

NEWS

**TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE
MAYOR JOHN E. McCORMAC**



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**STATE SPCA INVESTIGATION CLEARS WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP
ANIMAL CONTROL FOLLOWING EUTHANASIA OF DOG INVOLVED
IN UNPROVOKED ATTACK**

**Independent Report Cites Aggressive Behavior of Dog and Inability of Owner
to Control Animal**

An independent investigation conducted by the New Jersey State Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (S.P.C.A.) – Law Enforcement Division, concluded that the Woodbridge Township Department of Health and the Animal Control officer that responded to the May 5 scene of an unprovoked dog attack on a human being followed State and Township procedures. The S.P.C.A. investigation also concluded that the owner of the dog was in no way forced into the decision to euthanize the animal. The independent S.P.C.A. investigation was requested by the dog owner and family and by animal advocates. The Woodbridge Township Department of Health & Human Services, the Animal Control Unit and the Woodbridge Police Department cooperated with the independent state S.P.C.A. investigation.

Dennis Green, Woodbridge Township Director of Health, noted that the State S.P.C.A. investigation represents a completely unbiased review of the facts and circumstances surrounding the dog owners' decision to euthanize the animal after admitting to authorities that the dog could not be controlled. "The investigation reports that State Department of Health regulations and procedures were followed by Animal Control Officer Mercedes Lopez and that her actions, along with the actions of Woodbridge Police Officer Matthew Carney, while at the scene and subsequently, were appropriate and clearly within the mandates of the law," Director Green said. "The S.P.C.A. report concluded that there was "... no sign of Mr. Legeny dog wrongfully being put to sleep [sic]. And that Ms. Lopez, [Woodbridge Township Animal Control Officer] at no point, overstepped her authority by deeming the animal vicious or ordering the animal to be put to sleep."

The detailed report by the S.P.C.A. included interviews with Animal Control Officer Mercedes Lopez, Woodbridge Police Officer Matthew Carney, Veterinarian Le Smith, Jr., DVM, St. Georges Veterinary Hospital and members of the veterinary hospital staff, dog-owner William Legeny, 94 Crampton Ave., Woodbridge and victim William Weiss of Woodbridge. The S.P.C.A. report detailed the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident, including statements from the dog owner that the dog could not be controlled.

The S.P.C.A. report, along with official Woodbridge Police Department and Department of Health, Animal Control Division reports, noted that, as a result of the unprovoked attack by the German Sheppard, the victim suffered five puncture wounds to the left leg, a puncture wound to the left arm and severe bruising to the left leg and groin area. The wounds required medical attention by Emergency Room staff at the Perth Amboy Medical Center on May. 5. As a result of the series of bites, the victim developed an infection and was required to undergo a series of tetanus vaccinations and medical treatments.

Director Green noted that the S.P.C.A. reports suggests that Department of Health Animal Control officers provide dog-owners written information (at the scene) detailing State and Township regulations and ordinances of that clearly inform pet-owners of the requirements and available options following dog-bite incidents. Current procedures, which were followed by the Animal Control officer, included the filing of a Dog Bite Incident Report , Notice of Bite and Confinement of Animal report, and Request for Rabies Examination report to the New Jersey Department Health and Senior Services.