



Debbie Maynard <[dmaynard@bexley.org](mailto:dmaynard@bexley.org)>

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## FW: Effective Dog Management

1 message

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**Tim madison** <[tmadison@bexley.org](mailto:tmadison@bexley.org)>  
To: Debbie Maynard <[dmaynard@bexley.org](mailto:dmaynard@bexley.org)>

Thu, Oct 20, 2016 at 10:57 AM

### Timothy G. Madison

Bexley City Council, President

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**From:** Samantha Nelson [<mailto:snelson@humanesociety.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2016 10:41 AM  
**To:** [citycouncil@bexley.org](mailto:citycouncil@bexley.org)  
**Subject:** Effective Dog Management

Please find the message below attached on letterhead.

Dear Council Members:

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization, understands what a large responsibility it is to create a safe community for residents and to uphold standards of

conduct through the enforcement of laws. However, breed-specific legislation (BSL) is an ineffective animal management strategy that has failed everywhere it has been tried, and we strongly urge you to repeal your breed-based ordinance provisions. Sound community management of dogs has nothing to do with breed, and Bexley will benefit from making this positive shift.

While we commend the consideration of repealing the city wide breed ban, we encourage the City Council to continue to press toward breed-neutral dog policy, moving the town toward a safer future for its residents, instead of maintaining breed-specific requirements. Determination of whether a dog should be identified as a "pit bull" based on the dog's physical features is subjective and unreliable. Research has shown that even animal control officers and veterinarians cannot accurately identify the breeds in a mixed breed dog's genealogy.

Furthermore, using physical breed standards as a proxy for determining whether a dog is dangerous is incredibly flawed. With advances in science and our increasing knowledge about a dog's DNA and the relationship to appearance and behavior, we now know that breed is a complex issue that does not neatly translate into predictive behavior patterns. The physical appearance of a dog has no basis in determining whether a dog is likely to harm someone. Instead, breed-neutral factors such as whether a dog is well socialized, altered, receiving veterinary care and other similar issues are significantly more predictive of the likelihood that a dog may be dangerous.

Experts in policy-making recommend against using breed or any single-factor approach towards community animal management, and research has shown that while singling out a particular type of dog may give an illusion of protection, it is ineffective. In fact, breed-specific ordinances often decrease public safety as individuals are lulled into a false sense of security. Twenty states and counting prohibit breed-specific legislation, and many municipalities are repealing BSL due to its lack of efficacy. Cincinnati and Youngstown recently repealed breed-specific language from their codes, and Shaker Heights struck down proposed breed-specific regulations.

The HSUS recommends breed-neutral laws which give enforcement agencies necessary powers to address dangerous incidents which have occurred, as well as policies and funding to support proactive community animal management to prevent future problems. The best use of limited local resources is an approach which ensures that dog owning residents are aware of standards and have access to the pet care services, information, and resources conducive to meeting them. Everyone wants to live in a safe community and we should do everything possible to prevent harmful dog-related incidents from occurring.

We stand ready to assist legislators in strengthening Bexley's dangerous dog laws, while providing dog owners with due process and making it incumbent on owners to manage their dog's behavior to prevent injury or threat. Now is the appropriate time to strengthen existing laws and focus strictly on regulating the people who allow aggressive or unsafe dog behavior.

We offer a wealth of information on dog behavior, dog management, and dog ownership. Our resources are free and we would welcome the opportunity to partner with the city. Please contact us or our Ohio state director Corey Roscoe, at [croscoe@humanesociety.org](mailto:croscoe@humanesociety.org), if we can assist you in any way.

Respectfully,



Cory Smith

Director, Companion Animal Public Policy

**Samantha Nelson**

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The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization, rated most effective by our peers. For more than 60 years, we have celebrated the protection of all animals and confronted all forms of cruelty. We are the nation's largest provider of hands-on services for animals, caring for more than 100,000 animals each year, and we prevent cruelty to millions more through our advocacy campaigns.

The HSUS is approved by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance for all 20 standards for charity accountability, and was named by Worth Magazine as one of the 10 most fiscally responsible charities. To support The HSUS, please make a monthly donation, or give in another way. You can also volunteer for The HSUS, and see our 55 ways you can help animals. Read more about our 60 years of transformational change for animals, and visit us online at [humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org).

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**2 attachments**

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