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Publish Date: 4/5/2006

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## Council won't pursue dog ban

City focuses instead on tougher enforcement of existing animal laws

*By Trevor Hughes  
The Daily Times-Call*

LONGMONT — While an estimated 15,000 dogs call Longmont home, only about one-third of them are registered as required by city law.

And while City Council members on Tuesday night decided against pursuing a ban against pit bulls and other “dangerous” dogs, they agreed to discuss ways to strengthen enforcement of Longmont’s existing animal control laws, including having all dogs registered.

The decision, reached informally and unanimously, was met with applause from about a dozen audience members.

“I don’t see any need to go beyond what we already have on the books,” said Mayor Julia Pirnack. “It’s really more how the owner disciplines and treats the dog rather than any specific breed.” The council agreed last year to discuss a possible ban on certain breeds at



the request of several residents. After police officers, animal control officers, the Longmont Humane Society and many pet owners weighed in, with most voices opposed to the idea, the council declined to take action.

“I think you all are barking up the wrong tree,” joked resident Jere Freeman during the public testimony portion of Tuesday’s meeting.

Several speakers who opposed the ban said media organizations tend to exaggerate or highlight pit bull bites, and suggested that dogs owned by responsible people are perfectly safe.

Three people supported the ban, saying they fear pit bulls in large part because of their ability to cause significant damage.

“There’s no doubt in my mind these dogs are loving and loyal to their owners,” said Larry Rickert, but “something does click in these dogs’ head, and suddenly this loving, kind dog maims or kills.”

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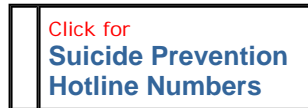
At the council's request, the police department, animal control and the Humane Society will investigate ways to increase dog licensing in Longmont, as well as consider other ways to better enforce the city's existing laws.

Animal control officers at Tuesday's meeting said they have already stepped up enforcement of leash laws.

"We were, in essence, being too nice," said city animal control officer Robin Breffle.

In other action Tuesday, the council appointed Marty Block and Fred Wilson to serve on a committee investigating the city's school-capacity benchmark.

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