

HOTLINE CASE

2008-25

February, 2009


Complaint – Anonymous call that an employee at Animal Control adopted a dog and had the City veterinarian conduct unnecessary cosmetic surgery on the dog (docking a tail). This was done at no cost to the employee.

The IG investigated and the Acting Chief of animal Care and Control wrote the attached letter on the incident.

ENVIRONMENTAL & COMPLIANCE DEPARTMENT
ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL DIVISION



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 17, 2009
 TO: Fred Forbes
 FROM: Scott Trebatoski 
 Acting Chief of Animal Care & Control Division
 RE: Ethics Inquiry:
 Kennel, Wendy (P050287) – Adoption of A211262 "Pup pup" & Surgery Question

In response to the recent inquiry from the Ethics office regarding the elective surgery allegation related to the dog known as A211262, a Doberman mix, adopted by Wendy Kennel, an employee of Animal Care & Control on September 25, 2007; the following details have been found:

1. The Doberman mix (A211262) had chronic traumatic injury syndrome (a.k.a. "happy tail") to the distal end of his tail. The resulting amputation of the end of the tail was a medical treatment to resolve the syndrome. While this may or may not be a common practice for all animals with the chronic traumatic injury syndrome for the distal tail, it has been done in the past and probably would be done again in future if it were deemed medically appropriate.
 - a. Dr. Niessen and Ms. Kennel have been advised that although there may have been nothing medically wrong with the decision to amputate the tail, they need to be conscious of the appearance such actions could create. Complete medical documentation and perhaps a second opinion would have been a better way to verify that the procedure was medically necessary, and not a cosmetic tail docking.
 - b. Any future medical treatments/procedures that would lead to an appearance of impropriety due to the fact an employee or other person is adopting the animal should be authorized by the Chief or higher level position.
2. There was no attempt to conceal the surgery (see invoice from adoption #R07-059828). And all other regular adoption procedures and protocols were followed in the 9/25/2007 adoption of A211262 to Wendy Kennel. That included signature authorization for the adoption by the Interim Chief.
3. This entire situation had been addressed by the Interim Chief and Dr. Niessen had been counseled about the surgery and the perception that lead to the original complaint.

It appears that the situation had been satisfactorily dealt with in the past and the employees understand the issues, perceptions and appearances that were created by this situation.



For completeness of the record, the dog does not have cropped ears.

cc. Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi, Director, Environmental & Compliance
 Dr. Kimberly Niessen
 Wendy Kennel
 File