

[http://www.pe.com/localnews/corona/stories/PE\\_News\\_Local\\_cward28.1Od4a.html](http://www.pe.com/localnews/corona/stories/PE_News_Local_cward28.1Od4a.html)

## Dogs' permit up for debate

**NORCO: Conditional approval will be considered for a Great Dane rescue operation.**

11:28 AM PST on Wednesday, January 28, 2004

By PAIGE AUSTIN / The Press-Enterprise

TONIGHT'S MEETING

**When:** 7 p.m.

**Where:** Norco City  
Hall, 2870 Clark Ave.

**Why it matters:** The Planning Commission will consider issuing a permit to the only dog-rescue operation in Norco.

**NORCO** - The Planning Commission today will consider the fate of the only dog-rescue shelter in Norco, Gentle Giants Rescue and Adoptions, Inc., owned by Burt and Tracy Ward.

Ten years after the shelter opened and seven years after the city began grappling with whether the rescue operation for Great Danes could legally function within a residential neighborhood, city officials hope to finally resolve the matter by issuing a conditional-use permit to the Wards. City staff members are recommending that the Planning Commission endorse a permit for the operation. If it does, the City Council will have the final say.

More than a dozen of the Wards' adjacent neighbors have signed a petition asking the city not to issue the permit. Since 1997, a handful of neighbors have complained to officials about barking, traffic and dog waste from the shelter.

The permit would allow the Wards to care for no more than 50 dogs at a time. It would also require them to maintain nonprofit status, to neuter or spay the dogs and to give them rabies shots.

A condition of the permit is that it could be revoked if the dogs bark excessively or if the Wards fail to maintain adequate records or to clean up dog waste. Without the permit, city code allows for no more than four dogs per residential property.

"There is no doubt that what (Burt Ward) does for the animals is a good thing," said Planning Commissioner Greg Newton. "But the Planning Commission has to look at this as a land-use issue. Before we could recommend that the City Council approve the permit, we would have to find that there is no adverse impact to adjacent property owners."



According to a city Planning Department staff report, city officials toured the shelter last week and concluded that the shelter's two doghouses have adequate soundproofing and sanitary conditions. At the time, there were 39 dogs.

"This thing has dragged on and on and on," said Keith Harrington, who lives across from the Wards on Pedley Avenue. "The city isn't listening to what the neighbors have to say. We don't want it here. Who would want 50 dogs next door?"

Ward could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Reach Paige Austin at (909) 893-2106.

