

Honorable Council  
City of Newark, Ohio  
August 1, 2012

The Safety Committee met Monday July 30, 2012 in council chambers following the Street Committee. These members were in attendance:

Rhonda Loomis, Co-Chair                      Carol Floyd  
Jeff Rath    Bill Cost Jr.  
Shirley Stare, for Marc Guthrie

We wish to report:

**Mrs. Loomis-** wished to make an opening statement prior to the commencement of the meeting. She stated that she performed research including case law on the legality of breed specific legislation, and reviewed emails both pro and con in considering removing Pitt Bulls from the vicious dog list prior to this evenings meeting. The appropriateness and the effectiveness in the breed specific legislation in preventing dog bite fatalities and injuries has been disputed, and that is what has brought us here tonight.

We are not here to attack those that administer the law. Government must look at all the input and make a decision based on the well-being of all citizens. Tonight is not about arguing for or against it is a time to educate.

Mrs. Loomis requested for those who are going to speak tonight to come to the podium and state their name and address for the record and present their opinion on why they believe the City should or should not address its current vicious dog ordinance specific towards Pitt Bulls. She stated that tonight is about being educated on the breed specific legislation and the good or the harm you feel it is doing for the City as a whole.

**Mr. Rath-** Stated that he supports the request to change our law to coincide with the state law. He stated he is open and willing to listen to both sides. There are definitely some parts of the law that we have now the he would like to see changed, pertaining to holding the owner of the pet accountable for the action of the pet.

**Mr. Houdeshell-** was in favor of the City's law changing.

**Beau Bromberg-** 410 Clarendon St. Submitted a copy of the City's current Ordinance and has highlighted the section of the ordinance that he would like to see eliminated. Mr.

Bromberg supplied records obtained from Licking County Health Department and Toby Wills regarding the number of dog bite cases reported and those that were from a Pitt Bulls within those numbers. Mr. Bromberg believes a dog should be judged on the dog not the breed of the dog.

**Mr. Frost-** stated the he researched why Pitt Bulls were on the vicious dog list. During his research, he found that Pitt Bulls only make up 5 percent of the dog population however the number of deaths due to a Pitt Bull was 10 times higher than other dogs. He stated that he felt if the State of Ohio doesn't say we have to change the ordinance he thinks that we should watch to and see what happens in other communities. He is in favor of the law staying the same.

**Lesa Best-** 205 W Church St, she stated that she has a 15 year old dog that has been attacked 5 times by dogs, only once by a Pitt Bull that was not on a leash. Her concern is irresponsible owners that feel leashes are optional. She asked for a clarification from the Law Director regarding the difference between vicious, dangerous and nuisance in Ohio and or Newark regarding dogs.

**Law Director-** provided a definition of vicious, dangerous and nuisance regarding dogs to Ms. Best's satisfaction.

**Kay O'Dell-** 84 N 25<sup>th</sup> St, she stated that she has recently came into contact with Pitt Bulls and it changed her opinion regarding the breed. She is in favor of the law being changed.

**Anna Reel-**1293 Granville Rd, she feels that dogs should be judged based on the dog not the Pitt Bull breed. She feels that the owner should be held responsible for the dogs' behavior, especially if an owner has brought the dog up to be vicious.

**Randy Wise-** 70 Hancock St., owns a Pitt Bull and he feels that they should be removed from the list.

**Wendy Murphy-** 1400 Surry Downs, she stated she supports the state law. Her concern is that if these dogs are taken to the shelter she feels they are not adoptable and the fines are so severe for owners of these dogs that they do not come to get their dogs. These dogs are then euthanized.

**Mr. Marmie-** he stated that he feels the owners are responsible for the demeanor of the dog and should be held responsible if they are teaching their pet to be vicious.

**Mr. Rath-** agrees that owners should be held accountable for their pets' actions.

**Mr. Cost-** he believes that dangerous, vicious and nuisance can be described in different ways depending on the situation and the owners are responsible for the dogs action.

**Mary Angela Reid-** 46 Beecher Rd, she agrees with the City's ordinance that makes owners register their pets.

**Mr. Rath-** stated that the City enforces the licensing of pets, which is where it begins. Therefore regardless of the breed owners are able to be found and held accountable for their pet.

**Mr. Cost-** asked the Law Director questions regarding vicious and dangerous dogs and the requirements for fencing and insurance. If a dog is found to vicious and dangerous the laws are imposed on the owners. Therefore in Newark these laws are imposed on Pitt Bulls owners. He also asked what made the State change their law.

**Law Director-** stated the circumstances in which the state passed the bill changing the vicious dog law. He stated there was a mountain of data presented. He stated that according to the law you can only hold owner's responsible for their actions as to how they violated the law not on the actions of the dog. Mr. Sassen stated that the decision whether to remove Pitt Bulls from the list should be based on concrete documentable evidence, not opinion.

**John Luzio-** worked for Licking County Animal Control. He presented information regarding his experience with dog bites and attacks during his employment. He stated that dogs that were abused were responsible for attacks more often than not.

**Toby Wills-** Provided statistics regarding owners of dogs that have violated the laws and what percentages were related to Pitt Bulls.

**Mrs. Floyd-** suggested that the committee takes more time to review data before making a decision to not change the law or prepare legislation to change.

**Mrs. Loomis-** concurred with Mrs. Floyd and advised the audience that those were the actions the committee was going to take at this time.

Rhonda Loomis, Co-Chair