

January 5, 2026

**OFFICE OF THE HEARING EXAMINER
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**
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REPORT AND DECISION

SUBJECT: Regional Animal Services of King County file no. **V25017639-A25004392**

JENNA AND GORDON GRAVLEY
Animal Services Enforcement Appeal

Activity no.: A25-004392

Appellants: **Jenna and Gordon Gravley**

[REDACTED]
Kenmore, WA 98028

Telephone: [REDACTED]

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King County: Regional Animal Services of King County
represented by **Chelsea Eykel**
Regional Animal Services of King County
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Overview

1. After hearing the witnesses' testimony and observing their demeanor, studying the exhibits admitted into evidence, and considering the parties' arguments and the relevant law, we deny the Gravley's appeal but reduce the otherwise applicable monetary penalty.

Procedural Background

2. On September 17, 2025, Katelyn Feer filed an online complaint with Regional Animal Services of King County (Animal Services) for an incident on September 16. Ex. D3. On September 18, Animal Services issued Notice of Violation V25017639-A25004392 to Jenna Gravley for her dog, Higgins, qualifying as potentially dangerous. Exs. D5, D6. Jenna and Gordon Gravley filed a timely appeal on September 22. Ex. D7.
3. We went to hearing on December 19. Participating in the hearing were: Sgt. Chelsea Eykel representing Animal Services, complainant Katelyn Feer, and appellants Jenna and Gordon Gravley.

Appeal Issues

Per the Notice of Hearing, the issues identified for consideration on appeal are as follows:

4. In the Gravley’s September 22 appeal statement, they admit that the incident occurred and agree to comply with all requirements and restrictions “including confinement, leash and muzzle requirements, and vaccination rules.”
5. The limited issues raised in their appeal statement are whether the associated \$500 fine can be reduced or waived and whether Higgin’s potentially dangerous animal designation can be reviewed “...after he successfully completes training and demonstrates a sustained period of safe behavior.”
6. Based on the scope of the appeal statement, the issue(s) on appeal are as follows:
 - A. Whether the September 16 potentially dangerous animal violation of KCC 11.04.230(F) and the associated \$500 penalty are supported by a preponderance of the evidence and appropriate under the facts of this case.

Factual Findings

Weighing all the evidence, the hearing examiner finds the following facts by a preponderance of the evidence:

7. The Gravley’s acknowledge that the September 16 incident occurred; however, they did not agree with some of the reported circumstances. They testified to factors that they believe are mitigating. The parties testified as follows:
8. **Sgt. Chelsea Eykel**, representing Animal Services, testified that it is obvious from the photos that the Gravley’s did research and took steps to contain Higgins and keep him from digging or going over the gate. Ex. D7-004. Ms. Feer is not the only person who entered the Gravley property and went past the signage. The previous sign that the Gravley’s posted was not totally clear as compared to the sign they are using currently. The Gravley’s had no reason to suspect that something like this would happen since

Higgins has been friendly and greeted people when neighbors or delivery people came onto the property. Animal Services is not concerned with the fact that Higgins came out and confronted Ms. Feer but rather the severity of the injuries he inflicted. Higgins did not just make one point of contact. Instead, he bit Ms. Feer seven or eight times.

Animal Services believes that the appellant's took appropriate steps after the fact by adding extra signage to their property and moving the Ring doorbell to the outside of the gate. Animal Services recommends that a latch or lock be placed on the outside of the gate to prevent another "over-the-top" reaction from Higgins. The Gravley's have already mostly complied with the requirements. Animal Services requested that the violation and designation be upheld due to Higgins' disproportionate response.

9. **Katelyn Feer** testified that on September 16, she was soliciting for donations in the neighborhood when she approached the Gravley residence. Prior to entering the Gravley property, she saw a sign that said "warning/security dog." She thought that the dog had some training. She entered the property, went up to the door, and rang the Ring doorbell. She heard dogs running. One leapt up at her and started biting her. She started screaming "Ow" and "Oh my God" and kicked the dog in the chest. The dog biting her did not have a collar, so she was not able to grab the dog to restrain him. Ms. Gravley came out and said, "yeah that's why we have the sign."

After the incident, Ms. Feer called urgent care and went in for treatment. Upon examination it was discovered that she had seven to eight bites. She was bitten several times on her legs, on her elbow, and on her breast. Ex. D4-001-004.

She is permanently scarred. She had to change out dressings and apply ointment all over her body. She now has a slight fear of dogs. When she approached the gate, there was no dog present in the yard. There was not a "no soliciting" or "no trespassing" sign. Per her employer's rules, they do not enter properties that display those types of signs.

