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## Police kill dog that cornered girl

RON SELAK JR. Tribune Chronicle

WARREN — In the wake of a dog shooting that upset neighbors, city Police Department officials are considering drafting policy on how officers should handle menacing canines.

On Tuesday, police said they were forced to shoot and kill a dog who witnesses say cornered a young girl walking her own dog on an East Avenue S.E. home porch.

The decision to shoot Lightning, a shepherd mix, angered some residents, one of whom said Friday she believes there were alternatives to killing the dog.

Another resident said she's sorry the dog was killed, but those outraged about the dog's death should be concerned with the girl's welfare.

Neighbors said Lightning was tied to an outside tree while its owners were away for a couple days. No one was home Friday for comment.

Capt. Timothy A. Bowers said police are reviewing the situation and that no specific policy regarding how to handle similar situations exists in the department. With the number of dog attacks seemingly on the rise, it might be a good time to consider such a policy, he said.

But close attention needs to be paid so as to not create a policy that takes all the decision making power from cops on the street, he said.

"This is officer's judgment and hopefully we've got people with good judgment," Bowers said.

According to reports, repeated attempts by police and the city's animal control officer to corral the dog, which had gotten loose in the area near the intersection of East Avenue S.E. and Grandview Street S.E., weren't successful.

Officers tried for about 30 minutes to catch the animal, which eluded a snare twice. Reports show the animal was aggressive toward the girl and her dog, and then became more aggressive when officers tried capturing it.

When the dog ran into a nearby field, it was destroyed "for the protection of the public," a report states.

"Whether it's a dog, cat or chicken posing a threat to the community, the officer has a right to act to end that threat," Bowers said.

Darlene Wright, 1508 Grandview St. S.E., said she believes there was other ways to handle the problem. One lady offered to keep the dog in her garage until the owner's returned home, Wright said.

Wright said the dog wasn't vicious.

"If a 77-something old lady offered to put the dog in her garage, it couldn't have



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been that vicious,” Wright said.

Another resident said she believes police did all they could to catch the dog, which she said had been running loose most of the day.

“They didn’t come out with their guns drawn,” Kathy Heisterman said. “They tried (catching the dog), they really did.

“If I thought they came out to shoot the dog, crazy pistol happy people, I would say so,” she said. “But I watched them a good bit of the time to get that dog.”

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