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**Members**

Stanley Walczak, Chair  
Fred Krampits, Vice Chair  
George Balakier  
Frank Laflamme  
Derek Dobosz

**MINUTES**  
**May 24, 2021**

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Monday, May 24, 2021 at 6:30 PM held in the Council Chambers, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013 and via teleconference.

**Members Present**

Walczak, Krampits, Balakier, Laflamme, Dobosz

**Also Present**

Attorney Daniel Garvey, Lisa Sanders (Health Director), Benjamin Turnberg (Captain, Fire Department)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

In compliance with the Open Meeting Law the Chairman asked if anyone in the audience was recording the meeting. Hearing none the meeting continued.

**ITEM #1**

BE IT ORDERED THAT Mutt Cuts, Mutt Rescue, 102 Grove Street, be called before the City of Chicopee License Committee and City Council to discuss the license (s) currently held by Mutt Cuts, Mutt Rescue including compliance with restrictions imposed upon any licenses held by Mutt Cuts, Mutt Rescue. The Council may modify, suspend, fine, or revoke any license held by Mutt Cuts, Mutt Rescue. Violations - customer complaints and concerns communicated to the City by Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center.

Hannah Orenstein, Animal Control Supervisory, T.J. O'Connor Animal Center, was present at the meeting. Also present was Lori Jerusik, owner Mutt Cuts, Mutt Rescue.

Ms. Orenstein stated that TJO (Thomas J. O'Connor) received a complaint in January of this year. Complaints and photos were submitted to TJO. This report was forwarded to the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health. The following month an unannounced inspection was conducted. During that inspection it was found that at least 4 dogs were muzzled, only 2 staff members present and a large number of dogs. The owner was not present. There was one staff member that did not allow TJO to enter the building until owner arrived. When the owner arrived she explained that she has been dealing with a disgruntled employee who made these complaints. When asked during the inspection why the dogs were muzzled, Ms. Jerusik replied that it's only during crazy times which is during drop off and pick up. Ms. Jerusik

also told TJO that she receives permission from the owners to do this. Ms. Orenstein continued that based on the large number of dogs, low staffing, sanitation concerns, and noise registered on the CDC decibel level, the license would not be renewed or renewed with significant lower number of dogs allowed.

Councilor Balakier asked if this was an isolated incident. Ms. Orenstein stated that TJO has been to this site as early as 2017 and have recommended reduced numbers twice before this.

Lori Jerusik, 102 Grove Street, stated that she started the business in 1996. She has two part-time employees and several volunteers. She continued that the noise level was instigated by TJO when they hung cameras on the fence of her property pointing directly onto the dogs. TJO arrived at the business at 11:10 AM and Ms. Jerusik was home working and arrived at the facility in 20 minutes. Upon her arrival TJO was already inside the facility. The Department of Agriculture fined Ms. Jerusik \$300 because it took her staff 6 minutes to put dogs in kennels so that there wouldn't be any attacks. If people just walked into the facility with 25 dogs they will get muddled. Ms. Jerusik's staff informed TJO that they cannot come in at that moment because they have to make it safe. She continued that the muzzling started recently just there's something going on the dogs home and the dogs are changing. Ms. Jerusik stated that aspirin was given with the dog owner's permission. She continued that all this occurred because of a disgruntled employee, Deborah Messier. This employee was employed worked between Halloween and the third week of January. Ms. Jerusik provided a packet of text messages between the employee and Ms. Jerusik. The employee was threatening. The reason why Ms. Messier was let her go was because of safety concerns. Ms. Jerusik stated that all her licenses have been renewed.

Lisa Sanders stated that there was an issue in the past with a dog named Clifford. The dog had been rescued by a family and returned to Ms. Jerusik because the dog was aggressive. The dog bit 2 employees and the Board of Health instructed the dog to be euthanized. It was concerning to the Board of Health that this incident was not reported to the Board of Health immediately until the employee reported it.

Councilor Laflamme asked if Ms. Jerusik is licensed to administer aspirin. Ms. Jerusik replied no. Councilor Laflamme asked about employees feeding dogs. Ms. Jerusik stated that the dogs that she is boarding get fed by two employees at 7 AM.

### **Public Input**

Karen Lignar, 277 Szetela Drive, she stated that she has been sending her dog to Mutt Cuts for 15 years and she has no complaints.

Susan Aldrige, 457 Pendleton Avenue, stated that her dog has been going to Mutt Cuts for 20 years. She also volunteers at the facility. She also stated that Lori Jerusik is a great person.

Jeanette Peletier, 17 Jeanette Drive, stated that she only has good things to say about Ms. Jerusik. If something is wrong she fixes it and follows restrictions.

Cindy Storozuk, 80 Windemere Street, Springfield, stated that Ms. Jerusik has been caring for animals her whole life. She also is a volunteer at Mutt Cuts.

