



# RiverheadPatch

GOVERNMENT

## Following Story of Bruno, Animal Advisory Committee Seeks Change in Euthanasia Policy

Final decision would lie with animal advisory board as opposed to animal control officer and veterinarian.

By **Joseph Pinciario** January 11, 2011

Following public outcry after a dog was recently euthanized by the town, the animal advisory committee is in the works of drafting a new policy which would add more oversight to the town's euthanasia process.

The current policy, adopted in 2005, calls for evaluation by an animal recommended for euthanasia - both in aggression and medical cases - by both a Riverhead animal control officer, and a town-approved veterinarian. If both approve, the dog can be put down.

The change in the policy would give the animal advisory board the final say.

"Now, the animal control officer would be the first one to alert us if there any problems," said Councilman Jim Wooten, the town board liaison to the committee. "At that point, we want that report to come to the liaison, which will forward it to the animal advisory board. The board will then take the best course of action for the dog, whether it's socialization, rehabilitation, or euthanasia.

"We just want an impartial board to make those decisions," he continued. "Sometimes, when you're outside the box, you can make a better choice."

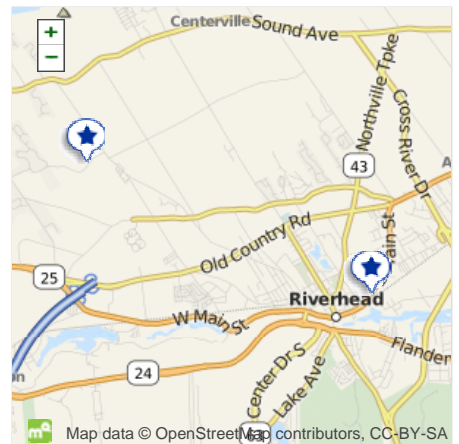
Animal enthusiasts raised their arms in protest after the story of Bruno surfaced, originally at the advisory committee meeting last month on Dec. 21. When word surfaced that Bruno, a 5-year old pitbull, was scheduled to be put down the next day, Wooten and others asked if it could be put on hold until the board discusses the current euthanasia policy. The dog was put down by 8 a.m. the next morning.

At last Tuesday's town board meeting, animal shelter volunteer Pat Lynch called into question the criminal record of animal control officer Lou Coronesi, who signed off on Bruno's euthanasia form (<http://riverhead.patch.com/articles/letters-show-euthanized-dog-showed-great-improvement-before-being-put-down-by-town>) on Dec. 16, one day after he had written that Bruno was showing "great improvement." Records show that Coronesi was found guilty in 2004 of several counts after being caught gathering restricted wildlife in Arizona. Lynch - who was recently barred from volunteering at the Riverhead animal shelter - stated Coronesi's record made him unfit for his position.

Carol Scalfani, a member of the animal advisory board and assistant for Supervisor Sean Walter, said that the use of a 'euthanasia form' would be phased out, since evaluation would fall upon the members of the board.

Wooten said the text of the proposed change in policy should be finalized on Tuesday, and he would discuss the proposed changes with the members of the town board on Thursday at its weekly work session. From there, a finalized policy would have to be approved by the town board.

**To you believe the current euthanasia policy needs to be changed? [Tell us in the comments.](#)**



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