

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CLAIR SHORES ANIMAL ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
November 2, 2022**

Board Members Present: John D. Caron, City Council Liaison
Jason Allen, Chief of Police
Abrial J. Barrett, City Clerk

Also Present: Kyle Chauncey, Animal Control Officer
Kollin VanDenHeuvel & Caroline Bodell, Petitioner

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Mr. Caron. A quorum was present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Barrett, seconded by Allen to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2022 meeting as presented.

Ayes: All - 3

3. KOLLIN VANDENHEUVEL & CAROLINE BODELL - REQUESTING 4TH DOG AT 28130 NIEMAN STREET

Background Brief: Kollin VanDenHeuvel and Caroline Bodell are requesting a variance on Ordinance 6.5 Exception to Limitation on Number of Dogs or Cats.

Previous Action: The letter of request for variance states that Kollin VanDenHeuvel has 3 dogs and Caroline Bodell has 1 dog and upon moving in together they would like to register a fourth dog. All 4 dogs are fully up to date on shots, licenses and have been spayed or neutered.

Economic Impact: N/A

They have four dogs Emma, an eleven-year-old Golden Retriever, Zain, a ten-year-old goldendoodle, Mak, a one-year golden retriever, and Koda, a one and half year-old German Shepard.

Letters of opposition were submitted by neighbors Carmen Pledger of 22320 Gordon Rd. and Deborah Parenteau of 733 Claire Pointe Court West.

The petitioners brought four letters of support by neighbors Tess & Jon Rodgers of 28108 Nieman St., Tom & Cindy Reese of 28105 Nieman St., Douglas Platte of 28117 Nieman St., and Chuck Barnes of 28201 Nieman St.

Ms. Bodell moved from Lapeer to St. Clair Shores after developing a relationship with Mr. VanDenHeuvel. She has been working with Koda since he was a puppy to become a therapy dog for the military. Koda has successfully completed level three in advanced obedience. She does not agree with Carmen Pledger's letter indicating that Koda is aggressive.

Mr. Caron mentioned dogs will tend to bark when people come up to the house but to take the necessary precautions.

Mr. VanDenHeuvel said he moved here in 2020 and works from home. There is a doggy door but there are two doors that divide the dogs from the outside so it is not fully open. The property has cameras and they are quick to respond if it goes off. He mentioned Carmen's dogs who live next door can be aggressive.

Ms. Bodell said Carmen's dogs are known as gate reactive. The dogs will bark if you walk by them. She noted most of the neighbors around them did not know they had four dogs. Tess who is on the opposing fence from Carmen also has a dog and there have been no concerns.

Mr. VanDenHeuvel confirmed that all of the dogs are microchipped, fixed, licensed and are fully up to date from the vet.

Mr. Caron asked what organization handles the training for Koda.

Ms. Bodell said it is through All Dogs Can in Lapeer Michigan.

Ms. Barrett commented on having four large dogs could be a concern.

Mr. VanDenHeuvel said two of the dogs are seniors. They are slowing with age and are relaxed.

Chief Allen checked and there were no animal complaints at the petitioner's address.

Mr. Chauncey also checked into their background and there was nothing prior to October 12, 2022. An animal control officer went to the petitioners address due to concerns of the yard being full of feces. The officer said the petitioners were cooperative and he only noticed about five piles of feces in the yard.

Ms. Bodell indicated they clean the yard twice a week.

Mr. VanDenHeuvel said they plan on replacing the chain link fence with a privacy fence in the spring.

The Committee said with the size of their lot and adding the privacy fence will help with the neighbors.

Ms. Barrett clarified if one dog passes away, they will not be able to have another dog.

The petitioners agree not to bring in another dog when one passes away. They know having four dogs is a lot of work.

Mr. Caron said Animal Control will put a note in the County records for licensing so when the petitioner transfers Koda's license, it will not flag them there are already four dogs at this address.

Mr. Chauncey noted to the petitioners to keep the approval letter allowing the variance to Ordinance Chapter 6.5 and to transfer the license over to the County as soon as possible.

Moved by Allen, seconded by Barrett to grant petitioner a variance to Animal Ordinance Chapter 6.5 Exception to Limitation on Number of Dogs or Cats allowing petitioner a fourth dog at 28130 Nieman Street.

Ayes: All – 3

4. MINI PIGS

Mr. Caron received an email from a resident asking to have a miniature pig. They are looking to make a change on our ordinance or bring it forward as a future animal ordinance variance. The variance is the pig would be considered a pet not a farm animal. He is not sure we would want to carve out specific species of pig in the ordinance but make an exception.

Mr. Chauncey mentioned once you allow for livestock in the city it becomes how will they be housed outside or inside, what will the housing look like, and what will the licensing/registration process look like. Will this stop at mini pigs. Pigs can be destructive.

Chief Allen researched and mini pigs can grow up to 100 pounds. He also said looking into some cities in Florida their ordinance states the letters from the neighbors all have to be positive and housed indoors only.

Mr. Chauncey indicated some counties do allow livestock animals but there must be a minimum number of acres.

Mr. Caron has the information to go back to the resident. The resident has a standard size lot. This is not just a City decision it also goes through the County to decide.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – None

Motion by Barrett, supported by Allen to adjourn at 2:23 p.m.

Ayes: All – 3

Prepared by: Katie Bala
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by: Abrial J. Barrett
City Clerk