10. **Jenna Gravley** testified that she agrees that Ms. Feer was bitten by Higgins on September 16; however, she does not agree with some of the circumstances and believes that she has mitigating information. She was apologetic for the incident occurrence.

When the Gravley's adopted Higgins, they were not aware that his breed has a tendency to nip.¹ Due to this, they made sure their yard was secure and posted signage. Ex. A4-001. Since the incident, they have added a no soliciting sign, moved the Ring doorbell to the outside of their gate, and got a mesh screen in front of the door. Ex. A4-001. They rarely have anyone into the yard. Delivery people and neighbors come into the yard sometimes; however, they have never had any issues. Ms. Gravley opined that Ms. Feer ringing the doorbell may have triggered Higgins since no one usually rings the doorbell.

¹ Pursuant to RCW 16.08.110(2), we do not make determinations on whether to uphold a violation based on a dog's breed. Our decision would be the same no matter the breed of the dog.

On September 16, Ms. Gravley was working on the far end of her home. As soon as she heard the doorbell ring, she got up to see who was at the door. She saw that Higgins had a hold of Ms. Feer's sweatshirt which was tied around her waist. She did not see any wounds on Ms. Feer. Ms. Gravley pulled Higgins by his collar off of Ms. Feer and escorted her to the gate. Ms. Gravley apologized and let her know this is why they had signs affixed to the gate.

Ms. Gravley let her husband know what had occurred and he went to see if he could find Ms. Feer. Ms. Gravley was not aware that Ms. Feer was bitten or hurt. Had she known, she would have ensured that Ms. Feer was alright. Mr. Gravley could not find Ms. Feer upon searching for her and Ms. Gravley was worried for Ms. Feer's safety.

99% of delivery drivers leave packages on the outside of their gate. Sometimes, delivery drivers ignore the signage and come inside but they have never had any issues. They have not had any indication that Higgins could be reactionary. They are usually very careful with their dogs.

This was an isolated incident. Ms. Gravley requested that the fine be eliminated or reduced. She also asked about the possibility of removing the potentially dangerous animal designation sometime in the future if Higgins takes part in a Canine Good Citizen training program and has a period of sustained good behavior.

11. **Gordon Gravley** testified that by the time he got outside, Ms. Feer had already left his property. He stepped outside and attempted to locate Ms. Feer. He only went as far as the street and looked both ways. He assumed that she got in her car and left.

When Animal Services came to his home a few days after the incident, the officer's statement indicated that he was already aware that Ms. Feer was bitten on September 16; however, he was not aware she was bitten until he was informed by the officer. When he learned this, he became concerned for Ms. Feer's well-being.

Conclusions of Law

12. The hearing examiner has jurisdiction pursuant to KCC 20.22.040.
13. Animal Services bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of evidence both the violation and the appropriateness of the remedy it has imposed. KCC 20.22.080.G; .210.B. We do not grant substantial weight or otherwise accord deference to agency determinations. Exam. R. XV.F.3.
14. **“Potentially dangerous animal”** means any animal that when unprovoked: 1. Bites or inflicts injury on a human or domesticated animal...”. KCC 11.01.320.A.1. Here, as all the parties agree, Higgins charged Ms. Feer and bit her repeatedly. Ex. D4-001-004. Absent some act of provocation, Higgins' behavior qualifies him as potentially dangerous.

15. The Gravley’s seem to assert that Ms. Feer provoked Higgins into action that day by entering onto their property in violation of RCW 16.08.050.² Ex. A3-001. While we understand the Gravley’s assertion, provocation is specific under our code and is separate from RCW 16.08.050.
16. **“Provocation”** means “to torment, agitate, or harass an animal immediately before the attack, chase or menacing behavior; it does not include actions taken to defend oneself, other humans, animals or property.” KCC 11.01.350. Further, in animal jurisprudence, reviewing courts focus on how an average dog, neither unusually aggressive nor unusually docile, would react to an inciting act.³ And a key touchstone of courts’ analyses is that “provocation” requires the dog’s reaction to be roughly proportional to the victim’s act.⁴
17. In our case, Ms. Feer heard dogs running after ringing the doorbell. She did not enter the property and do anything to Higgins. Rather, Higgins ran to her, grabbed onto her sweatshirt tied around her waist, and began his attack. Nothing she did constitutes tormenting, agitating, or harassing of Higgins. Simply ringing a doorbell cannot be provocation. Further, we do not find that an average dog, neither unusually aggressive nor unusually docile, would hear a doorbell, run out, and begin a sustained attack that consisted of seven to eight bites all over a person’s body. Higgins’ action went too far that day. We understand the Gravley’s assertion that the doorbell may have triggered Higgins. We do not discount this. However, Higgins’ excessive reaction was not proportional to someone being on the property and ringing a doorbell. Had he only barked and growled; we could excuse that behavior to the doorbell stimulus but that is not what occurred on September 16. We do not find that Higgins was provoked.
18. We often reduce the otherwise applicable penalty in cases where the incident happened despite, not because of, the steps the owner was taking at the time of the violation and/or the steps the owner takes afterwards to avoid further occurrences. Here, the Gravley’s were already taking precautions by having signage and various mechanisms to keep Higgins contained. They educated themselves on how to care for Higgins and had no indication that this type of incident was a possibility. After the incident, the Gravley’s worked to make sure their yard was more secure, made changes to the doorbell placement, and put up additional, clearer signage. A fee reduction is in order.
19. Lastly, Ms. Gravley offered that she would be amenable to the removal of the potentially dangerous animal designation after Higgins took part in a Canine Good Citizen training program and a sustained period of good behavior. Unfortunately, the code does not provide for that type of resolution. Moreover, there are no administrative mechanisms to implement or enforce remedies that deviate from the code’s requirements.

