



Press Release

Toledo Area Humane Society
1920 Indian Wood Circle
Maumee, OH 43537-4001
Contact: Patty Gelb, Director of
Marketing & Development
Direct Line: (419) 482-7101
Cell Phone: (419) 205-0860

pgelb@toledoareahumanesociety.org
www.toledoareahumanesociety.org

For Immediate Release

The Toledo Area Humane Society Board of Directors Vote to Allow Pit Bull Adoptions.

The Toledo Area Humane Society (TAHS) has had a policy in place for many years to not adopt pit bulls or pit bull type dogs to the public. While TAHS does not believe a particular breed of animal should be discriminated against in determining adoptability, the Ohio State Legislature has determined Pit bulls and Pit bull type dogs to be vicious by nature (ORC 955.11). Thus, it was TAHS policy not to adopt these breeds. Pit Bulls and Pit Bull type dogs include American pit bull terriers, American Staffordshire terriers, Staffordshire bull terriers and crosses of these breeds which predominantly display or exemplify the characteristics of these breeds.

During a recent governance review of all policies, the Board of Directors determined that this was a contradictory policy. The Board instructed TAHS staff to research the logistics of adopting out pit bull and pit bull type breeds including developing procedures for adoptions of how these breeds would be handled.

After careful study of these procedures the Toledo Area Humane Society Board of Directors changed its long standing policy of not adopting pit bull and pit bull type dogs to the public. Effective immediately, the Toledo Area Humane Society will put the procedures in place and begin moving toward Pit Bull adoptions.

Since the state of Ohio considers Pit Bulls to be "inherently vicious" and there is a lot of strong public opinion about them, TAHS will have several conditions on their adoptions above and beyond our regular adoption procedures. Besides requiring that all family members (including other family dogs) meet the pit bull prior to adoption, mandatory attendance in dog training classes, proof of liability insurance and licensing TAHS would

implement the following procedures:

- Pit bulls will only be put up for adoption if they score exceptionally well on their SAFER test and pass additional screening including extra dog-dog interaction, dog-cat interaction, food and possession guarding screening, and a trial period in a foster home. SAFER™ (Safety Assessment For Evaluating Rehoming) is a canine aggression assessment. SAFER was originally developed by Dr. Emily Weiss, C.A.A.B, and since it first started being implemented in shelters in 1999-2000, the SAFER assessment has helped animal welfare professionals all over the country identify potential aggression and opportunities for behavior modification—which ultimately leads to more adoptions through appropriate placement.
- All prospective adopters will have an initial counseling session which will cover breed characteristics, pit bull laws, and public perceptions and issues around pit bull ownership. Prospective adopters will be given a written summary of this counseling and be required to sign that they have read and understand the materials provided.
- We will do a criminal background check on prospective adopters which covers convictions in Ohio and Michigan, and disqualify any potential adopter with drug, weapons or violent crime convictions or convictions for dog fighting or animal cruelty.
- We will visit the home of prospective adopters prior to adoption to confirm that conditions where the adopted dog will be housed are suitable and meet the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code.

The conditions outlined above will preclude any same day adoptions of pit bulls due to the pre-adoption home visit requirement. Adoption fees for these animals will be higher than other adoption fees charged by TAHS to cover the costs of these additional procedures and the mandatory training classes. TAHS will limit the number of adult pit bulls available for adoption to a maximum of two at any time.

Attached with this press release is a copy of the procedures that will be put in place for all pit bull adoptions. For any questions about this policy or to speak with our Executive Director or President of our Board for comment, please contact Patty Gelb, Director of Marketing.

Via e-mail to The Blade

Subject: Statement from Commissioner Konop

April 21, 2010

Statement from Lucas County Commissioner Ben Konop upon the passage of The Toledo Area Humane Society's new policy allowing "Pit Bull" adoption:

"I commend the Toledo Area Humane Society for its logical, progressive, and compassionate decision today to begin a pilot program that will adopt out temperament tested, family friendly dogs classified as "pit bulls." I am instructing our county administrator to reverse his previously stated policy, and immediately grant authority to Dog Warden Julie Lyle so that she may begin participating in the Humane Society's program, and transfer "pit bulls" that she deems to be adoptable. Thanks to the Humane Society and our new Dog Warden, countless friendly, loving dogs will now have a chance to be great family pets instead of being indiscriminately killed at the dog pound."

TAHS Animal Care & Standards Committee
Staff proposal on pit bull adoptions - DRAFT

3 March 2010

If the TAHS Board changes current policy and we begin direct adoption of pit bulls and pit bull mixes to the general public, the staff proposes the following procedures in addition to all existing adoption procedures:

1. Pit bulls will only be put up for adoption if they score ~~exceptionally well~~ one or two on all seven elements of-on their SAFER test and pass additional screening including extra dog-dog interaction, dog-cat interaction, food and possession guarding screening, and a trial period in a foster home.
2. All prospective adopters will have an initial counseling session which will cover breed characteristics (including prey drive, bite characteristics etc.), pit bull laws, and public perceptions and issues around pit bull ownership. Prospective adopters will be given a written summary of this counseling and be required to sign that they have read and understand the materials provided.
3. We will do a criminal background check (Lucas County only) and disqualify any potential adopter with drug, weapons or violent crime convictions or convictions for dog fighting or animal cruelty.
4. We will visit the home of prospective adopters prior to adoption to see other pets and that conditions where adopted dog will be housed are suitable and meet the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code.
5. All members of the adopter's household must meet the dog prior to adoption.
6. Any dogs and cats living in the adopter's home must be introduced to the dog prior to adoption.
7. Adopter must review relevant portions of the Ohio Revised Code (if Ohio residents) and the Toledo Municipal Code (if Toledo resident) and sign an acknowledgement that they understand the laws as they relate to pit bull ownership.
8. Adopter must sign an acknowledgement that the dog warden and health department in the county where they reside (if Ohio residents) will be informed of the transfer of ownership of the dog.
9. Adopter must show proof of required liability insurance.
10. Adopters residing in Lucas County must purchase a Lucas County dog license prior to taking possession of dog.
11. Adopter must show leash ~~and/or~~ humane muzzle that comply with restrictions in Ohio Revised Code (if Ohio residents).
12. Adopter must agree to post-adoption home visits to check on the housing and behavior of the dog.
13. Adopter must agree to attend dog training classes at TAHS with their adopted pit bull. The cost of these classes will be included in the adoption fee.

The conditions outlined above will preclude any same day adoptions of pit bulls due to the pre-adoption home visit requirement.

~~Adopters will pay \$100 in addition to the normal adoption fee to cover the costs of additional screening procedures. Adoption fees for pit bulls will include a built in surcharge to cover the costs of these additional procedures and the mandatory training classes.~~

TAHS will limit the number of adult pit bulls available for adoption to a maximum of three at any time.

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