

# **Resident calls on city to put teeth into vicious dog ordinance**

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**By Clare Walters, The Star**

Rose Anne Amaya loved Bailey, her 6-year-old Yorkshire terrier.

The Chicago Heights resident's affection was evident last week as she was moved to tears describing a pit bull that attacked and killed her dog and bit her son July 23 in the 200 block of West Raye Drive.

"I feel like something really has to be done," Amaya said about what she considers to be a growing vicious dog problem in the city.

Amaya now is calling on city officials and police to address the problem and strengthen their vicious dogs ordinance.

"If this had to happen in order for something good to come out of it, so be it." she said. "Today it was my dog and tomorrow it could be a child. I just don't want that to happen."

Ald. Michael Sabo, 6th Ward, said the city needs to "push" the issue as far as it can take it.

"It's a problem and we're very sorry that this happened," he said.

City ordinance defines a vicious dog as any that has or attempted to bite or attack a person or other dog. Vicious dogs are prohibited citywide.

Most of the Southland's municipalities have similar ordinances and many communities worked to strengthen them after a string of highly publicized pit bull attacks last year in Chicago and the suburbs.

The municipalities have not supported a ban of pit bulls, but many have added provisions allowing for the euthanasia of dangerous dogs.

Chicago Heights Deputy Police Chief Michael Camilli said people in violation of the city's ordinance can be cited and fined as determined by a local adjudication officer.

The department also can temporarily impound vicious dogs, but no euthanasia provision exists in city code.

Chicago Heights police Tuesday cited the pit bull's owner; however, officers have been unable to make contact with him, he said.

Michael A. Turner, 29, of 270 W. Raye Drive, was cited for having a dog without a city dog license and without 2006 rabies shots, police said.

According to the police report, two 11-year-old boys each were walking a pit bull down the sidewalk in front of Amaya's home.

Amaya's dog ran out of the home and barked at the other dogs. One pit bull then bit the dog and began shaking it in his mouth, police said.

Amaya said she and her 20-year-old son attempted to get the pit bull to release their family dog from its mouth, but were unsuccessful.

Amaya's hand was bruised from hitting the pit bull and her son was bit and scratched on his right forearm, according to the police reports.

After the pit bull released the dead dog from its mouth, it ran to the home it resides in, police said.

Amaya said the dog's owner immediately left the area with his dog.

"I feel like my hands are tied," she said. "There's only so much the police can do."