

From: Cawaling, Cindy
Subject: Puppy investigation update

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King County Executive

News Release

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Contact: Bobbie Egan, 206-296-1552

Puppy investigation update

King County Animal Services investigators are asking the public to help find anyone who might have witnessed the tragic abuse of the puppy named Mooie. The four-month old pit bull was found in Federal Way 12 days ago suffering from massive hair and skin loss.

Animal Services staff and Federal Way Police have gone door-to-door and searched the area where the dog was originally found and continue to compile evidence in the case. The one missing piece of evidence is an eye witness to what happened to the puppy. Anyone with direct knowledge in the case should call: 206-296-PETS (7387).

"What happened to Mooie is tragic and horrific, and that is why we are working hard to solve this case," said Walt Washington, Manager of King County Animal Service. "We want to find out exactly what happened to Mooie and who did it. First, we need the public's help. We need a witness to come forward and tell us what they saw."

King County Animal Services and Federal Way Police have collected eye-witness statements about the puppy's condition, numerous photos documenting the puppy's extensive injuries, and other evidence, including the puppy's collar. The collar has been sent to the Washington State crime lab for analysis.

On March 10, a citizen found Mooie the puppy in the 28000 block of 28th Place South in Federal Way bleeding and sloughing skin off of most of her body. The injuries were caused by a caustic substance, possibly some form of acid. The citizen who found the

puppy took it to a local veterinarian who examined the puppy and ultimately euthanized her because she could not be saved.

Once investigators had compiled the numerous pieces of evidence, the puppy's body was cremated to avoid the potential health risks for staff associated with storage of a decomposed corpse. Medical staff confirmed that the corpse is unusable for necropsy and forensic evidence after 72 hours. The extensive pictures, eyewitness accounts and other evidence in this case supplanted the need for a necropsy.

Animal Services is actively pursuing leads and the public is encouraged to report any information related to this case to 206-296-PETS (7387). Two groups - the Humane Society of the United States and Pasado's Safe Haven - have provided invaluable assistance in rallying the community on behalf of the animal victim in this case and both have offered rewards for information leading to the arrest, prosecution, and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the incident.

This release is also posted on the King County Executive's Web site, at <http://www.metrokc.gov/exec>

Dear Karen,

Thank you for your concern regarding the Mooie dog case. We share your concerns and assure you that King County Animal Services launched an investigation into this incident Friday, March 10, immediately upon learning of this case. As with all reports of animal cruelty, we will investigate this matter fully and work with local law enforcement to ensure any case of animal cruelty is prosecuted according to law. Our vast experience in handling animal-related investigations is based upon sound methodology widely recognized and supported by the legal system.

In response to your email voicing concern about the handling of the evidence in the case involving the dog that was the subject of a cruelty investigation, it is important the facts of the case are clear. Below are some of the points that have been missed in the communication of this incident and the ongoing investigation:

The facts are:

There were• extensive pictures taken of the injured animal to sustain a cruelty case;

There are• eye witnesses who will testify to the condition of the animal to support the case;

There are• written witness statements of the facts in the case that would support a cruelty conviction;

There is• expert testimony from the veterinarian who examined the animal and performed the euthanasia that would support a conviction of "cruelty";

There are• experienced officers involved in the case, both the police and animal control, who have expertise in gathering evidence and reporting crimes of this nature;

Retention• of the body of the dog as evidence did not shed any light to the case in light of its potential decomposition in the cooler and the known cause of its injuries that led to its death; and

A• decomposed corpse presents a health risk to staff and becomes unusable for necropsy and forensic purposes after 72 hours unless DNA testing of the flesh or organs is needed to support the case. This case did not present the need for the in-depth discovery with the already known facts and evidence.

It is with these facts in mind that King County Animal Services properly disposed of the corpse of the animal. With the evidence collected, eye-witness statements, and expert testimony from the veterinarian who euthanized the dog, King County has all the facts needed to fully investigate this case.

Protecting the welfare of animals in King County has been our top priority for more than 35 years, and I assure you that all cases of animal cruelty or the mistreatment of animals will be investigated fully by King County Animal Services.

Again, we truly appreciate your concern for the health and welfare of animals in our community.

Sincerely,

Animal Services and Programs

King County Records, Elections & Licensing Services