



June 9, 2026

The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors
33 North Stone Avenue
11th floor
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Re: Jan Leshar Memorandum.

Subj: Snuggles

To Whom It May Concern –

This correspondence is in response to the Memorandum issued by County Administrator Jan Leshar on June 8, 2026, which was supported by an attached correspondence provided by Steve Kozachik- Director of Animal Care Center (“PACC”) on June 6, 2026. Ms. Leshar alleges in her memorandum that a summary of the events was attached, authored by Mr. Kozachik. First, let's be very clear, the communication is not an actual summary of the events that took place in regard to the alleged event/incident. It is nothing more than a distorted and exclusive view of Mr. Kozachik’s creative writing, which could, in part, have some facts in it. Neither Ms. Leshar nor Mr. Kozachik ever attempted to make contact with me to gain actual insight into the fact pattern of the alleged event/incident, but they feel comfortable talking about me and the event as if they were knowledgeable, and they simply are not. Thus, the communication provided by Mr. Kozachik is not a factually based summary but a designed prejudicial communication that does not provide a full perspective of the various issues at hand. It is a significant distortion of the actual facts and events that actually occurred.

I am providing this correspondence as clarification to Mr. Kozachik's correspondence, which, in my opinion, as the actual victim, I am compelled to address the various misstatements, false narratives, and inaccurate information released in that June 6 communication to this Committee. In that same letter, Mr. Kozachik alleges that portions of the narrative, which come from me, the victim, are somehow false and his is "somehow" the correct one. Mr. Kozachik's¹ communications are not only a libelous betrayal of me and the actual story, but his unusually odd positioning of revictimizing the victim with his June 6 correspondence, as will be explained below, is unfortunate but not historically beyond reproach for his indulging in crafting creative narratives of sorts historically against various Tucsonans and now me. I must admit, his implying I lack candor or worse, calling me a liar; his alleging that I do not know the facts of my story, and his never reaching out to me before releasing this communication also opens his historic character for review and appreciation of his measured candor before others and this honorable Committee? And when I provide these issues of concern, watch how Mr. Kozachik will now allege he is the victim when he knowingly presents false, misleading, inaccurate, and distorted information to this Board about the Snuggles incident and me.

I am encouraged that this Board will impress upon Mr. Kozachik that it is highly inappropriate to mislead the committee and misrepresent the facts of the victim, and strongly encourage him to not only retract his knowingly misleading narrative but to issue an apology to this Committee for the creative narrative and character disparaging of this victim of the incident, and the false allegations against Snuggles and me.

Before I respond to the very misleading creative conjectural narrative points proposed by Mr. Kozachik [as factual] June 6, 2026 communication, which I strongly dispute with my actual "person in the know," fact pattern, I encourage each of you to research the Anatolian Shepard and its amazing temperament independently. There is no dispute that it can have a bite force in excess of 620 psi; dogs, such as the Pit Bull, German Sheppard, even a coyote or a wolf, have much lower PSI's. But this is by design; none of those forenamed types of dogs can protect like Snuggles was trying to provide against wild animals such as coyotes, wolves, bears, raccoons, badgers, etc. To put this in perspective, how many Chevy S10 trucks do you see pulling tractor-trailers? It's the wrong tool for the job. So, with this perspective, it is highly appreciative that if a person was hit

¹ In an article in the Arizona Independence dated April 1, 2013, it appears Mr. Kozchik holds a double standard where he is comfortable violating City Ordinances, disrespecting fellow citizens and their property. Presenting creative conjectures as facts, because he has a government title, and at the same time wants to hold citizens to a higher standard than he has to comply with. Mr. Kozachik might imply that I am misrepresenting the facts of this disturbing incident where he was not held accountable to his conduct or acts, because I was not there when the incident transpired; thus I would not know all the facts. I would not disagree with him if that is his employed defense; I would not know the facts because I was not there. So all we can do is trust either Mr. Kozachik or the News Agency, but within that story is interesting parallels of Mr. Kozachik. Creative storytelling where only Mr. Kozachik's alleged facts matter.

by a bicycle at 10mph per hour, no big deal, but if a tractor-trailer hit a person at 10mph per hour, the outcome is devastatingly bad. The Anatolian Shepard is the diesel truck, and extra care needs to be provided when managing them. This Committee, the Pima Sheriff's Office, the Tucson Police, and other law enforcement agencies have seen terrible accidents by these trucks, but you don't ban them? However, your research is going to show you it is practically impossible to find this breed in a vicious attack incident. Mr. Kozachik falsely represents my view to you is probably why social media is so robustly supporting Snuggles and me; they see PACC and Mr. Kozachik's math is not mathing. You will find that cocker spaniels are some of the most aggressive and vicious dog-biting breeds out there, especially compared to Snuggles.

