

=

**GJSentinel.com** **PRINT THIS**

Town ban on pit bulls dies  
Parachute ordinance with strict requirements for owners fails to pass

By MIKE McKIBBIN  
The Daily Sentinel

Thursday, December 13, 2007

PARACHUTE — Pit bulls will continue to be allowed to live with their owners in Parachute, but all vicious animals will soon be targeted for closer regulation, after action by town trustees Thursday night.

An ordinance that would have banned pit bulls, unless their owners followed several strict requirements, died after two motions to approve it failed for lack of seconds. One motion would have added other dog breeds, such as Dobermans and Rottweilers, to the ban.

Instead, trustees instructed Assistant Town Attorney Ed Sands to draft a new ordinance to toughen the town's existing ordinances that deal with stray and vicious animals.

Trustee Linda Waite proposed the ordinance to prohibit pit bulls within town limits. Waite remained steadfast in that desire, despite opposition from pit bull owners, animal shelter operators and others from Parachute and as far away as Carbondale and Grand Junction.

"I live near an elderly, ill woman who was so scared of the pit bulls next door that would always charge the fence when they saw her that she couldn't go out her front door without feeling threatened," Waite told the standing-room-only crowd at Town Hall. "This is not a hysterical thing. I don't think anyone should feel scared to walk down the street or even be in their own yard."

Among the pit bull owners who spoke, Joy Veland of Grand Junction said what several others told the board — the problem isn't the dogs, it's their owners.

"The owners who have gone bad and don't follow the rules could care less about this," she said. "It's the conscientious owners that are affected by (breed-specific legislation.)"

The granddaughter of Judy McGruder, an elderly woman who was attacked and mauled by a pit bull outside Silt a few years ago, was one of the few to voice support for the move.

"Don't wait until a child or someone else's grandmother is mauled," said Chrissy Welch of Battlement Mesa.

Aimee Chappelle of Parachute owns pit bulls and is the Garfield County animal control officer. She strongly opposed the ordinance and said her dogs are well-trained, as she takes them to schools for dog-bite demonstrations.

“The kids love them, I have pictures of them hugging the dogs,” she said.

However, Chappelle said a previous pit bull she owned bit someone on the ankle. The dog was killed, she said. Chappelle also offered to help the town develop a different ordinance.

Besides Waite, most other trustees voiced opposition to the ordinance in favor of a broader approach that will be considered in the near future.

“I have enforcement concerns about this,” Mayor Roy McClung said at the start of the discussion. “I think it will be a real financial burden and we don’t even have a shelter in this end of the county. So, we’d have to build our own, man it and maintain it. And we’d probably have to train a police officer to handle these situations.”

&bull

*Mike McKibbin can be reached via email at [mmckibbin@gjds.com](mailto:mmckibbin@gjds.com).*

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.gjsentinel.com/news/content/news/stories/2007/12/13/121407\\_1a\\_Pit\\_Bulls.html](http://www.gjsentinel.com/news/content/news/stories/2007/12/13/121407_1a_Pit_Bulls.html)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.