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MIDDLETOWN CITY COUNCIL

## **Pit bulls no longer banned from city**

### **Amended ordinance prohibits chaining animals.**

By [Ed Richter](#)

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MIDDLETOWN — An amended dog ordinance bans chaining animals and beefs up penalties for irresponsible pet owners.

Middletown City Council on Tuesday unanimously approved the amended ordinance that also eliminated breed-specific designation of pit bulls as vicious dogs.

Carol Collier, a resident who spoke in support of the amended ordinance, said she has "Yorkies that are more vicious than pit bulls."

"I believe if you have love for an animal you will not keep it chained," she said. "I believe (dog owners) should be made responsible. Somebody needs to stand up for these animals."

A member of the committee who helped develop the amended ordinance, Leland Gordon, executive director of Animal Friends Humane Society in Trenton, said of pit bulls, "We don't want to judge a book by its cover. If you own a pit bull, please be more responsible."

Gordon also voiced his support for the measure against tethering, saying "it's a terrible life living on a chain."

Last September, several residents questioned the "breed-specific" designation of pit bulls as vicious. Also, an Ohio appellate court declared Toledo's breed-specific law unconstitutional, according to a staff report from city Law Director Les Landen.

A committee was formed consisting of Vice Mayor Anthony "Tony" Marconi, Councilwoman Laura Williams, Animal Control Officer Liz Lucas, Kim Sterling, a former dog warden, Matthew Heller, a local veterinarian, Gordon and Landen, who worked several months to restructure the city's ordinances regarding dogs.

The ordinance was amended to include:

- Increasing the penalties for repeat offenders allowing their dogs to run at large and including spay and neutering for the dogs for repeat offenders.
- Eliminating the breed-specific designation of pit bulls as vicious dogs.
- A definition of dangerous dogs to include an unprovoked attack and injury of another dog.
- Adding provisions to the code to limit and regulate outdoor tethering of dogs.
- Eliminating prohibitions of owning pit bulls in the city.

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