

## Judge postpones ruling in suit against Spring couple who had 200 cats seized from home

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Updated 5:01 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, October 24, 2018



Photo: Submitted Photo, Houston SPCA / Submitted Photo

Montgomery County Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace Edie Connelly ruled that the more than 200 cats seized in a Spring home on Oct. 17 be given to the Houston SPCA.



Photo: Submitted Photo, Houston SPCA / Submitted Photo

More than 200 cats found in bad living conditions were seized from a home in Spring on Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2018.

After nearly five hours of testimony, Montgomery County Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace Edie Connelly postponed a ruling on the civil suit against David and Faye Spencer, who had more than 200 cats seized from their south Montgomery County home by the Houston SPCA Oct. 17.

"I know this is a difficult case for everyone involved," Connelly said.

Assistant County Attorney Ronald Chin asked Connelly to grant ownership of the 231 cats in varying states of illness to the HSPCA, in the hopes that they could be rehabilitated and adopted out. Chin also asked for the couple to be held responsible for

the almost \$34,000 veterinary bill the HSPCA has incurred in the treatment and care of the animals in the week since they were seized.

HSPCA investigators and Montgomery County animal control officers painted a grim picture of the home on Hickory Hollow Lane in Spring.

### **ANIMAL RESCUE: Hundreds of cats seized from Spring home**

Officials who arrived at the house on Oct. 17 alleged the house was filthy and found many of the cats suffering from nasal and eye discharge, emaciation, skin issues, hair loss, fleas and diarrhea. One cat found unresponsive and was later euthanized, HSPCA investigator Bob Wilson told the court. "This was not right," Wilson said. "(The cats) had health issues."

After continued complaints, officials initially visited the property on Oct. 11 and issued a notice to, among other requirements, correct the cleanliness of the house, complete veterinary examinations for 25 visibly ill cats and have a veterinarian conduct a colony check to be completed by Oct. 16.

However, when officials arrived on Oct. 17, they said, they found the requirements in the notice had not been met, and a county judge signed off on a seizure warrant for all of the cats. "Failure to provide for an animal's well-being is what constitutes neglect," said Jordan Gentry, a veterinarian at the Montgomery County Animal Shelter who was present at the seizure. "Any reasonable person would've looked at these cats and it would be obvious to them that they had an illness."

The Spencers denied any allegation of animal cruelty throughout the hearing, saying that their home, which they have operated as Dave and Faye's Cat Sanctuary for 11 years, was a better option for cats than living on the street.

"This is the biggest farce I've ever seen," David Spencer told the court.

The couple wasn't represented by an attorney, but called character witnesses that testified to the continued excellent care of the cats. "These people are angels," said Vicky Kaiser, who said she met the Spencers at a veterinary office when they were seeking medical attention for one of their cats. "(These) animals were in excellent shape."

David and Faye Spencer asked Connelly to postpone ruling on the case pending their entering of years of veterinary bills into evidence. Connelly will rule on the ownership of the cats on Oct. 31.

"We help other people," Faye Spencer said. "We have a safe place."