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The Herald (Rock Hill, S.C.)

August 19, 2008 Tuesday  
Final Edition

## Council takes up dog chain ban proposal

**BYLINE:** Charles D. Perry / cperry@heraldonline.com

**SECTION:** CITY; Pg. 1A

**LENGTH:** 764 words

YORK - The debate over dog chaining reached a new height Monday night as tethering opponents and proponents packed the York County Council meeting.

Council Chairman Buddy Motz acknowledged that the county's animal ordinances need to be strengthened, but he asked that people on both sides of the issue give their research to county staff as leaders weigh what should be done.

"Nobody here in this room condones animal abuse," Motz said. "We can all agree on that. But I'm not sure where we need to be."

At issue is whether county leaders should outlaw chaining dogs. Several animal rights groups brought the matter to the County Council, claiming that chaining makes dogs more aggressive and often leads to neglect.

To highlight their cause, they have pointed to the recent case of a Rock Hill man whose 13 pit bulls were seized by local authorities.

Most of those dogs lacked adequate shelter and were restrained by logging chains, police said. Some of the animals didn't have access to water, and none of the dogs had received rabies shots. The dogs' owner has been allowed to get his animals back. Police never charged him with a crime and said he provided the animals some care.

Tethering proponents who came to Monday's meeting told the council that responsible pet owners should not be restricted because of others' cruelty. Some held signs that said "Say no to laws that restrict the rights of responsible pet owners" and "I own a dog & I vote."

"We should enforce the laws that we already have before we start making new laws," Chris Evans of York said during a break in the meeting. "You're doing nothing but adding onto the problem (by) making new laws. There's already laws in place to protect dogs and people with dogs - chained dogs, kennel dogs, all the way around."

Although not every person who chains a dog abuses that animal, far too many chained dogs in York County are neglected, Martha Holcombe of the Animal Adoption League said.

"We're not after the people who are responsible," she said. "We know that there are a small group of people who tether their dogs responsibly."

"But being part of a rescue group, we get calls daily about chained dogs that are not being treated responsibly, and that's who we're

after," Holcombe said. "Unfortunately, you can't say these people are responsible and these people aren't. You have to make a law that covers everything."

But those opposed to the ban disagree.

"I understand what they're fighting for," said Maya Haught, the South Carolina representative for the group Responsible Dog owners of Eastern States. "But I don't agree with them trying to take my rights as an American and a dog owner away."

During the council meeting, the groups supporting the ban made a PowerPoint presentation illustrating their case. They showed photos of emaciated tethered dogs and dogs with chains embedded in their necks.

They also showed a picture of a child whom they said had been mauled by a chained dog. They said these kinds of tethered animals aren't properly socialized, making them a danger to the community.

"Chained dogs are like loaded guns," Alicia Schwartz of Dogs Deserve Better said.

After the presentation, opponents of the ban said the PowerPoint didn't show people who tether their dogs and treat them well.

"Any animal that is not being properly socialized will be aggressive," Haught said. "Whether they're chained or whether they're confined in a kennel or in a backyard. Aggression does not come from tethering."

Haught and other tethering supporters spoke to the council later in the meeting. Among the group was Chester County's Arthur Parker Sr., who faced criminal charges in 2004 for his alleged involvement in hog-dogging, an illegal form of animal fighting that pits wild hogs against pit bulls. Parker has said the events are field trials for evaluating the skill of hunting dogs.

He was acquitted of the hog-dogging charges in 2005.

"My dogs are healthy, happy," he said Monday. "My dogs are chained to protect them from other people, not to protect other people from them."

Despite their differences, advocates from both camps see a York County chaining ban as a trendsetter: Supporters want to see other counties in the state follow a local example and opponents fear that happening.

A few South Carolina communities have tethering laws. Simpsonville doesn't allow any tethering and Columbia permits it for only nine hours each day.

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The News & Observer (Raleigh, North Carolina)

August 9, 2008 Saturday  
Final Edition

## Officials may yank the chain to spare the dog; Possible ban could put owners in quandary

**BYLINE:** Samiha Khanna, Staff Writer

**SECTION:** DURHAM NEWS; Pg. A1

**LENGTH:** 977 words

It's not that Tonnie Markham doesn't love her dogs. She lets Tennessee, her greyhound-shepherd mix, sit on the kitchen floor while she fries fish for dinner.

Every evening, she takes cool, crunchy ice outside to two other pups, Pinky and Snoopy, as a refreshing treat. She coos at them and they look up at her sweetly, wagging their tails.

And it's not that Markham prefers to keep two of her dogs chained in her backyard -- she hates the sight of it -- but she can't afford a fence right now, she said.

"I'd like my dogs to run free," said Markham, 44, who works at Raleigh-Durham International Airport. "It makes me feel bad when I have to leave 'em back there and go to work."

Markham is hesitant to let the world know her dogs are chained because so many people see it as inhumane. It also could soon be illegal, if county commissioners approve a ban on tethering dogs next month.

A county-appointed committee has been researching the issue of dog chaining for the past two years, and this week presented an anti-tethering ordinance for commissioners to consider. The board will hold a public hearing on the proposal at 7 p.m. Aug. 25, and could vote on a final draft of the ordinance as soon as September.

A similar ban on chaining has been pitched to Orange County commissioners, and they're scheduled to revisit the issue later this year. Other counties have ordinances that place time limits and other restrictions on chaining, too, said Amanda Arrington, chairwoman of the Animal Control Advisory Committee, the panel that performed the research.

