



WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ZONING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Julie Giordano
County Executive

Bunky Luffman
Director of Administration

MINUTES

The Wicomico County Animal Appeals Board met in regular session on April 27, 2023 in the Government Office Building, Room 301, with the following persons in attendance:

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Ola Meadowcroft, Chairman
Sharrell M Callaway, Member
David L. Snyder, Member

CITY/COUNTY OFFICIALS:

Andrew Illuminati, County Attorney
Courtney Culver, Recording Secretary
Officer Scott, Animal Control Officer
Tim Burke, Wicomico County Health Department Rabies Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Ola Meadowcroft, Chairman. Mr. Illuminati then asked the Board to introduce themselves. Ola Meadowcroft introduced herself as the Chairman, followed by Ms. Sharrell Callaway and Mr. David Snyder.

Public Hearing/Teepee:

Mr. Illuminati introduced the appeal, the dog Teepee, and the dog's owner, Juanita Courtney of 806 East Road, Salisbury MD 21801 and explained the order of the meeting and rules of procedure to those present. All persons wishing to testify were sworn or affirmed by Mr. Illuminati.

Mr. Illuminati called Officer Scott, Animal Control Officer to testify. Officer Scott stated that there were other bites and that he had paperwork from when Teepee was deemed potentially dangerous. He explained that he was dispatched to 806 East Road by the Wicomico County Sheriff's Department on April 5, 2023. On April 11, 2023 Officer Scott was able to make contact with Ms. Courtney, he was accompanied by two Wicomico County Sheriff's Deputies. Officer Scott noticed that Teepee was out and unattended and was tethered which violates the potentially dangerous regulations. There had been several other bites reported

and Mr. Scott brought Tim Burke from the Wicomico County Health Department as a witness. Ms. Meadowcroft asked Officer Scott what was the date of the initial dog bite. Officer Scott confirmed the date August 3, 2021. Ms. Meadowcroft wanted confirmation that this was when Teepee was deemed potentially dangerous and that Ms. Courtney was notified in that letter of all the stipulations that go along with the dog being deemed potentially dangerous. Officer Scott confirmed that all of that information was in the letter.

Officer Scott presented all the letters to Mr. Illuminati for evidence, introduced as Exhibit 1.

Mr. Snyder asked Officer Scott about the details of when Teepee had bit the postal worker. Officer Scott said since he was not part of that incident, he did not have details on that. Mr. Illuminati asked if Officer Scott had any evidence that he wanted the board to receive. Officer Scott had multiple documents to present. The first being a letter where Teepee was deemed the dog dangerous and that does have Ms. Courtney's signature on it, police reports from the Wicomico County Sheriffs Dept, introduced as Exhibit 2. The photos that Officer Scott has from the April 5, 2023 incident will be introduced as Exhibit 3.

Mr. Illuminati confirmed with Ms. Meadowcroft, chairman that Exhibits 1, 2, & 3 all have been received by the board.

Officer Scott called his witness Mr. Tim Burke of the Wicomico County Health Department to testify. Officer Scott asked Mr. Burke if he had contact with Ms. Courtney when the initial incidents occurred. Mr. Burke explained that he was not in that position when those bites occurred but did have contact with Mr. Courtney and Ms. Courtney in June of 2021. Officer Scott asked if he had copies of all the bite reports. Mr. Burke stated that he had reports from March 2017, that was reported from the Wicomico County Sheriff's Department. The March 30, 2017 report was introduced as Exhibit 4. The April 4, 2018 Health Department report was introduced as Exhibit 5. That March 23, 2020 Health Department report was introduced as Exhibit 6. The June 19, 2021 Health Department report was introduced as Exhibit 7. The April 5, 2023 Health Department report was introduced as Exhibit 7. All Exhibits were received by Ms. Meadowcroft, chairman.

Mr. Illuminati asked if Ms. Courtney had any questions for Mr. Burke or Officer Scott. Ms. Courtney asked what Mr. Burke did. Officer Scott explained that the Sheriffs Department is not always called to these types of incidents, but they can be reported to the Health Department. The Board had no further questions for Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke was excused.

