



# **‘Vicious’ Cats, Dogs Could Prompt Change In Alton No-Kill Policy**

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
July 25 2023 2:28 PM

ALTON - Residents of Alton’s fourth ward have raised concerns about what Fourth Ward Alderwoman Rosie Brown described as “vicious” cats and dogs in the area. Possible solutions, including a change in the city’s no-kill policy, were discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday.

“My concern is that in my ward, these dogs and cats are vicious,” Brown said. “People are scared to walk the streets.”

Alton Public Works Director Mike Parsons said he was concerned about unlicensed and unvaccinated animals.

“So many people have dogs in our town that are not licensed, that don’t have rabies shots, and we really don’t have any way to follow up on that,” Parsons said.

Parsons added that he’s against the city’s no-kill policy because a “runover of cats” is leading to “cat colonies.”

“We literally, in our town - and I don’t know when this happened - but they have cat colonies,” Parsons said. “If you have cat colonies and these colonies are not being checked, animals are not getting spayed or neutered or whatever the case is, you’re having a runover of cats, and that’s what we have.”

While he would like to hire another Animal Control Officer, Parsons said they don’t currently have the budget for it. He added the department does respond to calls it receives, but is limited on space as “right now, every pen in Animal Control is full.”

Those pens will continue to be full until the city decides to change its no-kill policy, Parsons said.

"We all love animals, I love animals ... but we have to have room," he said. "Things have to be euthanized so you can make room for other things - and I know it's a political bomb, and I'm sorry, but it's a problem."

He later clarified that he's not talking about out-of-town visitors bringing their pets to Alton, but pets belonging to Alton residents and stray animals.

Police Chief Jarret Ford said the Alton Police Department is also at capacity with nowhere to put animals they take into custody if nobody from Animal Control is on duty. Another concern of Parsons' was dogs biting and possibly having rabies.

"If there's a dog bite, we have got to take that dog off the street," he said. "Because if the dog has rabies, that child's going to have to get rabies shots. We can't let dogs that bite just run in the city - we have to do something."

Mayor David Goins added that disease-carrying dogs are especially dangerous because "if you're not careful, one dog can wipe out a whole pen of dogs in a matter of days."

Alderwoman Carolyn MacAfee asked if the City Council would need to write a policy change, which Parsons confirmed. City Attorney Tonya Genovese said there has been an updated ordinance drafted and discussions had, but no concrete action to change the policy yet - the City Council is likely to take action on it in the next few weeks.

"I'm an animal lover too and I don't like that either, but when you can't provide a space for these animals, then you have no alternative but to basically put them to sleep," MacAfee said. "I know it's heartbreaking, but it doesn't hurt the animal - it hurts them more ... not being able to live a decent life."

A full recording of the July 24 meeting can be watched at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](http://Riverbender.com/video).

