Belchertown Police report that was issued after the incident but which contained few particulars of the incident.

Ms. Reed presented proof of Lichtenberg vet visit. It was noted in the report that no visible open wounds were evident on either of the two dogs.

She also presented the Board with a letter from her friend describing the incident but who wished to remain anonymous. This did not settle very well with some Board members. In the letter, the friend stated that she kicked the pitbull to separate him from her dog. Luippold questioned that if in fact she did this, that a pitbull would have turned on her to protect himself.

After the incident , because it was thought that there were open wounds, Airoidi's dogs were quarantined for 10 days.

Discussion ensued by Board members about the strength of the two dogs and how many people react with fear to the strong personality of pitbulls.

Airoidi showed the Board photos of his renovation efforts to his kitchen. He had placed a huge rock in front of the kitchen door which was moved by the dogs which caused their breaking out of the house. Airoidi's girlfriend was in the house when the incident occurred. She stated that the two pitbulls had not pinned the two other dogs in a vicious way and saw one of the pitbulls running towards town but saw nothing of an aggravated attack. Apparently, a good Samaritan stopped and picked up the dogs and returned them to Airoidi' house.

A reporter from the Republican was present during the meeting and when asked to leave for the Board to have a private discussion on the matter, he declined to leave and chairperson Miner agreed to have the discussion as an open one so no one was asked to leave the room.

People in attendance were asked to listen to the discussion but not take part in it.

Board members did voice concerns that a friend of a citizen of Belchertown was put in a precarious situation with two pitbulls storming at her and the dogs she was walking.

Board members did agree however that Airoidi's dogs have made good progress since the 9/2015 meeting and could not define these dogs as vicious. Aggressive , yes, but not in a violent way.

Board members Kasabian and Safford recommended a dog trainer they worked with that Airoidi should contact so she could work with the dogs' training. This trainer offered a reasonable charge for her services which Airoidi could easily afford. A different collar for both dogs was also recommended.

Miner asked Airoidi to :

Procure better collars for the two dogs

Provide restitution for the vet bills and lost eye glasses \$314 to Ms Reed

To ensure that the kitchen door be boarded up in a more secure way to ensure that the dogs could not escape the house again.

Airoidi sincerely apologized to Ms Reed about the incident and assured her that it would never happen again.

Ms Reed did not seem willing to accept his apology.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Luippold, secretary, on 6/30/2016