



Monday, 11 June 2007

## Dog attack spoils first day in dream home

**A three-year-old English bull terrier has been declared 'menacing' after it attacked a dog that strayed on to its property, and allegedly bit the dog's owner when he tried to separate them.**

The attacked dog's owner, Lee Thomas, needed tetanus injections for bites to his wrist and thumb.

Now the Whangaparaoa family is wondering why it took more than six weeks to get the Rodney District Council to act after their seven-month-old puppy, Blossom was attacked.

"The attack was on the day we moved into our new dream home," says Mr Thomas.

"It wasn't a very good welcome and not a nice scene for our kids to witness."

The family's four children are aged between two and nine, and the incident has left their parents concerned for the children's safety.

"We are frightened to let our kids out to play without constant supervision," says mother Sarah.

But council animal control and bylaws manager Wayne Knightbridge says part of the delay was caused by confusion about who was to complete the file, and the delay was made worse when information requested from Mr Thomas was not provided until May 30.

"All I was asked to do was take the vet's bill to the neighbour - which is what I did," says Mr Thomas. "It wasn't until my solicitor contacted Mr Knightbridge on May 24 that we knew the council wanted documents."

Mr Thomas says his injuries would have been worse if he hadn't been wearing a metal wrist brace.

Blossom suffered a puncture mark to the lower rib cage, and bruising.

Mrs Thomas says they aren't looking for a dispute with their neighbour, or even asking for the dog to be put down.

"All we want is to ensure the safety of our children. It's up to the council to decide how best that can be achieved."

Mr Knightbridge says determining the severity of the attack and injuries is critical.

"It would have been inappropriate to make a decision without documents. The injuries sustained by the dog were minor."

You may not copy, republish or distribute this page or the content from it without having obtained written permission from the copyright owner. To enquire about copyright clearances contact [clearance@fairfaxnz.co.nz](mailto:clearance@fairfaxnz.co.nz).