Officer Scott called his next witness to testify. Melissa Rogers & Lissianna Rogers of 803 East Road, Salisbury Md, 21801. Ms. Rogers' and her daughter's service dog Sabrina was attacked by Teepee. Officer Scott asked Ms. Rogers to confirm that she was not at home when Teepee attacked their dog Sabrina and that her daughter was home and would testify to the attack. Officer Scott asked Lissianna Rogers to explain to the board what happened when Teepee was loose and attacked Sabrina. Ms. L. Rogers explained that she and her brother were riding bikes around 4:00pm and that they had taken their dog with them and she asked her brother to hold on to Sabrina because she had to put the bikes away. At that time Lissianna heard the sound of dogs fighting and went to see what was going on. Lissianna stated that's when she saw Teepee going at Sabrina's legs and she was able to grab Sabrina. A neighbor in a red hoodie saw what was going on and helped Lissianna to get Sabrina inside. About 30 mins later Ms. Rogers woke up and noticed that Sabrina was bleeding at the stomach and there was a puncture wound. Ms. Meadowcroft asked if they took Sabrina to the vet and they did but the wound ended up getting infected. Officer Scott provided Mr. Illuminati with pictures of the infected area of the puncture wound and were be introduced as Exhibit 8. Mr. Illuminati

asked Ms. Rogers and her daughter to describe what Teepee looked like. Ms. Rogers said that Teepee was a mixed breed and light in color. Ms. Meadowcroft asked how the dogs were broken up. Lissianna explained that it was a neighbor who she did not know and he was able to get Teepee off of her dog Sabrina. Ms. Meadowcroft asked what happened after the dogs were separated and where did Teepee go. Lissianna explained that she was taking her dog inside and the neighbor accidentally let Teepee go and she was unsure how or when Teepee went after that. Ms. Meadowcroft asked if they have ever seen Teepee loose or unattended. Lissianna told the Board that she usually see's Teepee chained up. Mr. Snyder asked how much Sabrina weighed. Lissianna said 38-40lbs and is 7 months old. Mr. Snyder was also curious if there were a lot of children in the area. Ms. Rogers said that there are a lot of kids her daughter's age.

Ms. Courtney went to the podium to ask Ms. Rogers if she came to her house after the bite. Ms. Rogers said she did go over to Ms. Courtney's house and Ms. Courtney explained that she took responsibility for Teepee biting Ms. Rogers dog, Sabrina. Ms. Courtney asked Ms. Rogers if she had taken Sabrina to the vet and at that time Ms. Rogers had not. Ms. Rogers said that she took Sabrina on Thursday to her vet in Easton. Ms. Courtney requested vet records and stated that she would reimburse Ms. Rogers for her expenses. Ms. Courtney asked if she had the records with her at this time. Ms. Rogers did not.

Mr. Illuminati asked Officer Scott if he had anymore witnesses and he did not but Ms. Callaway did have a question. Ms. Callaway asked what was the time frame from when Sabrina was attacked and taken to the vet. Ms. Rogers answered that it was about 36 hours due to the fact none of the vets locally would take new patients and the emergency vet wanted \$250.00. Ms. Rogers was finally able to get ahold of her vet in Ridgley, Md and he referred her to a vet in Easton, Md. The vet in Easton gave Sabrina antibiotics for two weeks and if there were any other issues to bring her back in. Ms. Rogers said that she has not had any more issues with the puncture wound. Ms. Rogers explained that Sabrina was in training to be a service dog for her daughter but that is on hold since she is terrified of everything. Ms. Courtney asked if Ms. Rogers had a big white dog and puppies. Ms. Rogers answered that she does.

