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Dog Attack Has Owner Asking Where Is The Law?

Dog Attacking Other Dogs Only Get Fines And Administrative Hearings As Recourse

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Suzanne Le Mignot

(http://cbs2chicago.com/bios/local_bio_092161132.html)

Reporting

(CBS) CHICAGO A brutal dog attack has a woman from the Northwest Suburbs calling for stricter laws.

CBS 2's Suzanne Le Mignot reports the dog in question is a repeat offender.

Dog owner Ann Gerber's Shin Tzu poodle mix, Gigi, was mauled by another neighborhood dog while on a walk.

Gerber, the well-known Skyline columnist says a German shepherd mix jumped a fence and attacked Gigi.

"They told me they didn't think she'd make it," said Gerber. "He had puncture wounds here. She was bleeding all over here. She lost a lot of blood."

Gigi spent three weeks in two different hospitals before coming home.

"She always wanted to come home with us and she couldn't understand why she was hurting and people were sticking things in her," recalled Gerber.

Village of Skokie Health Department records show this is the second documented case with the same German shepherd mix attacking a neighborhood dog.

Citations were issued to the owner of the shepherd mix in March of last year. He was fined \$250 for having a dangerous dog that attacked unprovoked. The owner also paid \$75 for allowing his dog to run loose.

When CBS 2 went to the dog owner's home, we received a "no comment" about the incident.

"I think there should be a law in Illinois that says if a dog bites two dogs, he must wear a soft muzzle when out of the house," said Gerber.

The only recourse on the books in Skokie for cases like this is administrative hearings and fines.

"I don't want to minimize this. Of course, this is a very serious matter also. But, a human bite would take it to another level," said Lowell Huckleberry, Director of Health for the Village of Skokie.

And another level means circuit court. Then it would be up to a judge to decide the dog's fate. Huckleberry, who oversees animal control in Skokie, says there are no plans to change the ordinance as it stands right now, but that doesn't mean it won't change in the future.

The owner of the dog that attacked Gigi is not fined the maximum of \$750 for this second attack. Gerber says the owner said he'd pay Gigi's veterinarian bill – that totals \$3,800. Skokie officials say he paid the vet bill in the first attack too.

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