

9 May 2007

Dog Control in White Water Estates

By unanimous vote, homeowners present at the community Spring General Membership meeting (on 28 Apr 07) directed the Board of Directors (BOD) to send a letter to the entire community addressing dog control issues. Three issues specifically were identified as problem areas: dogs not on a leash, potentially dangerous dogs, and cleaning up after your pet.

Article III, Section 2 of our community Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCR) state that house pets are permitted so long as they do not cause a nuisance or unreasonable noise or disturbance.

Pertaining to the first concern, Dogs on a leash, Pierce County Charter, Title 6, Chapter 6.10.010 designates Unincorporated Pierce County as a Dog Control Zone, and Chapter 6.10.020 identifies requirements for dogs off premises. The exact wording is “Within a Dog Control Zone, any person owning or having charge, care, custody, or control of any dog shall keep such dog exclusively upon his own premises, except that the dog may be off the premises if it is under control of its owner or a competent person by a leash.” Violation of this chapter constitutes a Class 3 Civil Infraction.

The second concern is on Potentially Dangerous Dogs. Pierce County Title 6 defines Potentially Dangerous Dogs (in part) as “any dog with a know propensity, tendency, or disposition to attack unprovoked or to cause injury or otherwise to threaten the safety of humans, domestic animal, or livestock on any public or private property.” Title 6, Chapter 6.03.070 further states “It is unlawful for the owner or other person having control of any dog to allow such dog to frequently or habitually snarl at, growl at, jump upon, or threaten persons upon the public sidewalks, roads, streets, alleys, or public places. Any such dog may be seized and impounded.”

The last concern pertains to dog owners cleaning up after their pet on other peoples’ property. It is just common courtesy to pick up and properly dispose of any deposits left by your pet. But for those who refuse to do that, the law again applies. Pierce County Title 6, Chapter 6.03.020 state “It is unlawful for the owner or person having control or custody of any animal to allow such animal to enter or trespass upon private property without the express permission of the owner or caretaker of such property.”

Bottomline, our CCR are general in nature, but the County is very specific on animal control. If you are a dog owner, the community is asking you to keep your dog on a leash when off your private property, take appropriate action to correct aggressive and potentially dangerous dogs, and finally to pick up after your dog.

The BOD will continue to respond to complaints on pets that create a nuisance or unreasonable noise or disturbance. Any violations of the above issues can be considered nuisances, since they violate County Ordinances. Homeowners obviously can contact the Pierce County Sheriffs’ Office to enforce County ordinances if it becomes necessary.