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## Artest's Great Dane released to lawyer

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Socks, the Great Dane that was seized from Sacramento Kings star Ron Artest last month, has been released into the custody of his attorney under a foster-care agreement signed Thursday.

"(The lawyer) is essentially providing care on behalf of the county," said Placer County spokeswoman Anita Yoder.

Although the dog still technically belongs to Artest, his attorney -- identified in the agreement as Shannon V. Baker, a Sacramento criminal defense attorney -- is not allowed to return Socks to Artest until charges that he underfed the dog have been resolved, Yoder said.

According to the agreement, Baker must "arrange for the placement and care of the animal to ensure that it receives proper training, socialization and health care."

The accord stipulates that all costs of caring for the dog will be borne by Baker or the foster parent she finds.

Conditions of the agreement also allow the county to reclaim custody of the dog at any time.

Animal services officers confiscated Socks from Artest's Loomis home after determining he had failed to "provide proper sustenance" for the dog, which the law requires of pet caretakers.

The officers have completed their investigation into the matter and forwarded it to the District Attorney's Office, which will determine whether to prosecute Artest, Yoder said.

-- Kim Minugh

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