

From: [Matt Bryan](#)
To: [Bristol Town Administrator](#)
Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints >> response letter attached
Date: Friday, February 2, 2024 5:29:46 PM

Hi Valerie,

No problem at all on the delay, I know how busy everyone is. We are happy to answer any questions from the selectboard or Mr. Mulligan. We love our community here and we hate to feel like we are at odds with any of our neighbors. We too just want an amicable and humane solution that works for everyone. We never wanted to bring this to the selectboard and PD but felt this was the only option we had left in terms of finding a resolution. We understand that everyone makes noise from time to time, but dealing with this daily has been stressful on us. Thanks so much for understanding and taking the time to follow up on this, we hope you have a great weekend.

Matt and Olivia

On Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 3:20 PM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Hi Matt,

My apologies for the delay acknowledging and responding to your concerns. It has been a very busy time with budgeting, Town Meeting preparations, weekly Selectboard meetings, and other stuff and your note got a bit buried. The attached letter will be going out by certified mail today. Please know that your e-mail will be provided to the Selectboard and will be made available to Mr. Mulligan. To answer your questions, yes, any visual, audio, or other recorded evidence would be very helpful.

I appreciate this is a distressing situation and hope we can find an amicable and humane solution.

--Valerie

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator
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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 3:56 PM
To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>
Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>
Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

Hi Valerie and Bruce,

I hope the New year is treating you well. We unfortunately feel like we need to follow up on the situation with our neighbor, Michael Mulligan, and his barking dogs. For a while, it seemed like the situation had improved somewhat since our selectboard meeting back in March. However, as of recently we have been back to square one with the barking in that it has become a daily occurrence again. Specifically, since the week of November 12th before Thanksgiving it seems like Mr. Mulligan is no longer taking any measures to reduce the barking. We have been trying to give him the benefit of the doubt but it has been over 2 months since the issue has returned completely without any improvement. Since then we have been woken up almost every morning at unreasonably early hours by the barking. We then have to listen to constant barking throughout the day/night which makes it extremely difficult to be comfortable in our own home and also operate our PYO farm business. This morning(1/15/2024) we were woken up around 4:30a.m. by the barking and we could not go back to sleep because it persisted all morning. They were still barking when I left the house a little before 11:00a.m.

We hate to resurfrance this when we know you have other issues for our town on your plate but this has been a huge burden to our quality of life for over 2 years and for the sake of our well being, the other neighbors, and the dogs we just don't want to let this get away with as far as we have come with the PD and selectboard to address the issue. We have never even met Mr. Mulligan and have nothing personally against him at all, we just want there to be a resolution to the problem. We feel that we are not asking him for much, just the opportunity to sleep in our own home and to peacefully enjoy the rights to our property without this constant disturbance. During the selectboard meeting Mr. Mulligan acknowledged the barking was a problem. He also admitted the dogs do not get as much care since he is now divorced and his ex-wife no longer works from home and he is gone often. We do have sympathy for this and we know these types of life changes are difficult but it has been several years and it doesn't seem like an excuse to neglect your animals, especially in a way that is so disturbing to the community around you. During our selectboard meeting we discussed possible options for Mr. Mulligan such as leaving the dogs inside and hiring a dog walker when he is gone; dog daycare; hiring a dog trainer to assist with the barking. The selectboard scheduled a second meeting with Mr. Mulligan to further discuss options and agree on a plan. We were not part of that meeting so we are not sure what was agreed upon, but as I mentioned things seemed better for a while and then as of the last 2 months have gotten

unbearable for us again.

We do not have any proof, but it seems evident to us that these dogs are being mistreated on some level. We have both owned dogs and been around dogs our whole life and they simply do not behave in this way if they are healthy and happy. I don't know if they are cold, hungry, or lonely but something is causing them to bark in this neurotic manner. During the selectboard meeting Mr. Mulligan said that he has a dog door for them to go in and out during the day. If this is true, then he is either locking them outside or they are distressed enough to choose being outside howling in the freezing cold temperatures. Either way, something seemed off to us about the story he was telling.

