

Greyhound lovers ask Seminole leaders for dog racing regulations



A non-profit animal welfare group has collected more than enough signatures to place on November's Seminole County ballot an initiative that dog track owners be required to report greyhound injuries and for the dogs to be licensed.



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Nearly a dozen greyhound lovers turned out to a Seminole County meeting today to demand that commissioners require the county's sole dog-track owner – the Sanford Orlando Kennel Club – publicly disclose greyhound injuries and that the racing dogs be licensed by the county.

The dog lovers told commissioners that they submitted a petition last month with enough signatures that would require Seminole County to either adopt an ordinance or place the issue on the November 8 ballot for the voters to decide.

However, Seminole County has filed a suit that asks a circuit judge to rule on whether dog racing is regulated by the state's Division of Pari-mutuel Wagering and that such a county ordinance would be pre-empted by

Florida law.

A circuit judge is scheduled to hear those arguments on Aug. 16. County commissioners, however, agreed to hold a public meeting on Aug. 9 to gather more facts on the issue, including what are the state regulations on greyhound racing and how far can the county go in overseeing the industry.

"I want to hear all the facts," Commissioner Brenda Carey said. "The worst thing that can happen is that we put something on the ballot and the people vote for it and then the state and the courts come along and say: 'Nope you can't do that.' So I want to make sure that we have all the facts."

For years, Florida animal advocates have tried to get legislation passed that would more heavily regulate dog-track owners. But their efforts have failed, largely because dog racing is tied to pari-mutuel gambling in Florida.

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