

February 24, 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. **V25017914-A25005546**

RENEE REILLY

Animal Services Enforcement Appeal

Activity no.: A25-005546

Appellant: **Renee Reilly**

[REDACTED]
Kirkland, WA 98034

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
Email: raskcappeals@kingcounty.gov

Overview

1. After hearing the witnesses' testimony and observing their demeanor, studying the exhibits admitted into evidence, considering the parties' arguments, and applying the relevant law, we deny Ms. Reilly's appeal but remove the monetary penalty.

Procedural Background

2. On December 1, 2025, Deborah Wingert filed an online complaint with Regional Animal Services of King County (Animal Services) for an incident on November 29, 2025. Ex. D3. On December 7, 2025, Animal Services issued Notice of Violation V25017914-A25005546 to Renee Reilly for her cat being unlicensed unaltered and trespassing. Ex. D6. Ms. Reilly filed a timely appeal on December 29, 2025. Ex. D12.
3. We held a hearing on February 12, 2026. Participating in the hearing were: Sgt. Chelsea Eykel representing Animal Services, complainant Deborah Wingert, and appellant Renee Reilly.

Appeal Issues

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

4. In Ms. Reilly’s December 29, 2025, appeal statement, she contests whether the cat identified by complainant was her cat. She requests evidence from the complainant and Animal Services establishing that it is her cat.
5. The issue on appeal is whether the December 7, 2025, violation for “Trespass” 1st violation (KCC 11.04.230.L) and the associated \$50 penalty is supported by a preponderance of the evidence and appropriate under the facts of this case.
6. At the hearing, the Examiner will also request an update on the cat’s licensing status.

Factual Findings

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

7. Ms. Wingert testified that on November 29, 2025, she observed Ms. Reilly’s cat on her property. Wingert Testimony. She took the photo of the cat on her property. Wingert Testimony; Ex. D4. Ms. Reilly confirmed that the cat in the photo was her cat. Reilly Testimony; Ex. D4.
8. There is no dispute that Ms. Wingert has communicated to Ms. Reilly that her cat is not welcome on her property. Wingert Testimony; Reilly Testimony; Exs. A1-2. Ms. Wingert testified about her concerns with Ms. Reilly's cat entering her property and stalking or hunting birds. She finds dead birds on her property and attributes that to Ms. Reilly's cat. Wingert Testimony. Ms. Wingert did not state that she had observed the cat actually kill a bird on her property or elsewhere. *Id.*
9. Ms. Reilly testified that there are lots of outside cats in the neighborhood and no proof that it was her cat that killed birds on the Wingert property. Reilly Testimony. She provided pictures of several cats outside in their neighborhood. Exs. A6-10.

10. Ms. Reilly indicated that she is now letting her cat outside less and has put a bell on the cat's collar. Reilly Testimony. Ms. Wingert testified that she has not seen the cat on her property since she filed the complaint on December 1, 2025. Wingert Testimony.
11. Sgt. Eykel acknowledged an error in the Animal Services "nuisance letter" from September 2025, which makes it unclear whether there was accurate communication to Ms. Reilly of a code violation. Ex. D10. Ms. Reilly testified that she did not recall receiving anything from Animal Services related to the September complaint.
12. Sgt. Eykel pointed to the October complaint and the "Warning Notice" issued to Ms. Reilly as evidence that Ms. Reilly was on notice that her cat was trespassing, in violation of KCC 11.04.230.L. Ex. D9. The notice states that a complaint was made regarding Ms. Reilly's cat "trespassing and killing birds." *Id.*
13. Sgt. Eykel also clarified that there is no licensing fine or violation being imposed. The licensing violation was withdrawn by Animal Services and is not an issue on appeal.

