



Resident questions policies after cat allegedly mauled by dogs

By Meera Pal, STAFF WRITER

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PLEASANTON — Kristine Gialdini says her 16-year-old orange tabby cat Argyle was mauled to death before her eyes by two dogs that had escaped from their home a little more than a mile away.

Now, she wants to help prevent the same trauma from happening to other animal owners.

Gialdini plans to attend Tuesday's City Council meeting to share her experience. She wants to encourage residents to report loose dogs in their neighborhoods to create a paper trail on problem pets. And she would like a notification system, alerting neighbors they are living near a dog that has killed an animal.

Even though the dogs' owner, Gerard Boyance, was cited and fined, Gialdini doesn't understand why the dogs were allowed home so quickly after the vicious attack.

"If they are going to kill my cat, they're going to kill someone else's cat," she said. "If I knew my dogs had killed someone's pet, I couldn't look at the dogs the same way."

The incident that ended with Argyle dead in Gialdini's arms began the afternoon of Jan. 21, when Pleasanton police received a call about three dogs on the loose. Officers were able to track down only one dog and return him to Boyance's backyard.

Three hours later, police received three more calls about the same two dogs still on the loose a mile away. When they arrived, the officers were told the dogs had just killed a cat. The dogs were eventually found and transported to the Alameda County Animal Shelter.

Boyance, who has raised his dogs Malakai and Moreno from puppies, is distraught that his normally happy-go-lucky dogs would kill a cat.

"I don't want my dogs running around; I don't want them killing anything," he said. "It worries me immensely."

Boyance said he doesn't know what provoked his dogs, a black lab and English pointer, to suddenly lash out at the cat.

"It seems so out of the blue," he said. "I'm trying to figure out why it happened to begin with."

That question may never be answered. But to help ensure it doesn't happen again, Animal Services Officer Catherine Rush stopped by Boyance's house the day after the attack to make sure he had secured his backyard fence, eliminating any possible dog-escape routes before the dogs were released from the county shelter. Boyance also paid a \$100-per-dog fine to the city and \$50-per-dog fee to the shelter.

Rush said that in making her decision on the dogs, she took the dogs' history and temperament into consideration, as well as the owner's attitude.

"With one offense like that we wouldn't be requesting a dog be euthanized," she said. "We addressed the problem appropriately."

She added that when she visited the dogs at the

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shelter, they were friendly, and Boyance appeared to be a responsible and concerned dog owner.

Gialdini, who would like an apology from Boyance and perhaps a donation in Argyle's name to Tri-Valley Animal Rescue, thinks the punishment should have been harsher, especially when she learned from the police report and Boyance's neighbors that the dogs had escaped before.

"If they've been out before, how do we know they've only killed one cat?" she asked.

According to the police report, the dogs also were reported loose in 2006.

Gialdini said she doesn't understand what she calls the city's "two-cat minimum."

"Essentially, we have to wait for another animal to be killed and hope it's not a kid," Gialdini said. "A dog shouldn't have a second opportunity."

Rush, who has spent 30 years in animal control — the last eight in Pleasanton — said vicious dog cases are taken very seriously in Pleasanton and rejected the idea of a "two-cat minimum."

She said the first time a dog attacks a person or animal, it is usually an accident. Beyond that it becomes a question of the dog's nature or the owner's negligence.

"If the conditions warrant it we have no hesitation requesting a (vicious dog) hearing," Rush said.

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