

October 12, 2009



The Honorable Mayor
and
Members of the City Council
City of Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

The following is an answer in response to a question raised at the September 28, 2009 Council Workshop.

Vicious/Dangerous Animal Ordinance

Question: Is insurance available for vicious dogs?

There are companies that sell this type of policy. Whether a person can purchase the insurance depends on individual circumstances.

Question: Has a breed-specific ordinance created a problem?

That is a matter of perspective, bite victims may claim not enough and dog owners may claim too much. It has not caused undue problems in being able to enforce the ordinance.

Question: Can we add language to the ordinance that would allow special events involving breeds labeled by our ordinance as “vicious”?

Yes, but it should be narrow in allowing exceptions for “vicious dog breeds;” such as requiring the dog to be licensed where the dog lives, unless their jurisdiction does not license any dog or the dog is exempt from licensing there, the dog owner submits proof of current rabies vaccination and proof of liability insurance to the event coordinator who will make it available to the police department and/or animal control, if requested. There would also need to be an exemption that would allow the “vicious dog breeds” to be out of confinement and/or off leash while actively engaged in the event. The Legal Department and Risk Management are researching the best way to handle this request.

Please let me know if I can provide further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick".

Richard A. Clark
City Manager