

5/24/2013: DOG ABUSE CASE UPDATE FROM EDMONDS' POLICE CHIEF AL COMPAAN

Recently, Edmonds was highlighted in local and national news due to a situation of dog abuse. While we know that all of you as park users, understand the importance of proper training and care of your canine companions, we received many inquiries and actual video on our FACEBOOK page.

So, we asked Edmonds Police Chief Al Compaan to provide us with the details and possible action that a citizen could take if they suspect animal cruelty issues. Here is Chief Compaan's update:

Two suspects have been charged in this case. Charges against defendant Adams consist of animal cruelty and possession of dogs in excess of that number (five) allowed by city code; and against defendant Beutler of animal cruelty. Secondly, the dogs (fourteen of them) are still in police custody. Ultimate disposition of the dogs will be determined by the Court.

The defendants are being prosecuted to the full extent of the law and the Police Department has no intention of turning the dogs over to anyone outside of Police Department control pending legal process of these cases. The Police Department and the City Prosecutor's Office have literally been in daily contact with each other on this regarding aggressive prosecution of these cases. In addition to both of the defendants having been arraigned, Ms. Adams has also been served with notice of a bonding requirement under section 5.05.124 of city code. This requires her to secure a bond within five business days in an amount sufficient to provide for the animals care for a minimum of 60 days from when the animals were seized. Failure to post such a bond will, in essence, cause a forfeiture of the animals to the city. In other words, the Court can find a failure to post the bond and then can order the animals to NOT be returned to her and the animals made available for adoption.

As far as what can happen in other cases going forward, the main pieces we need to help us do our job are: timely information regarding suspect(s) conduct that constitutes violation of the law; documentation of that information with signed statements; video and/or audio is helpful, but we need to know who captured the video/audio, when it was captured, and it must be done legally under the law. Single party consent to record private audio conversations is not allowed here in Washington State. Typically, however, if a neighbor is making a video/audio recording from one's own property of something that is occurring next door (i.e. you are sitting on your deck and looking over to the neighbor's property and happen to make a recording), that would very likely be acceptable under state law and would be dismissable in court. But again, we would need to be able to show the where/when and who it was making the recording for best admissibility.