In Response to the Incident.

This victim of Mr. Kozachik does not dispute that there was a 110-pound Anatolian Shepherd, but this victim does dispute that there was an attack. The dog never attacked me. Mr. Kozachik alleges that the dog was in a tie-out, violating Pima County Code; he does not go into detail and only conjectures it as a violation, although no citations were issued to my daughter. Also, Mr. Kozachik, by presenting this new argument, is making new allegations never raised before and is only employing the unfounded allegation to support his already concerning misrepresentations of the facts of this matter. Tethering a dog for short-term purposes appears acceptable, by the plain reading of the Pima County Code. Further, because he fails to tell the entire story with meaningful accuracy objectively, why would one temporarily tether a dog, especially a livestock dog? Mr. Kozachik should have advised this Committee of that reason. Nonetheless, although the tie-down, in my personal view, was not at issue and very temporary, it unfortunately contributed to the unfortunate accident, not a vicious attack as erroneously alleged by Mr. Kozachik. At all times, prior to this event, as Mr. Kozachik is or should be fully aware of, Snuggles was **NOT** tethered.

Mr. Kozachik, who appears to have nothing less than [*sic*] intent, as he communicates a completely false narrative of what happened to this Committee, and appears to have no problem inaccurately using my name. At no time did this Victim frequently pass Snuggles and pet him on the head or provide any communication with him, and then Snuggles spontaneously attacked me; this is a false communication to this Committee by Mr. Kozachik.

What did happen and why Mr. Kozachik is so eagerly willing to provide this Committee a false narrative is highly concerning. As Mr. Kozachik was advised that there were coyotes on the property, they frequently visited the property, which was the very reason my daughter purchased the Sheppard. However, Snuggles was temporarily tied down because the female Anatolian Shepherd was in heat, and dogs have an amazing way of finding other dogs in heat, where fences, which are normally effective in constraining dogs, are not during this evolution. So Snuggles was

temporarily tied down while cleaning up after another dog, and the separation of the female dog in heat.

What I did not realize, initially, while taking out trash, which consisted of various excrement and fluids of a dog in hospice, was that the Coyotes were on or near the property. As I walked out the door, unbeknownst to Snuggles, I was going to walk to the trash receptacles to throw away these items from the hospice dog. Although I heard Snuggles initially barking, I did not think anything of it while I was walking towards the trash cans, approximately fifty 50 yards away. This is a very important fact: Snuggles did not know I left the property, as his attention was on the coyotes and another trespassing dog. However, as I was walking towards the receptacles, the barking of Snuggles and the female dog became so intense and so loud, I became nervous because I had never heard this type of intensity before. I was concerned. I threw away some of the stuff I meant to discard, and some of it, because I was trying to return to the property I still needed to discard. When I returned to the door, Snuggles was not aware I was there. He was extremely intense on wanting to engage the coyotes and/or the loose dog to remove them from the property as he had done before, but he was temporarily tethered. I was so proud of him standing guard that I reached out to pet him from behind, and without him knowing I was there. His act was instinctive, believing he was being attacked from behind. It was fast, it was substantial, and only being 5'1" at 105lbs, he easily knocked me over and down the steps. However, as soon as I called his name, he instantly cowered and retreated; I stood back up. Mr. Kozachik's failure to put these pertinent facts in his misleading summary is unfortunate.

Snuggles did not viciously attack me; he thought he was being attacked, he was protecting the property, and he instantly recoiled as soon as he heard my voice. I fell back, and he could have, under Mr. Kozachik's theory, continued to attack me; he did not, and once he knew who I was, I was no longer at risk of him while standing there before my daughter could offer assistance. The dog did not viciously attack me, and it is very offensive for Mr. Kozachik to once again, willfully, voluntarily, and intentionally misrepresent the facts to this Committee about me. Still, it's not the first time we have seen him conduct himself this way. Mr. Koachik, besides misleading this committee, is factually inaccurate [again] when he alleges that while I was on the ground, Snuggles continued to attack me; it was the complete opposite. He immediately cowered and recoiled as soon as he heard my voice. Can the committee please ask Mr. Kozachik why he is willfully misrepresenting the facts, and can the Committee provide me an opportunity to quantify the facts and stop Mr. Kozachik from victimizing me by alleging I made these false statements he communicated to this Committee when I did not?

Response to Injuries.

If there is an appreciation for the strength of this Mastiff and it rightfully believing I was actually attacking it, we can fully appreciate why the dog was in fight or flight mode while tethered. The injuries were not significant, but I can admit that it is my perspective. My groin area was not affected as erroneously alleged; there was a head, arm, and leg injury. There is no disputing it, but it was all defensive, in my view, by Snuggles, not a vicious offensive attack, I cannot repeat enough (obvious from Mr. Kozachik's misleading representations), that Snuggles did not viciously attack me, he immediately thought he was being attacked, and as soon as he heard my voice he cowered and recoiled long before my daughter could offer assistance. As a matter of fact, while my daughter was helping, he had access to each of us and did nothing, even while she rearranged his containment situation. It was a mistake caused by me; it sadly was friendly fire.