Is there anything the town can do to help us communicate to Mr. Mulligan so he knows he is still causing a disturbance that needs to be addressed? We were hoping it wouldn't come to it but wondering if we should start taking audio/video recordings in case we need to pursue further legal action. We have been trying to give him a chance to resolve this on his own but we are getting physically and mentally exhausted from losing sleep and dealing with the issue for so long so we are hoping that something meaningful can be done at some point if he is not willing to comply.

Thanks as always for everything you do, we really appreciate your attention to this.

Sincerely,

Matt and Olivia
1835 Lower Notch Road

On Mon, Apr 24, 2023 at 9:12 AM Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Valerie,

Things have improved in the last week. In the past there has been a pattern where things seemed to get better after Mr. Mulligan would receive warning from the PD but after a short time he would revert to the same ways. So, it was a bit concerning to have a couple bad nights within a short time but for now things seem to be trending back in the right direction.

Thank you for checking in

On Tue, Apr 18, 2023 at 10:47 AM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Hi Matt,

Any improvements?

--Valerie

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator

Town of Bristol

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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 3:50 PM

To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>

Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>

Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

No worries Valerie, I know we are getting close to the end of the week. Thanks for your reply. Have a nice weekend

On Fri, Apr 14, 2023 at 2:36 PM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Thank you, Matt, for the unfortunate update. We will see what we can do, but might not be until next week.

I hope you can enjoy the weekend,

--Valerie

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator

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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 12:46 PM

To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>

Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>

Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

Hi Valerie and Bruce,

Ironically enough, as soon as I sent you my last email reporting improvement on the situation, we again started to have issues with the barking. On Sunday (4/9) around 9:30 pm the dogs started barking and kept us up through much of the night as they continuously howled until the early hours of the next morning. Until Sunday the situation had been improving so we held off on reporting this in hopes this instance was just a fluke. But, last night (4/13) the barking started again around 8:45 pm and it did not stop until 5:00 am this morning. Needless to say we barely slept at all. After being deprived of sleep for a second time in less than a week we felt that we needed to report this. It is hard to imagine why Mr. Mulligan would leave his dog outside barking all night after everything we have already been through but it is not completely surprising given his history with handling the situation. At this point, we are starting to question whether Mr. Mulligan is capable of taking responsibility for his own actions and his animals. If there is any other information we can provide on our end just let us know. Thank you both very much again for your persistence with helping us resolve this issue.

All best,

Matt and Olivia

On Mon, Apr 10, 2023 at 11:29 AM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Thank you, Matt, for the good news.

Enjoy the sunshine,

--Valerie

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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 9, 2023 8:44 PM
To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>
Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>
Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

Hi Valerie,

We are happy to report that matters have continued to improve since our meeting. We'll let you know if anything changes. Thank you very much for checking in.

All best,

Matt Bryan

On Thu, Apr 6, 2023 at 12:22 PM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Hi Matt,

Checking in. Any updates? Are matters improved?

Thanks,

--Valerie

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator

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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:47 PM

To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>

Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>

Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

Hi Valerie,

Thank you very much for sharing a copy of the letter and for the update. So far, it seems that Mr. Mulligan is taking steps to improve the situation, the barking has lessened significantly since our meeting. This has made a huge difference in our quality of life here for the past week, we can only hope it continues this way. We appreciate everything you and the selectboard are doing to help resolve this matter. We'll let you know if anything changes on our end.

All best,

Matt and Olivia

On Thu, Mar 16, 2023 at 1:23 PM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Hi Matt,

Attached is a copy of the letter sent to Mike Mulligan in yesterday's U.S. mail. I will plan to check in with you around the end of the month to see if there has been any improvement, or feel free to check in with us with any updates.

Thank you,

--Valerie

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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 5:49 PM
To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>
Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>
Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

Hi Valerie,

Thank you for the update, we appreciate you getting this on the agenda. We look forward to moving toward a solution on Monday.

All best,

Matt and Olivia

On Wed, Mar 8, 2023 at 4:05 PM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Hi Bruce and Matt,

Attached is the letter that will be going out in today's mail for Monday's public hearing on the nuisance complaints. The agenda will be finalized by Friday.