The Board invited Teepee's owner, Juanita Courtney, 806 East Road, Salisbury Md. & her sister Barbara Townsend, 1023 Meadow View Drive, Salisbury Md. to the table. Ms. Courtney told the Board that she has had Teepee since he was 6 weeks old and he is now 11 years old. Ms. Courtney said that she had done everything that Animal Control asked her to do, which was a dog kennel & a muzzle. Ms. Courtney asked the Board if any of the documents received were the vet bill from Easton. Mr. Illuminati explained to Ms. Courtney that she had seen all documents received. Ms. Townsend told the Board that she has known Teepee since he was a puppy and that Teepee can be very protective of her sister, Ms. Courtney, & her mother who recently passed away. Ms. Townsend explained that she knows Teepee has tried to escape if the door has not been shut properly and sometimes like to chase cats and acknowledged the prior incidents that had happened with Teepee. Ms. Townsend wanted the Board to know how much Teepee means to her sister and is very sorry for what has happened. Ms. Courtney told the Board that she would do whatever she needed to do to keep him from getting out. Ms. Meadowcroft asked Ms. Courtney if she had gotten the cage after the first bite incident. Ms. Courtney confirmed that it was after that event. Ms. Callaway asked how do they secure Teepee now. Ms. Courtney told the Board that she had to get a storm door and another lock on the door. Ms. Townsend explained that Ms. Courtney takes Teepee out the back door when taking him outside. Ms. Courtney showed the Board a picture from her cell phone of the kennel she has for Teepee. Ms. Meadowcroft confirmed with Ms. Courtney that the kennel has been present since the bite in 2021. The picture of the kennel was received as Exhibit 9. Mr. Snyder asked if Ms. Courtney had talked to her vet about aggression or things that she could do to help Teepee. Ms. Courtney explained that she couldn't afford to

neuter him. Ms. Courtney told the Board that she took Teepee to Banfield. Ms. Townsend said she had suggested fixing Teepee since she had heard that male dogs can be more aggressive if not fixed. Mr. Snyder asked the size & breed of Teepee. Ms. Townsend said that it's a lab/pit bull mix and is about 50-70 lbs.

Since the Board had no further questions, Officer Scott wanted to talk Ms. Courtney about the dog kennel and a fence needing to be padlocked. Ms. Townsend said that would not be a problem. Ms. Meadowcroft wanted to clarify with Officer Scott that back in 2021 Teepee was deemed a potentially dangerous dog and that this bite deemed Teepee a Dangerous dog. Officer Scott confirmed, that was true.

There being no further questions from the Board and no other testimony, Ms. Callaway made a motion to go into closed session and seconded by Mr. Snyder. The Board recessed and deliberated.

When the Board came back to session, Mr. Snyder made a motion to **Uphold finding of the Animal Control Authority Deeming Teepee as a Dangerous Dog.**

Based on these findings, the Board ordered that Teepee shall be seized and euthanized.

Ms. Callaway made a motion to amend the original motion and would like Ms. Courtney to have the opportunity to see Teepee before he is euthanized as long as Animal Control and agrees with that. Mr. Snyder seconded the amendment to the original motion. All members voted in favor of the amendment.

With all Board members voting in favor of the entire motion as amended.

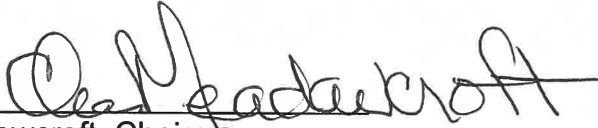
Old Business- Approval of November 1, 2022 Minutes

Previous minutes from November 1, 2022 had not been approved by the Board. Ms. Culver, Recording Secretary presented copies of the minutes to the Board for their approval.

A motion was made by Ms. Callaway and seconded by Ms. Meadowcroft with both members voting in favor to approve the November 1, 2022 minutes. Mr. Snyder abstained since he was not present for that meeting.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Snyder at 2:43pm The motion was seconded by Ms. Callaway and with all members voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

This is a summary of the proceedings of this meeting. Detailed information is in the permanent files of each case as presented and filed in the Wicomico County Department of Law.



Old Meadowcroft, Chairman



Courtney Culver, Recording Secretary

