

charlotteobserver.com

Comments (3) | [Recommend](#) (1)

Shelter may kill dog; family says it's surprised

By Josh Shaffer

jshaffer@newsobserver.com

Posted: Friday, Jan. 02, 2009



A photo from the Inggs family shows their pet boxer, Honey, sleeping with their other family dog. COURTESY OF THE INGGS FAMILY

RALEIGH Inside Wake County's animal shelter, a 40-pound boxer named Honey awaits a possible death sentence.

Two people reported bites. A third says he broke his wrist jumping out of Honey's way.

Putting the dog down without its family's consent is a rare step, but by Wake County law, Honey is dangerous enough to kill.

"This is not personal for us," said Michael Williams, Wake's animal control director. "I've been here two years, and this has never happened. We're doing what we feel is best for citizens in the county."

An appeal is pending, which could spare Honey. Still, her family says the dog's fate is not only unjust, but a surprise.

The family had no idea the dog had been declared dangerous, nor had it even met one of the reported bite victims, owner Connie Inggs said.

The first news that Honey's fate was so grim, she said, came in a telephone call from the Department of Animal Control, which said Honey would soon be euthanized.

"No one's said anything," she said. "No explanation. Just two strikes and we kill the dog."

Almost every state has a death penalty for dogs, triggered by a second or third offense, said William Reppy, a Duke University law professor who teaches an animal law course.

Often, families with biting dogs choose to put their pets down for public safety's sake.

But counties have the authority to step in. By Wake County law, a dog can be declared dangerous after the first biting offense and its owner required to build a secure, enclosed space marked with a sign.

If a dangerous dog attacks a second time, or if the owner fails to build a safe space as required, the county may kill the dog. By the county's definition, an attack can mean approaching in a vicious or threatening way, even without a

bite.

"I have cases where the dogs haven't even bitten anybody," said Calley Gerber, a Raleigh attorney who specializes in animal law.

The Inggs family has approached Gerber about Honey, she said, and it isn't clear whether the boxer was ever officially declared dangerous.

The Inggs family has moved to Charlotte and lives in North Raleigh only occasionally while it tries to sell a house on Swans Mill Crossing.

Honey ran inside an electric fence at the residence, but Inggs said the dog got past it while not wearing a collar.

The trouble started in August when a neighbor, Rajat Chander, reported that he broke his wrist after the dog ran at him, and he jumped away to avoid it.

Williams said that case was the first trigger, and that Honey was declared dangerous in August. But animal control's records show that the Inggses were cited only for a dog running loose — not being potentially dangerous.

Another person said she was bitten in August, but Williams said that person did not file a report. She will be called as a corroborating witness in Chander's case when an appeal is heard, Williams said.

The Inggses were sued by the second person, whose name was not available, and are waiting to appeal the case.

Then in December, jogger Christin Perkins reported running past the Inggs house and getting knocked over and bitten on the arms and legs, records said.

But in some county records, the person's wounds are noted only as bruises that didn't break the skin because of her heavy clothing. In other places, they are noted as a skin break.

The Inggs family says they have never met Perkins. Connie Inggs got a call from animal control while she was in Charlotte, instructing her to bring Honey to Wake's shelter.

She did so thinking her dog would stay there just a few days. But soon afterward, she got another call saying the dog would have to be killed.

The county doesn't have to hear an appeal, Williams said, although it will. Inggs family members never contacted Wake officials about scheduling the appeal, he said, and they didn't respond to numerous messages.

But, he said, "We will not put their dog down until this is heard."



[Subscribe to The Charlotte Observer & Earn Miles.](#)

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

Submit

Comments: 3 Showing: Newest first

Disclaimer

The Charlotte Observer is pleased to be able to offer its users the opportunity to make comments and hold conversations online. However, the interactive nature of the internet makes it impracticable for our staff to monitor each and every posting.

Since

WarrenDrye wrote on 01/02/2009 07:44:11 AM:

All these dog bites and not a word about what someone may have done to provoke the dog. There are more to most dog stories than what you read and hear. Never been without a dog since I was four years old and don't intend to be. An old saying is; "If someone doesn't like your dog, they don't like you". I find this to be true, I suggest seeing the movie "Maarley and Me" We saw it last night and that's the way I feel about my dog too, a Police trained Belgian Malanois that does what I tell her.

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

 [Report abuse](#)



E J H wrote on 01/02/2009 07:13:16 AM:

It would be better if the owner had to suffer the consequences being meted out to the dog- she sounds oblivious.

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

 [Report abuse](#)



CarolinaConservative wrote on 01/02/2009 06:29:19 AM:

Oh, it didn't break the skin of the jogger. That changes everything.

[Recommend \(0\)](#)

 [Report abuse](#)

More comments on this story: 1
readers to help us.

charlotteobserver.com does not control user submitted statements, we cannot promise that readers will not occasionally find offensive or inaccurate comments posted on our website. In addition, we remind anyone interested in making an online comment that responsibility for statements posted lies with the person submitting the comment, not The Charlotte Observer.

If you find a comment offensive, clicking on the exclamation icon will flag the comment for review by the administrators, we are counting on the good judgment of all our

Ads by Yahoo!

[Online Degrees](#)

Get Your AA, BA, Masters or PhD at a Top Online School. Start Now.
www.NexTag.com

[New Car Weekly Sales](#)

Find out Today's Advertised New Car MSRP & Instant Invoice Price Info.
CarBargainsWeekly.com