--Valerie

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator

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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2023 9:45 AM
To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>
Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>
Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

Hi Valerie,

There is a large brown dog that is mainly the issue in terms of the barking, I'm assuming this is Reggie. However, we have on occasion seen and heard another dog on the property that looks to be smaller and lighter in color. After reviewing the police reports, Mr. Mulligan's denial of responsibility is definitely a bit concerning. He mentions in the last report that he believes it may not be his dog because he brings them inside in the evening. However, it is not possible it could have been any other dog except his on that occasion. We can see the animals through our tree line and the larger dog's bark is very loud and distinct so it is obvious that it is coming from his property. He says that he has purchased a bark collar however, we do not believe this is the appropriate solution and it has not done anything to prevent the barking on a daily basis. It seems clear the dog is unhappy with being left outside all day based on the way it continually barks. If he has in fact purchased a bark collar I think this is further proof the animal is in distress if it is willing to continue barking while being shocked. This also does not change the fact that he is leaving his animal outside in all weather conditions and temperatures which does not seem like responsible dog ownership and makes us worry for the sake of the dog. I also just wanted to note that we are not the only ones that can hear the barking and are worried about the well-being of the dogs there. We have spoken to several of our other neighbors that have the same concerns. On our last complaint form we listed the contact information for our neighbors across the street at 1835 Lower Notch Rd (Kevin and Jo Holm-Hansen). They gave us permission to list them as witnesses and said they will also be filing a separate complaint form. If you need to speak

with another neighbor to get a second opinion they would be happy to speak with you about their similar experience with this. We can be available Monday evening for the meeting if all works out. Thank you very much for your understanding.

Matt and Olivia

On Thu, Feb 23, 2023 at 3:53 PM Bristol Town Administrator
<townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Hi Matt,

Thank you very much for your reply. How many dogs are there? He did have Reggie registered last year, but none others I am aware of.

I won't know until tomorrow if this will be on the agenda. It will depend if we are able to make contact and provide a meaningful opportunity for him to respond. There is not time to send a certified letter notifying him. If it is on, would you be available Monday? If on the agenda, it would be on around 7:00pm, possibly a little earlier depending on how long the Police Dept. pre-Town Meeting public information meeting beginning at 6:30pm goes. The Selectboard meetings are a combo of in-person or via Zoom.

I appreciate that this not only about your household's well-being, but also about concern for the well-being of the dog(s). Thank you for your patience.

--Valerie

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From: Matt Bryan <lowernotchfarm@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 3:28 PM

To: Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org>

Cc: Nason, Bruce <Bruce.Nason@vermont.gov>

Subject: Re: Mulligan dog barking complaints

Hi Valerie,

Thank you very much for following up. Unfortunately, this is still an ongoing issue. Despite our complaints and warnings from the Bristol Police Department, Mr. Mulligan continues to leave his dogs outside on a daily basis. The dogs will usually bark for hours on end starting early in the morning and continuing into the evening. Just let us know what we need to do on our end moving forward. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

All best,

Matt and Olivia

On Thu, Feb 23, 2023 at 1:10 PM Bristol Town Administrator <townadmin@bristolvt.org> wrote:

Hi Matthew,

I am writing to follow up on the phone message I left on your phone and Olivia's phone yesterday about the series of complaints about Michael Mulligan's barking dog(s). The Police Dept. provided me with your e-mail address. We do not seem to have one for Olivia. The Selectboard is meeting this Monday, Feb. 27 and I am trying to sort out whether this should be on the agenda. It would be very short notice for you and Mr. Mulligan. I called and left a message on his phone today to let him know and to try to find out his availability. Ordinarily, the agenda gets closed on the Wednesday prior to the meeting. As I mentioned in my message, I was out of the office for several weeks on medical leave and am still catching up on many things. What I did not mention was that Officer Turner resigned his employment with the Bristol Police Department in January leaving the department short-handed, which has also hindered follow-up. Is this still an active concern? Has it become resolved? The next meeting would be March 13.

Thank you,

--Valerie

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