



May 17, 2026

To: Supervisors Sherrill and Mahmood
Government Audit and Oversight Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

The San Francisco Dog Owners Group (SFDog) strongly supports dedicated funding and staffing to immediately restart Vicious and Dangerous Dog (VDD) hearings, commonly known as dog court, and to ensure the process is protected from future budget cuts.

SFDog is one of the largest nonprofit dog advocacy groups in San Francisco. We advocate for responsible dog ownership and off-leash recreational opportunities for well-behaved dogs. Responsible dog ownership includes training, socialization, and understanding how dogs should behave in shared public spaces.

In 2014 and 2016, I served on a committee that helped select a VDD hearing officer from a pool of applicants after the position became an independent contractor. The committee interviewed and evaluated all the candidates and made recommendations that the City Administrator's Office accepted. I've advocated for the importance of dog court – including for an independent VDD hearing officer – for over a decade.

Dog court is intended to be a structured, fair process that helps resolve serious situations involving aggression, neglect, or unsafe conditions before they escalate further. A functioning hearing process protects both public safety and animal welfare. Many cases can be resolved through training plans, behavioral support, veterinary care, fencing in backyards, and stronger owner accountability. San Francisco's dog court has long been viewed as a national model because it emphasizes individualized solutions rather than one-size-fits-all punishment.

But, unfortunately, for nearly a year, San Francisco has allowed VDD hearings to lapse. The lack of a hearing officer has left a significant number of cases without a formal path toward resolution or intervention. It's critical to restart hearings promptly and address the backlog of cases already investigated by the San Francisco Police Department's Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit. Delays in the hearing process create uncertainty for victims, dog owners, neighborhoods, and the dogs involved, while reducing opportunities for early intervention.

The VDD hearing officer must be impartial, not beholden to any one City department, making decisions based on evidence (what happened and why) and an understanding of dog behavior. The goal is a fair outcome for everyone involved – dog owners, victims, neighbors, and the dogs themselves.

SFDOG also supports a continuing education requirement for the VDD hearing officer, including consultation with experts in animal behavior and veterinary science, such as researchers at University of California, Davis, to ensure their decisions reflect best practices and the most up-to-date understanding of dog behavior.

SFDOG applauds Supervisor Sherrill's efforts to secure dedicated funding to responsibly restart the VDD hearing process and restore this important public service.

Sincerely,

Sally Stephens, Chair SFDOG
www.sfdog.org

From: [D. Dolloff](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Viscous Dog Hearings
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 4:39:06 AM

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As a resident of SF and recalling the horrific death of Diane Whipple, I am writing to ask that SF:

- Appoint a hearing officer and immediately resume VDD hearings
- Provide dedicated funding so the program is not vulnerable to budget cuts
- Require continuing education for hearing officers, including consultation with experts in animal behavior and veterinary science such as researchers at the University of California, Davis.

SF is home to many dogs and I greatly appreciate that. However, bad things do happen. SF needs to be proactive and have systems in place to keep viscous dog issues from becoming tragedies. If not, SF could be complacent and viewed as liable in future cases.

Thank you,

Diane D.

From: Bev Ulbrich
To: Crayton, Monique (BOS)
Cc: Beverly Ulbrich
Subject: Vicious and dangerous dog court
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 3:37:31 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Hi. As a dog behaviorist in San Francisco for over 20 years, I have a very long history with the San Francisco VDD Court. It had been running very well and then it stopped. If it's going to be run as poorly as it was running at the end, it is indeed useless.

But if it gets set up again like it was when it actually worked, it's vital to our community and the survival of our pets.

Below are links to 3 of the brief articles/posts where I've written about it.

I know the original two hearing officers very well. But the last one was a disaster, and the entire process was broken.

Please let me know if you would like any further information from me on this topic. I understand it thoroughly from being a Dog behaviorist as well as having to attend hearings on behalf of other people and their dogs, and then finally for my own almost murdered dog.

The dog who picked my dog up in its mouth and shook her trying to kill her, was let off completely free without a warning, to be adopted by someone else so it can attempt to kill again. Like I said, it was completely broken. They were no longer even following the San Francisco laws that were created for these types of incidents.

It became a total waste of time and money for everyone, and there was no protection offered whatsoever for our San Francisco pets.

Here is some of my information:

<https://www.poochcoach.com/sf-dangerous-dog-court/>

<https://www.poochcoach.com/irresponsible-and-incorrect-conclusion-to-dog-mauling-case/>

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02NxHXTyFVvqHQTDWawm1mgdbCPNBh7mxPmAK2AYJaDe7ZpVR5NULxm5oXDr3BRvc3l&id=100070227797709&mibextid=wwXlfr)

[story_fbid=pfbid02NxHXTyFVvqHQTDWawm1mgdbCPNBh7mxPmAK2AYJaDe7ZpVR5NULxm5oXDr3BRvc3l&id=100070227797709&mibextid=wwXlfr](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02NxHXTyFVvqHQTDWawm1mgdbCPNBh7mxPmAK2AYJaDe7ZpVR5NULxm5oXDr3BRvc3l&id=100070227797709&mibextid=wwXlfr)

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Beverly
Owner & Canine Behaviorist,
The Pooch Coach
Manager, Musik - SF Dog Actor & Model
Wrangler, Dogs for TV & Film
415-307-1461