

To whom it may concern,

Regarding the designation of my beloved pet Goofy as a dangerous dog, please consider this letter as a formal appeal pursuant to the Dangerous Dog Order I received related to the events of August 6th, 2020.

I believe there are several mitigating factors in this particular case that shed some light on the encounter between Goofy and the other dog that are worthy of your consideration. They are as follows:

1. The only reason Goofy was out "exploring the neighborhood" was because our overly curious neighbor's daughter, Anna (age 7), opened our gate to see if Goofy and Murphy (my other dog) were available to play with her new puppy, Ruby. Unfortunately, she forgot to close the gate we otherwise keep closed at all times. Our dogs had played together many times. Anna's father, Matthew, would attest that he is very comfortable allowing his four month-old puppy and his three daughters (ages 9, 7, and 5) to play with Goofy with absolutely no concerns.
2. Although we do not believe Goofy is a dangerous dog, we have placed a padlock on the gate to prevent future escapes.
3. We didn't know Goofy had escaped until he had presumably been gone for some time. When we realized he was missing, we did everything we could to find him.
4. Although I wasn't able to witness the exchange between Goofy and the other dog, I can tell you that he is very friendly, but also very large. I can imagine that another dog and owner might be frightened to see him running toward them. Frightened dogs tend to be aggressive, and it's at least possible that the other dog was also aggressive toward Goofy.
5. The police officer I spoke with stated that the scratches on the other dog weren't visible to him when he spoke with the other dog's owner.
6. I found out from the police officer that the other dog's owner didn't feel that the scratches required veterinary care.
7. There was no evidence of blood on Goofy after this incident. He is white, and it would be very easy to see.
8. Goofy will be 6 years old in September and he has never injured another dog.

Several details here cast doubt on whether Goofy's actions meet the definition of "dangerous dog" delineated in Municipal Code 7.126. Definition i states that a dangerous dog is "Any dog which, when unprovoked, inflicts bodily harm on a person, domesticated animal on public or private property". Although Goofy was off-leash, it absolutely has not been determined, to my knowledge, that he was unprovoked by the other dog. Furthermore, while a scratch is technically an injury, it is a very mild injury, an injury, as mentioned above, that wasn't visible to the police officer. Anyone who plays with a dog or cat can get scratched from time to time, but that doesn't mean that pet is dangerous.

I am a careful, thoughtful dog owner and lover. I have taken significant steps to appropriately socialize Goofy, giving him plenty of affection and love. Please consider all of these factors and remove the Dangerous Dog Order.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Engdahl

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