

January 26, 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. **V25017825-A25005106**

BARTHOLOMEW HENNING
Animal Services Enforcement Appeal

Activity no.: A25-005106

Appellant: **Bartholomew Henning**

[REDACTED]
Kent, WA 98032

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

King County: Regional Animal Services of King County
represented by **Chelsea Eykel**
Regional Animal Services of King County
21615 64th Avenue S
Kent, WA 98032
Telephone: (206) 263-5968
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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 Mr. Henning's appeal.

Procedural Background

2. On October 29, 2025, Haylie McSheridan filed an online complaint with Regional Animal Services of King County (Animal Services) for an incident on October 27, 2025. Ex. D3. On November 1, 2025, Animal Services issued Notice of Violation V25017825-A25005106 to Bartholomew Henning for his dog, Soma, for trespassing and qualifying as potentially dangerous. Exs. D6, D7. Mr. Henning filed a timely appeal on November 25, 2025. Ex. D11.
3. We went to hearing on January 9, 2026. Participating in the hearing were: Sgt. Chelsea Eykel representing Animal Services, complainant Haylie McSheridan, appellant Bartholomew Henning, and his witness Michelle Poehler.

Appeal Issues

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

4. Whether the October 28, 2025, violation for Soma “Trespassing on Private Prop. 1st Violation” (KCC 11.04.230.L) and the associated \$50 penalty are supported by a preponderance of the evidence and appropriate under the facts of this case.
5. Whether the October 28, 2025, designation of Soma as “Potentially Dangerous” (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:

6. Mr. Henning and Ms. Poehler jointly own and care for their dog, Soma. On October 28, 2025, at approximately 4am, Ms. Poehler let Soma outside and her collar came off, at which point Soma "ran away." Ex. D11. Soma is next observed on video pushing open the door of the McSheridan residence and entering their home. Ex. D4. The McSheridan's live across the cul-de-sac from Mr. Henning. Ex. D12.
7. Soma made her way upstairs into the bedroom of the McSheridan's teenage daughter, where she and her guinea pig, Ollie, were sleeping. Ollie slept in a cage with an open top next to the daughter's bed. McSheridan Testimony. Ollie was the daughter's "companion animal" and supported her recovery after significant surgeries. *Id.*
8. The McSheridan's daughter woke to noises from Soma seizing Ollie from its cage. *Id.* The daughter tried to get the guinea pig away from Soma but Soma resisted, “snarling” at the daughter, and left the McSheridan house with Ollie in its mouth. *Id.* The daughter indicated to her parents and the police that, based on the pet’s condition, she could tell that Soma killed Ollie while Soma was still in her bedroom. *Id.*

9. Ms. Poheler observed Soma return to the Henning property with something in its mouth, later identified as Ollie. Poehler Testimony. Mr. McSheridan went to the Henning residence where he found Soma with Ollie in its mouth. Ex. D5; McSheridan Testimony.
10. Mrs. McSheridan called 911 and the police came. McSheridan Testimony. Police indicated that Ollie was deceased in the Henning's front yard when they arrived on scene. Ex. D13.
11. On November 1, 2025, Animal Services issued a Notice of Violation to Mr. Henning for Soma trespassing on the McSheridan's property and designating Soma as "potentially dangerous." Ex. D6. The "Potentially Dangerous Animal Designation" contains several requirements that apply even when the owners appeal the designation. *See* Ex. D7. Specifically, pending a decision on any appeal, Soma was required to be confined to the Henning property unless "securely leashed, under the control of a competent adult, and humanely muzzled...." *Id.*
12. On November 14, Soma was reported as trespassing on the McSheridan property. Ex. D9. The McSheridans "were not interested in full enforcement" and Animal Services chose to issue a warning to Mr. Henning for this incident. Ex. D8-002.
13. On November 25, Mr. Henning filed an appeal of the Notice of Violation. Ex. D11. Although the appeal included a request that the trespassing violation be dismissed, Mr. Henning's appeal statement acknowledged facts that show Soma was on the McSheridan property on October 28. Mr. Henning stated that the "intent was there to have Soma securely leashed, it was unfortunate that it didn't happen that way." Ex. D11. Instead, what happened was that "[w]hen Soma saw the Guinea Pig her unintelligent instincts kicked in and she simply grabbed it and ran across the cul de sac to our house and dropped it in the yard." Ex. D11.
14. Mr. Henning acknowledged at the hearing that, after seeing the video footage from Ex. D4, Soma did trespass on the McSheridan property on the morning of October 28. Henning Testimony.
15. Mr. Henning maintains, however that the "Potentially Dangerous" designation should be limited to a probationary period because of what he perceives as "dual negligence." He indicated that "[t]he negligence on the part of the neighbor lies with them not securing their door properly." Ex. D11.
16. Mr. Henning looked at the picture of Soma with Ollie and stated that Soma was "just holding [Ollie] by the back of the neck, it wasn't even in her mouth." Ex. D4.

