



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Selectboard Public Hearing
July 30th, 2024 FINAL Minutes

In-Person Attendees: Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Jim Armbruster, Animal Control Officer; Scott Henkels, Selectboard Vice Chair; John Lippman, Valley News

Remote Attendees: Danielle Thibodeau, Resident; Cathy Sartor, Resident

1. **Call Hearing to Order**

Kevin Gish called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

2. **Receive Testimony**

Nicola Shipman explained the purpose of the Animal Bite Hearing, explaining that the Selectboard is required by Statute to hold a hearing when certain conditions surrounding an animal bite are met.

Nicola explained the primary purpose is to determine if the dog was “provoked” or “unprovoked” when it attacked. If the Selectboard finds the attack was unprovoked, it may enforce statutory measures such as muzzling, containment or euthanasia. Nicola read aloud the definition of “unprovoked” for the Selectboard members.

Kevin Gish asked Jim Armbruster, the Town’s Animal Control Officer, about the vaccination certificate and if he had any additional testimony beyond the written report he provided.

Jim Armbruster said he encapsulated the events in his written report but highlighted that Ziggy’s rabies vaccination on file with the Town Clerk showed an expiration date of March 2024 (shown as “03”). The certificate sent to the bite victim showed an expiration date of August 2024 (shown as “08”).

Jim confirmed the rabies had expired and it was unclear how that change occurred. Jim noted Ziggy was in the road when it bit the runner, and Jim confirmed the animal bite fit the definition of an unprovoked attack.

Kevin Gish asked for testimony from Danielle Thibodeau, Ziggy’s owner.

Danielle Thibodeau reported that Ziggy usually wears an invisible fence collar when outside, but she and Ziggy were on the porch and he “slipped past the gate.” Ziggy’s collar was being charged so he was not wearing it at the time of the incident.



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Danielle reported she was behind her lilac bushes and was startled by the joggers, which startled Ziggy.

Danielle said she followed Ziggy immediately when he ran into the road, and she was able to get Ziggy to sit calmly when the victim and she exchanged information.

Danielle said she followed up with the victim and offered to pay the medical fees.

Danielle said she will make sure Ziggy is up to date with registration and will receive up-to-date rabies vaccinations.

Danielle said she is working to clear the bushes that blocked the view and has implemented protocols for charging the dog collar and communicated with the other members of the family regarding the procedures for the collar.

Kevin Gish asked Danielle if there are other dogs on the property.

Danielle said she has two other dogs.

Kevin Gish asked if they are all rabies vaccinated.

Danielle confirmed the dogs are currently unregistered and unvaccinated for rabies, but one dog could be eligible for an exemption from the vet due to her medical condition.

Scott Henkels asked about dog containment fencing.

Danielle Thibodeau confirmed they have a containment fence for the dogs in the back yard, and they have an invisible fence as well.

Scott Henkels asked if Ziggy is currently quarantined. Danielle confirmed he is currently confined.

Kevin Gish asked when the confinement would end. Jim Armbruster stated the quarantine ends on Sunday, August 4th and the confinement is 14 days according to the ordinance.

Kevin Gish asked about the next steps.

Jim Armbruster said the next steps are up to the Selectboard. He has authority to issue a fine. Jim also stated the dog should be noted to have vicious tendencies. Jim thinks it is important for there to be documentation.

Scott Henkels and Kevin Gish agreed they would like to hear from the victim.



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Nicola Shipman asked what the recommendation would be for Ziggy in the meantime.

Jim Armbruster noted that Ziggy should be vaccinated after the 14-day quarantine and that Ziggy will need to be vaccinated at the earliest time after the quarantine.

Upon recommendation of the Animal Control Officer, Ziggy will need to remain confined to the owner's property until the animal bite proceedings are finalized.

3. **Adjourn**

Scott Henkels made a motion to adjourn the hearing until Monday, August 5th at 7:00PM. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicola Shipman