



WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ZONING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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MINUTES

The Wicomico County Animal Appeals Board met in regular session on September 11, 2025 in the Government Office Building, Room 301, with the following persons in attendance:

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Ola Meadowcroft, Chairman
Sharrell Callaway, Member
Dave Snyder, Member

CITY/COUNTY OFFICIALS:

Chris Smith, County Attorney
Morgan Rice, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm. All persons wishing to testify were sworn or affirmed by Mr. Smith.

Public Hearing/Gunther:

On August 22, 2025, Officer Patrick Guyer from Animal Control received a call from Russell Lane, who reported that his dog, Gunther attacked another dog that ran after him and his dog. Officer Guyer was informed by Mr. Lane that he was walking on Crocket and Clyde Avenue in Fruitland when a dog ran up and provoked Gunther, described as an Akita. The dog that was provoking and then killed was described as a Jack Russell Terrior.

Officer Guyer visited the Jack Russell Terrior's owner, to inform them that their dog ran out of the house and provoked Gunther and would need more information. The owners were not cooperative and no names were mentioned. Officer guyer mentioned he had an eye witness that lived across the street of the incident that said four woman were sitting on the porch of the incident and heard Mr. Lane screaming for help. The dog in question is a 120-pound, American Akita.

Planning & Zoning Commission
Natural Resources Conservation Advisory Committee
Metropolitan Planning Organization
Shore Housing Resource Board

Wicomico County Board of Appeals
Historic District Commission
Agricultural Reconciliation Committee
Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board

Officer Hess, presented the board with reports of the incident. County Attorney, Chris Smith, identified plaintiff one as the Health Department Report and Plaintiff two as the potentially dangerous report. Officer Hess mentioned Gunther was quarantined for 10 days and does not have Rabies.

County Attorney, Chris Smith, invited Mr. Lane to testify and present his side of the story. Mr. Lane explained that his dog, Gunther, was walking his dog on a leash on one of his routes that he walks Gunther daily. He noticed that the front door to the attacking dog was open and two small dogs ran out. One of those dogs was a terrier mix and the dog that provoked Gunther was a Jack Russell and while the attack was happening, the terrier mix ran back home. He explained that Gunther was protecting him and as the Jack Russell came up, Gunther killed the dog immediately. Mr. Lane was crying for help and had to call animal control. Mr. Lane does not want his dog to be euthanized.

County Attorney, Chris Smith, asked if Mr. Lane had any evidence he would like the Board to see and passed up a few reports. Attorney, Chris Smith, identified Defendant exhibit one as Gunther's rabies certificate, Defendant exhibit two as the Healing Hands Report, defendant exhibit three as the Wicomico County Health Department Report and defendant exhibit four as the letter of animal control potentially dangerous report.

Board member David Snyder asked Mr. Lane a few questions for the defendants side since they were not at this meeting. He asked if Gunther provoked the other dog, was trespassing and if was or intended to do any sort of criminal activity. Mr. Lane answered "No" to all three questions.

Chairman, Ola Meadowcroft, asked Mr. Lane if he notice the door open to that house any other time he has walked Gunter on that street to which Mr. Lane replied "No."

After hearing Mr. Huber's testimony, the board stated that they had nothing further to discuss. Ms. Meadowcroft moved to enter a closed session, which was seconded by Ms. Calloway.


Closed Session 1:15 – 1:25PM

Resume Open Session

Chairman, Ola Meadowcroft, expressed how unfortunate the situation was and motioned to allow Gunther to be returned to his owner and deem Gunther not dangerous. Ms. Calloway seconded the motion.

This motion passed unanimously. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm.

This is a summary of this meeting. Detailed information is in the permanent files of each case as presented and filed in the Wicomico County Department of Law.


Ola Meadowcroft, Chairman


Morgan Rice, Recording Secretary