

EXHIBIT A

Received 1-28-2010
JY

To: Foster Town Council, Town Officials

From: Mike Watkinson, 37 Boswell Trail, Foster

Re: Events of Monday, January 11th

At about 8 am, I had turned west on North Road on my way to drop my youngest son off at Clayville School and accidentally hit David Hughes' dog Taylor. After stopping and realizing what I had hit, having noticed Taylor at the end of Mr. Hughes' drive way where it meets the road, I tried to tend to the dog. At that point, I realized I had no idea what needed to be done. I attempted to see if Mr. Hughes was home, but he was not. Not having my cell phone with me, I went home to call the Police Station, who immediately put me in touch with Animal Control Officer, Mike Caprarelli.

Mr. Caprarelli advised that he'd meet me upon my return from dropping my son off at Clayville. In passing the dog on my way to the school, I stopped briefly after noticing the dog had dragged himself from where I'd left him to under a tree next to the driveway. The ride to Clayville School and back takes a little less than fifteen minutes and upon my return, Mr. Caprarelli was already at the scene and was getting out of his truck as I pulled up.

Upon meeting, I expressed to Mr. Caprarelli that I'm not a pet owner, and have very little understanding of what needs to be done. The dog appeared to be seriously injured, and I could only defer to Mr. Caprarelli's experience and advisement.

Mr. Caprarelli advised at that time that he knew the dog to be an old dog, and assumed that he must have been a good dog having never presented any problems. Mr. Caprarelli then offered that he couldn't be sure, but the dog may have broken it's back.

Having assessed the injury as serious, I needed advisement towards what to do next. Mr. Caprarelli told me that some time ago, he'd have felt more empowered to take care of the situation himself, but that today, without the permission of the owner, and because it was Monday and the local Foster Vets office was closed for the day, I had no choice but to wait for David Hughes to return home. Mr. Caprarelli then told me that he'd try to contact Mr. Hughes once back at Town Hall using a number he had on record there. I would receive a call later in the morning from Mr. Caprarelli. He told me he could not reach Mr. Hughes with the number he had on record.

At the scene, the concern turned to what the next appropriate action should be. Mr. Caprarelli advised putting the dog in my garage to take him out of the cold and wait for Mr. Hughes to return home, but that there was nothing more he could do. I looked to Mr. Caprarelli for advice on how we would move the dog into his truck so that we could put him in my garage at my house, only yards away.

To move the dog, Mr. Caprarelli took a pole with a noose out and asked me to help adjust it. I asked why the tool needed to be used. Having no experience with this type of situation, the instrument seemed extremely harsh to me. But Mr. Caprarelli advised that injured animals can react very badly when approached, and he warned me that approaching Taylor without the tool was not advisable.

I told him that I knew the dog well and had already approached him prior to me bringing my son to school and returning to meet Mr. Caprarelli. I understood the advice, and assumed it was a voice of experience. I did continue to approach the dog without the dog reacting with any hostile nature.

After Mr. Caprarelli pulled the dog away from under the tree toward the road using the pole and noose, it was decided that we move the dog together. Mr. Caprarelli used the instrument with the noose around the dog's neck and I picked the dog up by around the mid-section. This being cumbersome, I advised that we look for a piece of plywood in Mr. Hughes yard with which we could put the dog in a more stable position. Mr. Caprarelli then took out two thin sheets of paneling that were loose in the back of his truck. Not the most stable stretcher, but it served the purpose quickly. Throughout, and though I can't be sure, it appeared to me that we were hurting the dog more. And though this is likely unavoidable to a certain extent, I would suggest that there are better modes of moving injured animals.

Mr. Caprarelli drove to my garage and helped me put the dog inside. He then advised that I could only wait on direction from the owner, and that he did not think the dog would die in the garage.

After he left, I put the dog on a much more stable stretcher (3/4" plywood), covered in a blanket and realized instantly that I really did have no clue what to do next. The dog appeared to be in shock and in pain. He was bleeding from what I thought could only be internal injuries (turned out it was not).

I called my wife who is much more familiar with pets than I am. I told her that I was advised that I needed to wait for David Hughes to return home before I could take any action. My wife's immediate response was to call Scituate Animal Hospital who in turn expressed urgency to bring the animal in immediately.

Prior to speaking with SAH, my wife called Mr. Caprarelli inquiring as to what more could be done. His response to her was what did she want him to do? To which my wife later interpreted as there being either no established protocol beyond bringing animals to only the Foster-based Vet, or Mr. Caprarelli's unwillingness to go beyond established protocol to the benefit of the animal.

I put the dog, blankets and stretcher in my car and drove to Scituate Animal Hospital where they made it a point to communicate what protocol in their town has. In Scituate, apparently the Animal Control Office takes the animal directly to a Vet under the same circumstances. They also cited Good Samaritan laws (guidance) and how they apply to behavior in such a situation.

Someday afterward I received a call from Town Council member, John Lewis. I assume in response to inquiries made with the town by David Hughes. My discussion with John was specific to addressing specific published protocol that the Animal Control Officer follow. Mr. Lewis agreed that, at a minimum, protocol would change, and be improved upon.

I apologize that my schedule doesn't afford me the opportunity to meet. But I do offer anyone to reach out to me directly. My only agenda in the matter is to improve protocol and action steps taken around circumstances like this. And to ensure that public service levels and standards are held high and met. Though a relatively new resident, my wife and I only can hope for a community that seeks to improve services provided in instances that present opportunity to do so.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Watkinson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Watkinson

27 Boswell Trail

Foster, RI

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