

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF WOODRIDGE, ILLINOIS,
HELD ON AUGUST 17, 2006 AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

VI. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mayor Murphy stated that it is during this portion of the meeting where residents and guests are invited to address the Board on items not on the pre-printed agenda.

Woodridge resident Andrea Bleau, _____ addressed the Board. She stated that she and her neighbors have an increasing concern regarding the growing presence of Pit Bulls in residential areas of the community. She indicated that her first concern is in regards to leashing laws. She stated that she and her neighbors have been given mixed messages as to whether or not it is legal to have a Pit Bull off of a leash in the front yard of a property. She noted that it is her belief that Pit Bulls should not be allowed to be unrestrained in any unrestricted areas, but that they should be gated in a fenced in yard or restrained on a leash at all times.

Ms. Bleau stated that her second concern is in regards to the number of Pit Bulls allowed in a single residence. She indicated that, currently, residents are allowed to have three dogs in a residence. She stated that she believes that three Pit Bulls is an unreasonable number of dogs in one home. She questioned the intended purpose of three dogs, of the Pit Bull breed, in one residence. She noted that a home on her street has four (4) Pit Bulls and that she thinks they are used for breeding. She asked if Woodridge needs to consider having Pit Bull specific laws. She noted the existence of breed specific bans in other communities. She asked that, if a breed specific ban is not considered, that the Board consider other measures short of a ban.

Ms. Bleau stated that she has lived in Woodridge for seven (7) years and within the last 13 months, she has had six (6) Pit Bulls move within four (4) doors of her family. She noted that safety is a basic need and a right that all Woodridge

residents deserve. She stated that she feels sad when having to tell her two (2) small children that they cannot play in the front yard. She pointed out that she has property that she cannot use because she does not feel safe on it. She indicated that the presence of these dogs in her neighborhood is decreasing her family's and her neighbor's quality of life. She stated that Woodridge needs stricter laws regarding Pit Bulls in order to continue to be a place where people want to live. She explained that she loves living in this community, once working for a Woodridge School District, attending Village of Woodridge and Woodridge Park District programs, and that she would like to raise her children here. She indicated that this issue is a threat to these intentions. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to be heard.

Mayor Murphy thanked Ms. Bleau for calling this issue to the Board's attention. He indicated that she has raised a number of concerns that are legitimate and surround a number of issues, some of which deal with State law and municipal governance. He noted that he would like to have the Village's staff take her concerns under review and report back to the Board, which, in turn, will be reported back to concerned individuals.

Trustee Brandt mentioned that he has reviewed a number of laws regarding dogs. He stated that Buffalo Grove has a breed specific law regarding Pit Bulls and Rottweilers. He indicated that the laws in Buffalo Grove require the identified breeds to be on leashes or enclosed on private property. He explained that the laws in Buffalo Grove would not allow these breeds of dogs to run right up to the sidewalk. He noted that, if breed cannot be used to restrict certain dogs, we should find another mechanism such as the weight of a dog. He stated that he feels that a dog should be restrained whenever it has the chance of going onto public property. He noted that residents have the right to walk on the sidewalk without fearing their safety. He pointed out that, as currently written, laws allow dogs to run at high speeds from the front of the home up to within inches of the public sidewalk. He stated that it is not until that dog crosses onto public property that the dog could be ticketed. He explained that, at this point, it is too late. He noted that there are ways to improve these laws. He stated that, if a Pit Bull bites a child it is too late for that child. He stated that the rights of children to play freely in their own yard trump the rights of the owners of these dangerous breeds of dogs. He stated that we should be looking at stricter leashing laws for dangerous dogs. He stated that if a small dog attacks it can be kicked aside, but if a Pit Bull attacks it cannot.

He stated that he also sees a problem with people using their homes to breed dangerous dogs in the community. He noted that Woodridge prohibits the breeding of donkeys, cows and mules, but that the breeding of dogs is not limited. He stated that this is not the country, Woodridge is a municipality and puppy mills should not be allowed in residential areas. He described the problem he sees with making residents fence in their yards to feel protected from dangerous dogs. He stated that this issue needs to be addressed as a priority.

Ms. Bleau stated that she and her many concerned neighbors agree.

Trustee Brandt stated that large dog owners need to understand that not everyone loves their large dogs. He stated that, if a Pit Bull, Rottweiler, Doberman, German Shepherd or any other large dog bites someone, it is too late. He stated that humans in the community deserve priority over dogs. He promised Ms. Bleau that this issue will be reviewed. He noted that the Village is constrained by State laws, but that the Village will get creative to make Woodridge a safer place. He reiterated that Woodridge belongs to humans.