² A person is lawfully upon the private property of such owner within the meaning of RCW [16.08.040](#) when such person is upon the property of the owner with the express or implied consent of the owner: PROVIDED, That said consent shall not be presumed when the property of the owner is fenced or reasonably posted. RCW. 16.08.050.

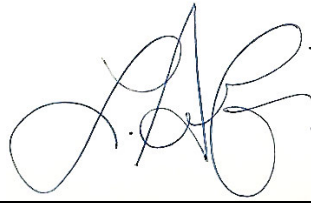
³ *Bradacs v. Jacobone*, 244 Mich. App. 263, 273, 625 N.W.2d 108, 113 (2001) (citing *Kirkham v. Will*, 311 Ill. App. 3d 787, 792, 724 N.E.2d 1062 (2000)).

⁴ *Stroop v. Day*, 271 Mont. 314, 319, 896 P.2d 439 (1995); *Bradacs* at 273–75; *Kirkham* at 792.

DECISION:

1. We DENY the Gravley’s appeal and uphold the potentially dangerous animal designation and all associated restrictions for Higgins.
2. We reduce the otherwise applicable monetary penalty from \$500 to \$300.

ORDERED January 5, 2026.



Leila Arefi
Hearing Examiner pro tem

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

King County Code 20.22.040 directs the Examiner to make the County’s final decision for this type of case. This decision shall be final and conclusive unless appealed to superior court in accordance with Ch. 7.16 RCW. It is the responsibility of the party seeking to appeal the examiner’s decision to determine and meet the legal requirements for filing an appeal.

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 19, 2025, HEARING IN THE APPEAL OF
JENNA AND GORDON GRAVLEY, REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES OF
KING COUNTY FILE NO. V25017639-A25004392**

Leila Arefi was the Hearing Examiner in this matter. A verbatim recording of the hearing is available in the Hearing Examiner’s Office.

The following exhibits were offered by Animal Services and entered into the record:

- Exhibit no. D1 Regional Animal Services of King County staff report
- Exhibit no. D2 RASKC investigation report no. A25004392
- Exhibit no. D3 Online Complaint form of September 16, 2025, incident by Katelyn Feer, dated September 17, 2025
- Exhibit no. D4 Photograph of Ms. Feer’s injuries
- Exhibit no. D5 Notice of violation no. V25017639-A25004392, issued October 3, 2025
- Exhibit no. D6 Potentially Dangerous Designation
- Exhibit no. D7 Appeal, received September 22, 2025
- Exhibit no. D8 Map of subject area

The following exhibits were offered by the appellant and entered into the record:

- Exhibit no. A1 Statement
- Exhibit no. A2 Warning Security Dog search
- Exhibit no. A3 RCW
- Exhibit no. A4 Photograph of gate
- Exhibit no. A5 Statements

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

SUBJECT: Regional Animal Services of King County file no. **V25017639-A25004392**

JENNA AND GORDON GRAVLEY
Animal Services Enforcement Appeal

I, Lauren Olson, certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that I transmitted the **REPORT AND DECISION** to those listed on the attached page as follows:

- EMAILED to all County staff listed as parties/interested persons and parties with e-mail addresses on record.
- placed with the United States Postal Service, through Quadient-Impress, with sufficient postage, as FIRST CLASS MAIL in an envelope addressed to the non-County employee parties/interested persons to addresses on record.

DATED January 5, 2026.



Lauren Olson
Legislative Secretary

Eykel, Chelsea

Regional Animal Services of King County

Feer, Katelyn

Hardcopy

Gravley, Jenna/Gordon

Hardcopy