

Atchison Commission approves tethering ordinances

(KAIR)--Atchison City Commissioners approve what Atchison Police Chief Mike Wilson calls another component in handling vicious dogs in the city.

During Monday's meeting of the Commission, Wilson presented a proposal to limit the amount of time a dog can be tethered within the city limits. "What you see before you tonight on a proposed ordinance to limit, or restrict, tethering, is actually to approach several things. Obviously, our main focus was to alleviate any aspect that we can of vicious dogs. But, it also has another aspect, and that is to reduce the inhumane tethering of dogs."

Commissioner Shawn Rizza voiced his support for the plan. "Any dog can bite if it's put in the wrong situation, and not all tethered dogs are vicious, but tethering is one of the leading indicators if a dog will bite. What Chief Wilson has just presented is a reasonable compromise, instead of banning all instances of all tethering. By prohibiting tethering during a time frame instead of a duration, we allow the responding personnel to instantly determine if there's a bite."

Commission discussion focused on aspects of the proposed ordinance, including the ability to enforce it.

Wilson explained that while the ordinance could not completely put a stop to vicious dogs, it allows for another step in handling that danger. "It's just another component where you're trying to reduce the likelihood of a dog being vicious."

Commissioners also questioned the presented time frame of 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., ultimately deciding to amend the ordinance to disallow tethering of dogs from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Commissioner Rizza made the motion, which was approved unanimously.

The ordinance also includes additional requirements for tethering, such as the size and length of the chain to be used.

The matter has been addressed by the Commission for several months, following a presentation made in March by Atchison resident Aaron Habegger.

At that time, he requested of the Commission that certain dog breeds be banned, citing an attack suffered by his daughter by a tethered dog.

