

Romulus commended for puppy mill ruling

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By PAULETTE LIKOUDIS/Finger Lakes Times | Posted: Monday, December 22, 2008 12:00 am

ROMULUS — The town has been lauded for issuing a moratorium on dog breeding facilities within its jurisdiction.

The New York State Humane Association and the group Animal Rights Mobilization commended Town Supervisor David Kaiser for pursuing a moratorium on commercial breeding kennels.

According to information provided by New York State's Ag & Markets Department, there are currently two commercial puppy breeders in the town.

“Your action demonstrates your awareness of and sensitivity to the tragic conditions prevalent in so many such facilities. We earnestly hope that the Town of Romulus will make permanent any regulations with the potential to reduce the number of commercial breeding kennels ... and to impose strict oversight and responsibilities on those that do exist,” wrote Samantha Mullen, legislative chair of the New York State Humane Association.

Kay Sievers, president of Animal Rights Mobilization, also wrote to Kaiser.

“I urge you to adopt the moratorium as permanent legislation, to avoid the cruelty, pollution, increase in abandoned animals and legal entanglements associated with puppy mill operations,” Sievers wrote.

Sievers added, “Non-human animals, like human animals, have certain basic interests and, if we consider ourselves humane, civilized individuals, we must — in fairness — respect those interests.”

The town's Dog Regulation Subcommittee met Nov. 17 and discussed how breeders might be examined by an inspector for dog health. The committee will explore the efficacy of permits and zoning to control and, possibly, eliminate commercial breeding operations. Also of concern are “backyard breeders” and ways to monitor those.

Dog Control Officer Aaron Covert, Seneca County Planner Harriet Haynes and Town Attorney Steven Getman are assisting in the project.

Kaiser noted that two animal welfare organizations in Seneca County are awaiting word on whether they will receive county funding. Kaiser said “there should be support for all.”

In other action, the board:

- **WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION** — Heard from Planning Board Chair Barry Roach that the five towns participating in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program have received a matching fund grant of \$30,000. Ovid, Fayette, Varick, Seneca Falls and Romulus — which serves as lead agency — will contribute matching funds in the form of cash or in-kind services.

The grant money will be used to produce a guidebook and uniform local law to ensure lakeshore quality of life, fair water access, attractive views and small craft safety by regulating the growing number of docks and moorings on the shores of Cayuga and Seneca lakes.

A Docks and Moorings Steering Committee formed in December 2007 includes two representatives

from each involved town, said Sue Ellen Balluff, a member of the committee and the Romulus Planning Board.

- **OFFICE POSITION** — Learned applications are being taken for a full-time clerical person, who will provide assistance to Angel Lawrence, the town's bookkeeper and secretary to Kaiser, and Main Office Clerk Mary Farnsworth. Kaiser said the job is justified due to a growing workload associated with former Seneca Army Depot issues, the town's sewer and water departments, incoming businesses and grant applications.

The minimum-wage job, with benefits, will begin after Jan. 1. Applicants are not required to live in Romulus.

- **ZONING BOARD** — Was notified applicants will be sought for two openings on the Zoning Board. One is a vacancy created by a resignation and the second is an alternate position created to assure a quorum at all meetings. A public hearing on the matter will be at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 21 during the regular town board meeting.
- **WEB-SITE RECORDS** — Heard Lawrence report that meeting agendas will be posted at the town's Web site (www.romulustown.com) on the Friday before each regular board meeting. The public can also find resolutions, budgets and local laws at the site, she said.
- **SPECIAL MEETINGS** — Scheduled a year-end meeting for 10 a.m. Dec. 23 and a reorganization meeting for 10 a.m. Jan. 5.