The perspective on injuries is what they are. I was released from the hospital the next day², and the doctors did such an amazing job that I did not even need post-op painkillers for the various sutures.

Response to Victim Statement.

This is the part that is concerning to me; there is substantial and meaningful information missing, and the PACC officer was really misleading in his Reporting of his design questioning of me. I did not know, until later, of his ulterior motive and misrepresentations, just like Mr. Kozachik's letter to this Committee. The time I was questioned, I was under the influence of sedatives, and the PACC officer arrived without calling me first, and his visits were unannounced. However, why Mr. Kozachik or his staff alleged that I would not return to the daughter's house, or that I was worried about the safety of the kids, is not true at all. Snuggles highly protects the kids. He is an amazing protector. Please read about these very docile, but protective dogs; they are amazing.

I have not only immediately returned to the house like I routinely have before, but I have also been actively involved in communicating the truth, the truth, that Mr. Kozachik is advising this Committee to ignore and then infusing his very misleading narrative. I will return to this house just as frequently as before, once we realize that Snuggles is a victim of this process and gets to return home. He is not vicious.

Mr. Kozachik has an established history of doing this type of behavior, and for him to victimize me like this is inexcusable, and I will challenge it and ask this Committee to address it.

² It is alleged I would have actually left the hospital sooner, but because there was a head injury, it needed to be cleared by a doctor who was not available, thus, as a safety measure and until the doctor was available, I stayed the night.

We can have a difference of opinion, but to actively mislead this board and condescendingly accuse everyone else of lying is inappropriate and needs to be addressed.

It is saddening to see Mr. Kozachik engage in this type of hyperbole and use my name, my incident, my story for his [*sic*] agenda. His behavior has been observed many years ago, and now, nothing has changed, and I am currently enduring his malicious victimization of me and my story. This is not right; his conduct is not appropriate.

Response to Legal Process and Summary.

Because this case is under a legal process, and primarily because of this false narrative being pushed by PACC under the leadership of Mr. Kozachik, I will not provide my personal opinion on it. However, if we all really wanted clean hands on this subject, rather than this government's bravado of creating a false story, this entire situation could have easily been resolved without any legal action, and Snuggles could be back in my daughter's care, where I would easily visit her house.

There is no doubt that there were mistakes that occurred on this day. Those mistakes were not Snuggles' doing; his reaction to the mistakes, as unfortunate as they were, all things factually considered, was not a vicious attack but friendly fire based on a naive misstep by me, and upon reflection, never putting a Sheppard on a tether. At the same time, he construes the property and people he is obligated to protect as constrained. He was doing his best under the circumstances.

I normally do not find it appropriate to address a person as aggressively as I have, Mr. Kozachik. Still, I am literally victimized every day by having to explain to everyone based exclusively on his very active discrimination of false information about the actual facts, which he still denies before this Committee. I am his victim, and he has done this to people before, as evidenced by the new Report. I am not sure why Mr. Kozachik is comfortable presenting false narratives about me and what he alleges I said to you and others, but it must stop. His history has to surface to understand that this inappropriate behavior of Mr. Kozachik is routine behavior. But I am not going to allow him to victimize me without standing up for myself and the truth. I will use his history to show he has engaged in this type of misleading behavior before, and he needs to stop doing this to me.

Snuggles did not viciously attack me. The Dog, while in its intense mode and constrained, believing the property it was protecting was being violated, thought for a moment it was being attacked from behind by me. That same dog, once he knew who I was, instantly cowered and recoiled as soon as I yelled his name. He could have still attacked me for a period of time before my daughter assisted me, and did not. This dog was doing nothing beyond his designed breed goals. He is not vicious. For Mr. Kozachik to tell you that the victim is lying and now 'somehow' he knows the facts better than me is so unexplainable and shocking. The incident is unfortunate,

and it is a lesson to me. Still, the price that my daughter and her family and Snuggles have to pay because of PACC and Mr. Kozachik's false narrative is incredibly unfortunate. I hope this Committee could lead by positive example rather than what Mr. Kozachik is presenting.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any additional questions or are interested in any other facts that were omitted by Mr. Kozachik's communication.

Sincerely,

Clara Garcia Gastelum

Cc: The Honorable Chair and Members – Pima County Board of Supervisors
Jan Leshar – County Administrator
Carmine Debonis – Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes – Deputy County Administrator
Chad Kasmar – Deputy County Administrator
Steve Kozachik – Director – Pima Animal Care Center