Conclusions of Law

14. The hearing examiner has jurisdiction pursuant to KCC 20.22.040.
15. 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.
16. A trespass occurs when a domesticated animal enters upon a person's property or premises without that person's permission. KCC 11.04.230.L. The evidence supports a finding that Ms. Reilly's cat entered onto Ms. Wingert's property without permission. By definition, this violates the code's prohibition on trespass.
17. There was a significant amount of testimony about whether Ms. Reilly's cat was killing birds on Ms. Wingert's property. What the cat was doing on Ms. Wingert's property is irrelevant to the trespass determination. It is marginally relevant, however, to whether the monetary penalty is appropriate.
18. Ms. Reilly's understanding of the issue with her neighbor was related to Ms. Wingert's concern about the hunting and killing of birds on her property. Setting aside the inaccurate September nuisance letter, Animal Services notified Ms. Reilly about the October complaint from Ms. Wingert in a warning letter. That warning letter did specify a code provision for Trespassing that had been violated. But it also discussed "killing birds." It was not apparent whether anyone from Animal Services had spoken directly with Ms. Reilly about the complaint or provided clarification that it was the trespass on Ms. Wingert's property that was the basis for the violation, not the alleged killing of birds.

19. In this specific factual scenario, it seems logical that Ms. Reilly focused on the bird issue and the lack of evidence establishing that her cat killed any birds, rather than recognizing that it was the cat's appearance on Ms. Wingert's property that created a code violation.
20. Although I am finding that there was a trespass, I am eliminating the \$50 penalty to effectively treat this incident as if it were a warning. As discussed in the hearing, however, a new trespassing violation by Ms. Reilly's cat will be considered a 2nd offense and will come with a \$100 fine, doubled for each subsequent violation.

DECISION:

1. The \$50 penalty is reduced to \$0.
2. The remainder of Ms. Reilly's appeal is DENIED.

ORDERED February 24, 2026.



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 FEBRUARY 12, 2026, HEARING IN THE APPEAL OF
RENEE REILLY, REGIONAL ANIMAL SERVICES OF KING COUNTY
FILE NO. V25017914-A25005546**

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. A25005546
Exhibit no. D3	Online Complaint form of November 29, 2025, incident by Deborah Wingert, dated December 1, 2025
Exhibit no. D4	Photograph of the Reilly cat trespassing
Exhibit no. D5	Email with Animal Services explaining trespassing
Exhibit no. D6	Notice of violation no. V25017914-A25005546, issued December 7, 2025
Exhibit no. D7	RASKC investigation report no. A25004843
Exhibit no. D8	Online Complaint form of October 13, 2025, incident by Deborah Wingert, dated October 13, 2025
Exhibit no. D9	Warning Notice V25017761-A25004843
Exhibit no. D10	RASKC investigation report no. A25004331
Exhibit no. D11	Online Complaint form of September 13, 2025, incident by Deborah Wingert, dated September 13, 2025
Exhibit no. D12	Appeal, received December 29, 2025
Exhibit no. D13	Map of subject area

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

Exhibit no. A1	Statement
Exhibit no. A2	Note from Deborah taped to my door
Exhibit no. A3	Picture of the dead bird Deborah left on a decorative pumpkin on porch
Exhibit no. A4	Video of Deborah on my porch with a sharp tool and a dead bird in her hand
Exhibit no. A5	Cat in my backyard, with a collar. Not my cat.
Exhibit no. A6	Black and white cat in my backyard
Exhibit no. A7	A few houses down from Deborah and I. I asked this neighbor to send me security camera pictures of any cats detected in her driveway because I knew she had the cameras. This photo is from January 27
Exhibit no. A8	Statement
Exhibit no. A9	Photograph
Exhibit no. A10	Photograph

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

SUBJECT: Regional Animal Services of King County file no. **V25017914-A25005546**

RENEE REILLY
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 February 24, 2026.



Lauren Olson
Legislative Secretary

Eykel, Chelsea

Regional Animal Services of King County

Reilly, Renee

Hardcopy

Wingert, Deborah

Hardcopy