Lisa Pasternak, 43 Watson Street, stated that the care and understanding at Mutt Cuts is exceptional. Her dog loves going there.

Dianne Kurr, 78 Kelly Road, stated that she is an investigator for the Department of Industrial Accidents and has sent her dog to Mutt Cuts for the past 13 years 5 days per week and her dog loves going there.

Sandy Maroney, 70 Chapel Street, stated that she has two dogs that go to Mutt Cuts 4 days per week and the dogs love going there.

Dianna Martin, 239 Laurel Rd, West Springfield, stated that her family adopted a dog in November 2020. Her dog is one of the dogs that gets muzzled. Ms. Jerusik asked permission of her before she muzzled the dog. Safety is top priority at Mutt Cuts.

Allison Croteau, 107 Sunnyside Street, stated that her dog has been going to Mutt Cuts 10 years. Ms. Jerusik is a loving and compassionate person. She has also granted permission to muzzle her dog whenever required. She also stated that Ms. Jerusik would never be cruel to the dogs.

Janice Wheeler, 203 Crestwood Street, stated that she has used Mutt Cuts for 13 years. The staff is exceptional and she has faith in what they do there.

Pam Malchik, 52 Collins Street, stated that someone recommended Mutt Cuts to her. She sends her dog 5 days per week. The dog is cared for and there have been no incidents. The employees at Mutt Cuts have even worked with her dog that has men issues. There is no ill will towards dogs.

Lori Banks, 1403 Granby Road, stated that she has been going to Mutt Cuts for 13-15 years. Everyone is like family. Her dogs is loved and cared for by Lori and her staff.

Mary Hamel, 724 Fuller Street, Ludlow, stated that her dog was a nightmare at Mutt Cuts have saved her. She has been going there for 9 years.

Catherine Marturano, stated that she volunteers at Mutt Rescue and at the doggie daycare. When walking into the daycare it's like walking into their home. Safety comes first. It's not safe for folks to just walk into the building.

Public input was closed.

Councilor Laflamme stated that he has to go by the recommendation of the Health Director. He suggested that the number of dogs allowed remain as is and that this matter be reviewed again in 3 months. Lisa Sanders said that she is ok with that suggestion but had a question regarding state issues that are not under the control of the Board of Health. Councilor Laflamme continued that he is requesting that the Board of Health conduct a couple more checks of the facility.

Councilor Dobosz stated that he will go along with the recommendation of Councilor Laflamme.

Lori Jerusik stated that the daycare is licensed for 25 dogs and the rescue is licensed for 18 years.

Councilor Balakier stated that he agrees with the recommendation of Councilor Laflamme.

Captain Turnberg stated that he stopped by the facility unannounced. Once safe to go in he inspected the facility. He found everything to be in good order.

Lori Jerusik stated that her building is made of steel and the noise echoes because of the steel. She continued that she has no issues with inspections but folks cannot just walk in. She has nothing to hide. She continued that the dogs are good and want to greet you but then there's a stranger and one jumps. The dogs are private property and you cannot just enter and create someone's private property to be hurt. Lori Jerusik stated that the state's original fine was \$300. She appealed and it was reduced to \$100. The fine was for not being able to enter the facility when requested instead the state had to wait.

Councilor Laflamme asked what the law states about entering the facility for inspection. Hannah Ornstein stated that under Chicopee code and state law TJ O'Connor is permitted to conduct inspections for a kennel license. They are not required to make an announcement for renewals or when there is an issue. The Department of State Agriculture can pursue a warrant if access is denied.

Councilor Walczak stated that the committee is here to penalize or judge. Many times the committee gives an opportunity to the license holder to fix the violations. The committee is not here to put folks out of business.

Councilor Walczak read the following from Christina Adamczyk, 56 Maryland Avenue called and said she has a previous commitment tonight and cannot attend the meeting tonight but would like the Council to know that she brings her dog to Mutt Cuts and doesn't understand why the business is being called in. She sees nothing wrong with the business. Her dog likes to go there.

The following was read from Councilor Brooks: I have been a customer of Mutt Cut's for the past three years and have found the business to be run ethically and professionally. I rescued my dog from there and I could not be happier with my companion as he is healthy and happy to have found his forever home. I without hesitation support the business and wish it nothing but continued success as it provides a much-needed service to our community. I have seen first-hand the level of compassion and professionalism displayed by Lori and her staff. I am proud of the work that she does and can attest to the level of cleanliness of the business and the ethical treatment all of her dogs receive. I apologize for being unable to attend in person, I would ask that this email is read into the public record.

Motion made by Councilor Laflamme and second by Councilor Walczak to postpone to the call of chair for 3 months and the Health Department and Animal Control to review the business operations. Also state report be addressed between the state and business operator to the satisfaction of the City.

Committee vote 5 – 0 favorable.

## **ITEM #2**

Minutes – April 26, 2021 Motion made by Councilor Laflamme and second by Councilor Walczak to approve. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 PM.

