



Dog Federation of Wisconsin
PO Box 521
Jackson, WI 53037

November 5, 2014

Madison Board of Health
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Board Members for the Board of Health,

Thank you for allowing the Dog Federation of Wisconsin to offer its input into the ordinances you have before you in regard to Legistar #35826 and 35827.

Dog Federation of Wisconsin (DFOW) is the unified voice of those who value the love of a good dog. DFOW has members from many backgrounds and experiences where dogs are used for work, training, showing, breeding and pets.

DFOW was involved in the Act 90 (Breeder Regulation) law that was passed at the state level several years ago. Many of the proposed ordinances are similar in nature to what was discussed at that time.

Regarding ordinance change #35826, where the definition of "Cruel" was revised; what was the reason for this change? There are many reasons why a puppy may be separated from its dam (mother) before the age of (7) weeks. It may be short term, such as veterinary specialist visits or taking the dam to events out of state. Long term events could include protecting the puppy from a mother that may have an underlying medical condition (tick borne disease) that manifests itself by being aggressive with a pup. In addition, there are some dams that never take to their pups and seek to harm them. Thankfully, these are rare occurrences and a surrogate dam will be found to take care of the pups. Once a puppy is weaned, they really do not need to be with their dam as long as there are other canines available that could teach them proper socialization skills.

We understand that you are now considering the licensing of breeders not currently licensed by the State. There are several areas of concern with your recent discussion. First of all, there are other reputable dog registries other than the American Kennel Club. United Kennel Club, ASCA, NADAC, are just a few that immediately come to mind. When a dog owner takes the time to train their dog for any specific purpose, it indicates that they are a responsible dog owner. Some of these owners may just enjoy hunting with their dog, but have no interest in canine competition. The same applies to dogs bred for herding or service work. If the owner chooses not to compete with their dog, it should not dictate the ability to breed the dog that was originally bred for a specific purpose.

Second, invasion of privacy by an outside agency before a person is allowed to breed a litter interferes with that person's Federal and State constitutional rights. In addition, home inspection by an animal control officer allows for disease transmission. Certain diseases, such as parvovirus is extremely difficult



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to eliminate, as are some types of worms that can remain in the soil for years. Parvovirus can kill entire litters.

Animal control officers are NOT trained in animal husbandry as it pertains to puppies; it is not part of their training curriculum. We do have concerns regarding their ability to properly administer the duties these ordinance changes dictate.

Neglect as it pertains to chaining and tethering is not cruel or neglectful if done for more than 15 minutes. There are many reasons why people choose to tether their animals. Done correctly, it is not cruel. Some dogs are escape artists and fencing may not safely contain them. Chain gang training, in which several dogs are tethered while they watch another dog work, can be very beneficial for sporting dogs; training time may exceed 30 minutes. This is why the neglect definition is troubling; an owner may actually be trying to keep their dog safe, rather than neglecting them. What is the reason this was chosen to be made an ordinance violation; possibly neighborhood nuisance due to extended periods of barking? If so, then a noise ordinance should be enacted so that a dog may not create a noise disturbance for longer than a certain period of time. However, that too can be troublesome and burdensome to enforce, especially if there are neighborhood disputes where the dog is blamed, but is actually not the problem. We do agree that there may be some cases, dependent on breed and weather conditions, where a dog left unattended without adequate shelter or food and water for more than several hours would constitute a charge of neglect.

Regarding Legistar #35827, Violation-based spaying and neutering of dogs, this was apparently considered due to an overpopulation of dogs according to news reports. There is actually an under population of dogs in the State of Wisconsin and if Dane County Humane Society has so many extra dogs, why does it not work with other shelters around the State to re-home them? Wisconsin Humane Society brings dogs from out of State on a regular basis to fill their shelters with dogs to sell.

The mandatory spay/neuter based on dogs that run at large on more than 3 occasions within 30 days appears to be a good idea in theory. However, in reality it may be difficult to police. There are some dogs that have been known to get out of their backyards, kennels and doors even though the owners have tried to be responsible and do everything right. Dogs may inadvertently escape their homes; contractors leaving a door or gate open or through disasters such as fire or burglars. Though these are typically one time occurrences, it is alarming that any government entity would have the power to alter or destroy personal property (dogs).

Large fees and fines may not deter the occurrence of an animal at large, what it may do is cause the dog to become homeless. The current owner may just give up their rights and take no ownership responsibility for the dog. You may actually see an increase in unlicensed dogs and dogs that do not wear collars or any identification so that the owner cannot be located.



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In closing, we ask that you reconsider your ordinance proposals as written, and work with groups such as the American Kennel Club to come up with ordinances written to not only protect the dogs, but also their owners. Thank you for your consideration.

Dog Federation of Wisconsin
Officers and Board of Directors