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Neighbors barking mad over kennel Building Department order calls expansion of Skipton Kennel & Pet Center a public health hazard

Nicole Haley; DAILY NEWS STAFF

WALTHAM - Michael Curry gets anxious when his 6-year-old daughter plays on the swings in the backyard because of barking dogs on the other side of his fence. "It's just horrible," says Curry, among a group of neighbors upset over the noise and odor coming from a Linden Street dog kennel.

The owners of the **Skipton Kennel & Pet Center** at 20 Linden St. are protesting a cease-and-desist order issued by the city's Building Department for expanding the kennel without proper permits. The order calls the expansion a public health hazard.

Curry and his wife hired an attorney to represent their interests as neighbors to the property, which is adjacent to Waltham District Court.

Having heard from a dozen disgruntled neighbors at a public hearing Aug. 14, the Zoning Board of Appeals decided to continue the case until its Sept. 18 meeting.

Steven Carlin owns the **Skipton Kennel** and told the board he has a license to board an "unlimited" KENNEL, Page A8
KENNEL, From A1

number of dogs on the premises, which consists of a veterinary hospital and a large house with fenced-in yard. The Building Department order takes issue with Carlin using the house and its yard as part of the kennel.

Curry and other neighbors, who primarily live behind the property on Ellison Park, say the house on the property was never used as a kennel. They say Carlin, who purchased the property in 2003, built additional pens and dog runs in the yard since he took over the business.

"I ran for office in 2002 and the kennel was a concern back then," said Ward 6 City Councilor Kenneth B. Doucette, who represents the neighborhood. "It became a much larger concern after the expansion into the residential house."

At last week's hearing, Carlin told the board the property boards as many as 100 to 150 dogs at its busiest. The debate centered around whether the house had been used as a kennel previously and if Carlin is within his rights to have that many animals on the property. Carlin did not return a call for comment yesterday.

Curry's attorney said the kennel's operation poses a public health threat because the dog excrement attracts flies that may carry diseases. Doucette said he visited Curry's home on several occasions and every time he went in the backyard there was an odor of "either feces, urine or bleach" coming from the Linden Street kennel.

Curry said there was no kennel at the house when he bought his home in 2000. He said the house was previously rented out and there was a swimming pool in the backyard. But starting around 2003, Curry said he saw the pool getting filled in and pens and dog runs being installed just over his fence. "They did a major expansion," Curry said. "They've certainly wronged the city in many ways."

Julie Slade, another Ellison Park resident, also complained at last week's hearing. "It's just gotten so much worse," said Slade, who bought her home in 1991. "There's dogs barking all the time."

Barbara Rando, chairwoman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, said the kennel operation seems to be

too big for the property. The board decided to continue the hearing to get answers on several questions regarding the original permits for the property and its current use. Nicole Haley can be reached at nhaley@cnc.com or 781-398-8004.

Owners of the **Skipton** Kennel & Pet Center at 20 Linden St. in Waltham are protesting an order to stop the expansion of the kennel.

DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY NICOLE HALEY

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