



Seized dogs up for adoption

No charges for rescue group

By Jeremy Carroll and
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C & G Staff Writers

AUBURN HILLS — While Trish Kay stuck her fingers into the cage, Cleo, a light-brown Chihuahua, was desperately trying to get the woman from Orion Township to rub her belly.

“I know,” Kay said, talking to the dog. “I’m frustrated too. I want to pet your belly.”

Kay was at the Oakland County Animal Shelter July 2 looking at Cleo and other dogs originally seized from an industrial site in Royal Oak on June 1. Police said at the time that the 33 dogs were found in terrible conditions — without food or water and in a small space — and that the owner of the dogs, Tracy Nelson, might face charges of animal neglect.

But Sgt. Chris Annetta of the Royal Oak Police Department said they are no longer pursuing charges since Nelson agreed to turn ownership of the dogs over to the Oakland County Animal Shelter for adoption.

“This is in the best interest of the dogs,” Annetta said.

There were 18 dogs remaining at the shelter to be adopted on July 2. Six of the dogs originally needed additional medical care when they arrived at the shelter, but the dogs have been spayed, neutered and have been adopted out.

“They will go quick. They are cute dogs,” said Larry Obrecht, manager of the shelter.

He said having Nelson turn custody of the dogs over the shelter was the best possible conclusion for the dogs.

“It should have happened earlier,” Obrecht said.

The shelter had custody of the dogs for about three weeks before they were able to begin adopting them out.

Nelson’s attorney, Eric Buikema, said the agreement they have reached included that the dogs must be adopted out and wouldn’t be destroyed.

“My client’s only goal in the whole endeavor was to do exactly that, so she and the county have reached an agreement, which includes her turning the dogs over to them for that purpose and requires the county to place them in homes rather than euthanize them,” he said.

Nelson, of Birmingham, ran Itsy Bitsy Dog Rescue, and began using a site in the 4500 block of Delemere to house the dogs. In a press release to *C & G Newspapers* in May, Nelson said she rescued 41 puppies from a flea market in Indiana.

Her attorney adamantly denied that the dogs were kept in poor conditions, contradicting what police had said. When they were seized, police said the dogs were on newspaper that was saturated with urine and feces, and oil, gas and grease was in the area where the dogs were being kept.



Photo by Jeremy Carroll

The dogs that were seized from an industrial site in Royal Oak are in good health and should be adopted out quickly, said Larry Obrecht, manager of the Oakland County Animal Shelter.

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“As far as any criminal charges, civil charges, or any consequence whatsoever or allegations as to my client’s alleged wrongdoing, neither the county, nor Royal Oak is pursuing any such charge or allegation. She never did a damn thing wrong, period,” Buikema said, as he hung up the phone.

The past wasn’t on Kay’s mind as she got a closer look at Amelia, a Jack Russell terrier mix.

“I have a little dog at home, and I want to get him a companion,” she said. “One of these would be perfect.”

For more information on how to adopt the dogs from the shelter, visit them at 1700 Brown Road in Auburn Hills, or call (248) 391-4100.

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