Durham's proposed law would completely ban chaining or otherwise tethering a dog and leaving it unattended. Violators would face county fines, and in some cases, could even lose their animals if they didn't find another method of containing their dogs.

"It's an antiquated practice, and it's something that's cruel and inhumane to the dog," Arrington said.

Dogs on chains are more likely to be aggressive, she said. Many cause a public nuisance by barking incessantly, and they often don't get the exercise or vet care they need, she said. Without a proper setup, the animals can be injured by their chains, could knock over their water or also get tangled and be unable to reach it. They also can contribute to the huge numbers of unwanted pets born every year.

Commissioners weigh in

Not every chained dog is neglected, she conceded. And likewise, abuse can happen to animals who live inside. But of the 1,500 animal cruelty complaints Durham animal control officers receive annually, a majority of the cases show abuse or neglect related to improper tethering, said Cindy Bailey, director of Durham's animal control department.

Three of five county commissioners heard Arrington's presentation Monday. Commissioner Becky Heron, an outspoken advocate for animals, was largely in favor of a tethering ban.

"I've been at the shelter," Heron said. "When you see animals come in with collars buried in their necks because they've been neglected, it's high time to do something."

But Commissioner Lewis Cheek questioned the fairness of the ordinance, saying some could argue that the county was keeping low-income families from owning pets if a fence or other enclosure were required.

Money an issue

Durham has one nonprofit group that already is helping build fences for people who can't afford them, but its reach is limited. The Coalition to Unchain Dogs, founded by Arrington about two years ago, uses donations and volunteer labor to build fences for dogs.

More than 100 dogs have been "unchained" by the group. Before a dog owner can receive help, though, the owner has to agree to update his or her pet's vaccinations, register the animal with the county and have it spayed or neutered, if it wasn't already. So far, no one has declined a free fence, Arrington said.

Tonnie Markham, for one, would welcome the help. Estimates she obtained last year for her back yard on Lafayette Street were high -- \$3,500 for an invisible electric fence, and \$2,200 for a traditional one, she said.

A fence would allow Pinky and Snoopy, two of the six dogs currently living inside and outside Markham's house, to roam more freely. But though better late than never, a fence wouldn't undo what happened a few months ago when Tennessee got loose.

The dog eventually found her way home, but soon had 11 puppies. At one point, the litter wandered the unfenced yard and at least four babies were lost. Tennessee has since been spayed, and some of her pups went to the animal shelter.

One of the males wandered across the street to the home of Geneva Rucker. When her 10-year-old granddaughter Erica saw him, she scooped him right up.

The family already has a brindle pit bull mix, Snoop. He lives in the back yard,

chained because the fence is broken.

The family can't afford to fix it.

Rucker said she hates to keep Snoop tethered behind the house. She's been a pet lover her whole life, she said. "I would rather see 'em home, chained down, than be with someone who doesn't take care of 'em," she said.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Public hearing on the anti-tethering ordinance

WHEN: 7 p.m., Monday, Aug. 25

WHERE: Second Floor, Old County Courthouse, 200 E. Main St.

WHY: Commissioners will consider public input on the ordinance

PROPOSED ORDINANCE

- Tethering is defined as tying out or fastening an animal outdoors on a rope, chain or similar restraint

- Tethering would be allowed for no more than seven days for certain training or work, i.e. hunting, shepherding, etc.

- The ban on tethering would exclude situations in which the animal was attended, i.e. tethering a dog in the yard while you garden.

- If adopted, the ordinance would go into effect after 15 months, with the first year spent on community education. Animal control officers would spend the next three months issuing warnings, after which a series of fines ranging from \$50 to \$150 could be issued.

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**GRAPHIC:** Tonnie Markham brings one of her dogs, Pinky, a bag of ice on a hot afternoon in her backyard on Lafayette Street. Markham said she'd love to have a fence within which the dogs could run free. But she doesn't have the money right now.

Ten-year-old Erica Riley took in this puppy after it wandered into the yard of her grandmother, Geneva Rucker. If a proposed ordinance to ban dog chaining were to pass, the family doesn't know what it would do once the pup grows up. Rucker can't afford to build a fence. Staff Photos by John Rottet

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Green Bay Press-Gazette (Wisconsin)

July 7, 2008 Monday

## Dog ordinance gets 2nd look

**BYLINE:** Tony Walter

**SECTION:** LOCAL/STATE; Pg. 3A

**LENGTH:** 230 words

The Brown County Public Safety Committee on Tuesday will revisit a proposed ordinance that would regulate the housing of outdoor dogs.

The committee backed the ordinance last month but the County Board, after hearing from opponents of the ordinance, sent it back for a more thorough discussion.

The ordinance would limit the chaining or tethering of dogs to a stationary object to one hour.

A running line or trolley must be at least 10 feet long, and no dog may be tied or fastened with anything attached directly to the dog's neck. Untethered dogs must be housed in an enclosure that's at least 100 square feet and must have access to shelter and fresh water.

Supporters of the ordinance say too many dogs are being chained, which makes them more aggressive and more likely to bite. The proposed ordinance has gained the support of the Sheriff's Department, which says it would give officers an additional tool to deal with dog owners who do not adequately supervise their dogs.

Dog owners told board supervisors the ordinance would unfairly punish hunters and kennel owners.

If you go

The Brown County Public Safety Committee will meet at 4 p.m. Tuesday in the Green Bay City Hall Council Chambers, 100 N. Jefferson St., Green Bay.

If you go

The Brown County Public Safety Committee will meet at 4 p.m. Tuesday in the Green Bay City Hall Council Chambers, 100 N. Jefferson St., Green Bay.

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