

Brighton Selectboard Minutes

June 8, 2021

Minutes of the special Selectboard meeting held virtually at 3:30 PM on June 8, 2021. Attending were Mike Strait, Heather McElroy, Scott Buchman, Jeff Noyes, Jeanne Gervais and Joel Cope.

Chair Mike Strait brought the meeting to order at 3:36.

The selectboard asked Jeff and Scott about the dog that someone shot. The dog had been reported as a problem running-at-large several times over the past two years, but Scott didn't consider it vicious, though he acknowledged that it may attack other people's dogs. In this case it was loose and Jeff and Scott were actively trying to catch the dog, but the dog was too skittish. Before they could catch it, the dog wandered onto the wrong property and was shot. The dog was not licensed. The dog was delivered to Scott for disposal. Since then Scott has received messages from the owner or reputed owner that are not fit for public discussion. But Jeff asked Scott to forward those messages to him.

The board asked how incidents like this can be avoided. Scott pointed out that he has had to deal with seven dog bite incidents in one year, compared with few in the prior ten years. He said that he needs some official ID, which Jeff thought he could get from the state.

Mike asked about tickets given to people who violate the dog ordinance. Jeff replied that he had given tickets, but that the civil ordinance law has few teeth. Jeff said that if the board wanted to give ticketing authority to Scott, they could. Jeff said that he is only part-time and a lot of his time is taken up dealing with people's domestic issues.

Mike said that there seemed to be little enforcement of ordinances, and asked for copies of citations Jeff has issued. He also was concerned that a victim in a recent dog attack had asked Jeff and Scott to call about the dog, and says they haven't responded, and Mike has to hear about it. Jeff acknowledged that he isn't good at filing reports for the Selectboard, and that he should attend more Selectboard meetings.

Mike said he wants more signs of enforcement. He doesn't want to go back to the extreme enforcement done by a former Constable, but something more than is happening now.

Heather said the board needs to have a plan to deal with unlicensed dogs.

Joel said that in prior years the effort to enforce the licensing law involved repeated attempts in one year by the Town Clerk's office, Joel and Jeff to get people to license their dogs. Licenses are due April 1, and the clerk had a list of known unlicensed dogs, as required by statute. But staff was still trying to get people to vaccinate their dogs in September. Some just never did get licensed.

Joel said that if the board wanted action on unlicensed dogs, a reminder to owners is appropriate, but repeated warnings are labor-intensive for the staff when the tool provided to towns by the legislature to impound is available as a last resort, when tickets and reminders don't work. Teresa can provide a list of unlicensed dogs if anyone is going to do anything with it. He also said there are some teeth in the civil ordinance process.

Mike asked if there was any progress on the graffiti incidents. Jeff said there was none so far. Mike brought up Adam Sykes, and asked Jeff to intervene.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45.