



BCPO News

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December 27, 2018

Additional Animal Cruelty Charges Filed Against Shamong Woman

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that additional charges have been filed against a Shamong Township woman who was arrested last month after New Jersey State Police found 44 deceased dogs on her property and more than 150 others that were alive but being kept in substandard, inhumane conditions.

Donna Roberts, 65, of the 500 block of Oakshade Road, was charged with three counts of Animal Cruelty (one Third Degree, two Fourth Degree) and 15 counts of Unlawful Confinement (Disorderly Persons). Roberts had a first appearance in Superior Court in Mount Holly today on the additional charges. She was not detained, but as a condition of her release she has been forbidden from owning, possessing or caring for any animals.

The cruelty charges accuse Roberts of failing to provide adequate shelter, food, water and appropriate and necessary living conditions for the animals, while knowing that she had a legal obligation to do so. A necropsy performed on a dog that was rescued but subsequently died indicated that malnutrition was a contributing factor in its death.

Roberts was initially charged with one count of Animal Cruelty (Third Degree) after officials went to inspect her property on November 13 and discovered dogs living in deplorable conditions. A search warrant was secured and an inspection of the entire premises revealed 44 frozen dog carcasses placed in plastic bags and stored in freezers throughout the residence.

Investigators also discovered 161 living dogs, four of which were in critical condition and required emergency treatment at a veterinary clinic. The remaining dogs were evaluated and treated at the scene. In the immediate aftermath, multiple agencies came forward to assist with the care of those dogs, many of which have since been adopted.

The investigation was conducted by the New Jersey State Police, with assistance from the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office and the Burlington County Health Department. The case, which is being prosecuted by BCPO Assistant Prosecutors Nicole Handy and Douglas J. Bligh, will now be prepared for presentation to a Burlington County Grand Jury for possible indictment.

All persons are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

END

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