



Dog banished after series of attacks

By **Kristen Grieco** , Staff writer
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ESSEX - Daisy Mae must go.

She fatally attacked a little dog named Sally and has sent three other dogs into surgery, according to the town's animal health officer.

Selectmen believe she is likely to attack again if she remains in town.

On Monday, they gave her owners, James and Yvonne Ramsey of Rocky Hill Road, 10 days to get her out of town, ordering them to restrain her at their residence until they find a new home for her.

The unanimous vote to banish Daisy Mae came after an emotional 45-minute hearing and a few minutes of deliberation. Some people's voices shook as they spoke, and one teenager ran from the room in tears after the decree.

Yvonne Ramsey pleaded for another chance, promising to restrain Daisy Mae from now on.

"She'll never be off the property without being on a leash," she said.

But Robert Steach, the town's animal control officer, said the coonhound mix has natural hunting instincts that cause her to attack small dogs - possibly mistaking them for rabbits.

"There's overwhelming evidence that she's become an aggressive dog," Steach said.

He said keeping the dog in an enclosure could intensify her instincts so that if she ever broke free, she would attack again.

"I really don't think we have room in town for that kind of experiment," Selectman Mark Lynch said.

Pam Stone, the town's animal health officer, said she had seen Daisy Mae around humans and did not believe her a threat to them but had no doubt she would kill another small dog again.

It was the attack on Sally, a 10-pound Chihuahua-terrier mix owned by David and Julia Peterson of Pine Ridge Road, that led to this week's hearing on Daisy Mae.

"I think if the Petersons got another 10-pound dog, she'd want it dead," Stone said.

Yvonne Ramsey said when Daisy Mae is "properly introduced" to other small dogs in the neighborhood, she is friendly and non-threatening.

At least three neighbors, one of whom gave a written statement to selectmen, said they did not see Daisy Mae as a threat to their dogs, large or small.

Several other neighbors said that they were concerned about the dog's behavior and wanted to come up with a way to ensure that she would not roam the neighborhood with the potential to attack other small dogs.

Daisy Mae attacked Sally, who was 6 years old, on the morning of Sept. 20 when she was playing on the Petersons' lawn, according to David Peterson. Daisy Mae picked up Sally and shook her three times, tearing her flesh, he said.

A police report said Sally was bleeding and seriously injured when she was rushed to the veterinarian.

Sally suffered broken ribs and severe lacerations, Peterson said, and needed several surgeries, including one to remove her spleen. She died three days after the attack of a blood infection. Peterson said his veterinary bills totaled around \$7,000.

Peterson on Monday asked that "the board take the necessary action to protect its town, its citizens and its pets."

According to state law, the board may choose to restrain, banish from town or euthanize a dangerous dog.

The Ramseys have 10 days to appeal the board's decision to the district court.

Steach offered to help the Ramseys find a home for Daisy Mae at, for example, a large farm, where she could run free and hunt rabbits.

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