

## Strassner, Melissa T

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**From:** Vern Toland <vern@verntoland.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 14, 2020 12:02 AM  
**To:** District1, Mail; District2, Mail; District3, Mail; District4, Mail; District5, Mail; District6, Mail; Mayor  
**Cc:** Strassner, Melissa T; camurusa@gmail.com; Andres Gaviria  
**Subject:** Harley and Orange County

Dear Honorable Mayor Demings and Board of Orange County Commissioners:

First, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to make you aware of a situation that has created a significant hardship for me personally as a proud Orange County Resident and may ultimately lead to the inhumane treatment of a very special dog named Harley that has touched many lives in a positive way.

Specifically, I am requesting consideration and relief from fees related to the annual Dangerous Dog registration that the County assesses of \$515. Additionally, I have been recently given a citation for \$265 for not being able to pay the annual fee. As you can see the fees are really adding up creating a significant financial hardship. If I am unable to pay these fees Harley will ultimately be euthanized due to no fault of his own.

Harleys story is unique. He was rescued twice from very abusive situations. He is a black lab that has endured extreme physical and verbal abuse, neglect, malnutrition and lack of a secure, safe and supervised loving home. This abuse has come at the hands of humans and other dogs. During the various hearings that ultimately led up to his Dangerous Dog designation the only person that was allowed to advocate or tell Harleys side of the story was the drunken person who neglected to supervise, secure and properly take care of Harley thus denying this incredibly loving dog any form of due process. This was clearly a case of a bad person not a bad dog.

When my friend and I heard about Harleys dire situation that he was going to be put down in three days we came up with the approximately \$1500 to rescue him from being euthanized. You will be pleased to know that Harley has been a model Orange County Citizen over that last 5 years now that he has a safe, secure and loving home. He has many friends both human and canine. He is loved by many and none more than my Mother who Harley provided significant companionship and emotional support during her one year recovery from a significant surgery and health issue. To this day she credits Harley for getting her through this difficult situation.

My parents immigrated to the United States from Colombia and I am proud to call Orange County Florida my home. Orange County Florida is a very special place. When I asked why Orange County Florida adopted the current Dangerous Dog guidelines and fee structure the answer I got was "because it's what everyone else is doing". As I look at the significant fees related to this I wonder if they were meant to be this draconian and punitive in nature?

In this situation, which may be unique, the best outcome happened. I took a chance and adopted a pet that was a major concern for the county, paid a huge fee to adopt the pet thus defraying the counties cost, kept the pet and community safe and ensured the humane treatment of beautiful and loving dog that got a rough start in life. This is a story all of us can be proud of in Orange County. Why at this point would we throw out all this success and progress over fees that have no basis in the outcome and results we want just because "everyone else is doing it". I believe we would all want to promote more success stories like Harleys.



