

South Bend Animal Welfare Commission  
Hearing Minutes

March 24, 2022  
1810 Hours

County City Building  
4th Floor  
227 West Jefferson Blvd  
South Bend, IN 46601

Hearing Case Number 2022-03 City of South Bend v. Melvin Maefield (Order Issued March 11, 2022)

Animal Control Commission Members Present: Pam Wesolowski, Rebecca Strand, and Barb Leavell

City Staff Present: Lindsey Cuellar -SBARC Shelter Manager, Tom Panowicz-Attorney for SBARC, and Kylie Connell and Ashley Snidecki- Attorneys for Commission

1. The hearing was called to order by the Hearing Officer at 1810 hours.
  - A. Hearing regarding Habitual Animal Offender residing at 1323 West Sample Street, South Bend.
  - B. Respondent is Melvin Maefield.
  - C. File opened in August of 2019.
  
2. Service was made and accepted by Hearing Officer.
  
3. Tom Panowicz called SBARC Manager Lindsey Cuellar to give testimony regarding the this case.
  - A. Respondent file was opened in August of 2019.
  - B. SBARC stated that Respondent has responded to multiple calls regarding this address ranging from inadequate food/water/shelter, tethering issues and dogs running at large resulting in a bite.
    - I. Respondent has a kennel set up in his backyard which he covers with a tarp.
    - II. Respondent has used large heavy chains to contain the dogs.
  - C. SBARC stated that a majority of the calls were made between February and July 2021, and all had the same issue of his dogs getting out, chasing people with two bite reports made in the summer of 2021.
  - D. SBARC has so many interactions with the Respondent's dogs that they knew the officers.

- I. Both dogs have been altered and micro-chipped.
- II. One dog was surrendered due to being a biting risk.
- III. Respondent had two of the three licensed, one is current and the other was temporary but Respondent has failed to comply and license the dog.
- IV. One dog is current on vaccinations the other is not in compliance.

E. SBARC stated that things have been quiet since July 2021.

- 4. Respondent stated his dogs were able to open the windows in his home and escaped that way.
  - A. Respondent stated that he was only approached regarding the one bite.
  - B. Respondent stated that the dogs share food and water bowls, stating that he does feed his dogs.
  - C. Respondent stated that dogs gets defensive when feeling threatened.
  - D. Respondent stated both dogs were altered at the same time, though his evidence only showed one dog was altered.
  - E. Respondent stated he used heavy chain because dogs were breaking regular tie outs.
  - F. Respondent stated he was willing to work with SBARC to keep his dogs.
  - G. Respondent was unaware that rabies shots were necessary every year or three years.
  - H. Respondent stated that the dogs are micro-chipped to him.
- 5. A motion was made by the Commission, after long discussion, to label the Respondent a Habitual Animal Offender, with a ten year ban, on owning any other animals within South Bend proper.
  - A. Respondent can keep his two dogs, but they must have their licenses and vaccinations updated.
  - B. Respondent must provide proof that both dogs have been altered along with licensing them.
  - C. Respondent cannot own or harbor any other dogs but ones listed in the findings.
  - D. Respondent must notify SBARC if there are any changes with the dogs.

- E. Respondent has been notified if he does not comply there will not be another hearing, he will lose his dogs.
- F. Respondent must pay fees to SBARC and the City of South Bend.
- G. Motion regarding this case was made and carried by all on the Commission.

Adjourned at 1910 hours.