Conclusions of Law

17. The hearing examiner has jurisdiction pursuant to KCC 20.22.040.

18. 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.
19. Under KCC 11.04.230.L, “Trespassing” occurs when a domesticated animal “enter[s] a person’s property or premises without that person’s permission.” At the hearing, Mr. Henning acknowledged that the Trespass violation was supported by the evidence provided by Animal Services.
20. There is no doubt that Soma was on the McSheridan property, without their permission, on October 28 at approximately 4am. The trespass violation is upheld.
21. Under KCC 11.01.320.A, a "Potentially dangerous animal" means any animal that when unprovoked: 1. Bites or inflicts injury on a human or domesticated animal....” Mr. Henning does not dispute that Soma entered the McSheridan’s home, “grabbed” Ollie and returned to the Henning property. Ex. D11. Soma’s actions undoubtedly resulted in Ollie’s death that morning. Whether Soma intended to kill or injure Ollie is irrelevant.
22. Mr. Henning’s appeal is based on his belief that the McSheridans share some responsibility for the events that morning because they did not properly lock their door. The duty is not on the McSheridans to ensure their doors are closed and locked. The responsibility lies with Soma’s owners to keep her from trespassing and from biting or inflicting injury on another domesticated animal. Mr. Henning’s theory of “dual negligence” is misplaced.
23. Mr. Henning did not seem to appreciate the impact or seriousness of the incident, focusing on the behavior of the McSheridans, and minimizing Soma’s behavior, stating that she "is a Husky and does Husky things." Ex. D11; Henning Testimony. As Soma’s owners, he and Ms. Poehler are responsible for ensuring that Soma is either trained out of doing “Husky things” that violate the code or is controlled in a way that prevents unlawful behavior.
24. Both violations are supported by a preponderance of the evidence and are upheld, along with the restrictions and requirements that accompany Soma’s potentially dangerous designation.

DECISION:

1. Mr. Henning’s appeal is DENIED.

ORDERED January 26, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal tail.

Devon Shannon
Hearing Examiner

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 JANUARY 9, 2026, HEARING IN THE APPEAL OF
BARTHOLOMEW HENNING, REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES OF
KING COUNTY FILE NO. V25017825-A25005106**

Devon Shannon 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. A25005106
Exhibit no. D3	Online Complaint form of October 27, 2025, incident by Haylie McSheridan, dated October 29, 2025
Exhibit no. D4	Video of Soma trespassing in the McSheridan house
Exhibit no. D5	Photograph of deceased guinea pig in Soma’s mouth
Exhibit no. D6	Notice of violation no. V25017825-A25005106, issued November 1, 2025
Exhibit no. D7	Potentially Dangerous Designation
Exhibit no. D8	RASKC investigation report no. A25005379
Exhibit no. D9	Online Complaint form of November 14, 2025, incident by Haylie McSheridan, dated November 16, 2025
Exhibit no. D10	Video of trespassing dog A25-5379
Exhibit no. D11	Appeal, received November 26, 2025
Exhibit no. D12	Map of subject area
Exhibit no. D13	Police report

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

Exhibit no. A1	Photograph
Exhibit no. A2	Photograph
Exhibit no. A3	Video
Exhibit no. A4	Video

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

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BARTHOLOMEW HENNING
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 26, 2026.



Lauren Olson
Legislative Secretary

Eykel, Chelsea

Regional Animal Services of King County

Henning, Bartholomew

Hardcopy

McSheridan, Haylie

Hardcopy