

2-115.

VICIOUS ANIMALS, (a) Prohibited: It shall be unlawful for any person to keep, possess or harbor a vicious animal within the city. Impoundment of animals whose owners have been cited for violation of this section shall be at the discretion of the animal control officer. If the animal presents a clear and present danger to the public health or safety, it shall be the duty of the animal control officer or his or her agent to impound such animal.

(b) Defined: For purposes of this chapter a vicious animal shall include:

(1) Any animal with a known propensity, tendency or disposition to attack unprovoked, to cause injury or to otherwise endanger the safety of human beings or domestic animals; or

(2) Any animal which attacks a human being or domestic animal without provocation;

(3) Any animal owned or harbored primarily or in part for the purpose of fighting or any animal trained for fighting;

(4) Any animal which is urged by its owner or harborer to attack, or whose owner or harborer threatens to provoke such animal to attack, any law enforcement officer while such officer is engaged in the performance of official duty.

(c) Complaint: Whenever a sworn complaint is filed in the municipal court against the owner of an animal alleging that such animal is vicious and in violation of this section, the municipal judge shall hold a hearing to determine whether or not the animal is vicious within the meaning of this section and thereby in violation of this section. The owner of the animal shall be notified in writing of the time and place of the hearing at least one week prior to the hearing. In making a determination, the municipal judge shall consider the following:

(1) The seriousness of the attack or bite;

(2) Past history of attacks or bites;

(3) Likelihood of attacks or bites in the future;

(4) The condition and circumstances under which the animal is kept or confined;

(5) Other factors which may reasonably relate to the determination of whether or not the animal is vicious.

The municipal judge shall order the impoundment, the muzzling in accordance with subsection (d) and/or the confinement of the animal accused of being in violation of this section in a manner and location that will insure that it is no threat to persons or other animals pending the outcome of the hearing. If such impoundment, muzzling or otherwise safe confinement is not possible or if prior court orders to restrain such animal have gone unheeded, the municipal judge may order the animal immediately destroyed.

(d) Vicious Dogs to be Muzzled: It shall be the duty of every owner, keeper or harborer of any dog in the city, which dog is vicious or has been known to bite, chase, or run after any person or animal in the streets, alleys, or any public place in the city, to keep the same muzzled with a good and sufficient wire or leather muzzle, securely fastened so as to wholly prevent such dog from biting any animal or person until such time as a determination has been made by the court as to whether the dog is vicious or not. Any person owning, keeping or harboring any dog within the city limits contrary to this section shall be guilty of a violation of this code.

(e) Immediate Destruction: Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent the animal control officer or any law enforcement officer from taking whatever action is reasonably necessary to protect himself or herself or members

of the public from injury or danger, including immediate destruction of any vicious animal without notice to the owner.

(f) Release of: If a complaint has been filed in the municipal court against the owner of an impounded animal for a charge under this section, the animal shall not be released except on the order of the municipal judge, who may also direct the owner to pay all impounding fees in addition to any penalties for violation of this chapter. The municipal judge may, upon making a finding that an animal is vicious or that it represents a clear and present danger to the citizens or to other animals in the community, order the animal to be destroyed in a humane manner by the animal shelter. Surrender of an animal by the owner thereof to the animal control officer does not relieve or render the owner immune from the decision of the court, nor to the fees and fines which may result from a violation of this section.

(Ord. 1467, Sec. 1; Code 1991)