



BRAMPTON

Flower City

On behalf of the City of Brampton, I am writing to clarify the circumstances surrounding two dogs, Brittany and Rambo, currently being looked after by the City's Animal Shelter. I would also like to correct some of the misinformation about why these family pets have come under our care.

The Province of Ontario's *Dog Owners' Liability Act, 2005* has been hotly debated since it was first introduced. Under the legislation, identified pit bulls born prior to November 29th, 2005 are considered "legal" pit bulls in Ontario. The law also says that these dogs must be spayed, neutered, microchipped, registered and licensed annually by the City. Pit bulls born after November 29, 2005 are considered "illegal" under the provincial law.

Rambo and Brittany, the two dogs currently at the Animal Shelter were both born after November 2005 and are, therefore, considered illegal pit bulls under the provincial law. As a result, both dogs were taken into care by the City on January 13th. Once in the care and custody of our Animal Services, the legislation is very clear about what can and cannot be done with the dogs. Both the owners and the City are now faced with limited options about how to proceed. At the heart of this issue is whether the dogs are pit bulls.

Many of you will have read that the families have called for the return of their dogs, as they contend that Rambo and Brittany are not pit bulls. Even though the provincial legislation does not provide an appeal route for resolving this issue, the City approached the families' lawyer last week to see if a mediated settlement was possible.

Unfortunately, the City could not reach an agreement with the families' lawyer on the details of how this mediated process would work. The City's offer remains open to the owners but, regrettably, the City anticipates that the family may seek an application before the Ontario Superior Court to argue that their dogs are not pit bulls and should be returned.

Readers should know that in instances where legal action is pending, as in the case with Rambo and Brittany, City staff and elected officials are unable to comment.

As we move forward, I want to assure everyone that Rambo and Brittany will continue to receive the highest level of care at our Animal Shelter. The dogs have been, and will continue to be, examined by an independent veterinarian to ensure their health and well being.

Throughout this process, we have understood that this is a sensitive issue involving family pets. It is our hope that the information in this letter has helped to set the record straight. We know that Brampton residents care deeply for their family pets, and that issues like this must be thoughtfully and cautiously considered.

We stand behind our Animal Services staff – they provide an important and compassionate service in our city. Our team takes enormous pride in how we approach and interact with every family and their pet. This case has been no exception.

Jamie Lowery
Commissioner, Community Services
City of Brampton