

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE April 11, 2014

TO Honorable Members of the Quality of Life & Environment Committee: Dwaine R. Caraway (Chair)
Sandy Greyson (Vice Chair), Adam Medrano, Rick Callahan, Carolyn R. Davis, Lee M. Kleinman

SUBJECT Proposed Amendments to Chapter 7, "Animals," of the Dallas City Code

On Monday, April 14, 2014, the Quality of Life & Environment Committee will be briefed on proposed amendments to Chapter 7, "Animals", of the Dallas City Code.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charles M. Cato'.

Charles M. Cato
Interim Assistant City Manager

Attachment

c: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
A.C. Gonzalez, City Manager
Warren M.S. Ernst, City Attorney
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor
Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary
Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge
Ryan S. Evans, Interim First Assistant City Manager

Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Theresa O'Donnell, Interim Assistant City Manager
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer
Shawn Williams, Interim Public Information Officer
Elsa Cantu, Assistant to the City Manager – Mayor & Council

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 7, "Animals," of the Dallas City Code



City of Dallas

Dallas Code Compliance, what it all means
COMMUNITY



Presented to
Quality of Life & Environment
Committee
April 14, 2014



Purpose and Outline

- To recommend enhancements to Chapter 7, "Animals, of the Dallas City Code that support effective operations and enforcement in the following areas:
 - Civil citations
 - Veterinary Practice Act
 - Adoption fee discounts
 - Animal Shelter Commission appointments
 - Animal Registration Requirements
 - Dangerous dog appeals

Civil Citations

- Challenges of current practice
 - Officer must witness incident to issue **criminal** citation at that time
 - Violator must be present & provide ID
 - Multiple visits result in inefficient use of resources and perception of officers not responding
 - Officer down time at court for each citation issued

Civil Citations

- Benefits of issuing civil citations
 - 83rd Legislature adopted House Bill 1509 to allow civil citations to be issued for animal violations
 - Supported by City Council Legislative agenda, Animal Shelter Commission, and Texas Humane Legislative Network
 - Once violation witnessed by an official, the civil citation may be mailed or posted to the property
 - Violator does not have to be present for citation to be issued
 - No repeat visits needed
 - Becomes violators responsibility to prove compliance
 - Minimized Officer time in court = more Officers in field

Animal Welfare Fund

- State law Chapter 54 of the Local Government Code allows for creation of an Animal Welfare Fund to provide resources for citizens to come into compliance with the Chapter 7 violations
 - Repair and build yard fences, dog houses, spay/neuter and vaccinations
- Funded through the administrative fee from civil citations issued for Chapter 7 violations
 - \$25K expected annually

Veterinary Practice Act

- Current Practice
 - Animals entering DAS receive vaccines and basic treatments by a team of dedicated vet technicians supervised by veterinarians
 - 5 Vet Techs
 - 2 Veterinarians
 - 1 Supervisor
 - Veterinarians treat the shelter population as a group

Veterinary Practice Act

- A recent regulatory change by the State board that regulates veterinary practices removed dogs/cats from definition of herd animals
 - Unintended consequence is that veterinarians must examine all dogs/cats individually, vs. allowing vet technicians to provide this function
 - An additional 4 fulltime veterinarians and 4 part time would need to be hired

Veterinary Practice Act

- State Vet Board has offered recommendations for amending local ordinances to offset impact of the regulatory changes:
 - To enable technicians to continue providing these services and continue meeting standards in vet care in shelter populations
 - Provides affordable solutions for large care facilities
 - No additional cost to City from current practice

Adoption Fee Discounts

- 2011 – The Animal Shelter Commission recommends the City align with the national practices to reduce the number of animals euthanized
- City Council amends the Code to allow for 6 “specials” annually and reduced rates for seniors and 2 for 1 specials

Adoption Fee Discount



- The Animal Shelter Commission recommends changes to the City Code to allow the Director the authority to permit specials as needed
 - Original amendment resulted in 2,300 more animals being placed
 - Increased placements = increased revenue, and registered healthy pets in our community
 - Ensures as many animals as possible are finding homes and helps save lives!

Animal Shelter Commission

- State Code
 - Requires an individual working in the day to day operations of an animal shelter be on the Animal Shelter Commission
- City Code
 - Additionally requires that the animal shelter representative not be affiliated with the City's animal services to serve on the Commission
 - Requires the individual to live in the City

Animal Shelter Commission

- Proposed Changes
 - The Animal Shelter Commission recommends the amendment of the City Code to match the State
 - Align Dallas with surrounding localities and provide the opportunity to use City shelter managers/directors to fill this mandated role
 - Provides the ability to meet the required appointments of the Commission

Annual Registration

- Current Requirements
 - Annual pet registration required
 - \$7 for a spayed or neutered dog or cat
 - \$30 for unspayed or unneutered dog or cat
 - No fee required for:
 - Service animal
 - Animal residing with a person over 65 years of age
 - \$423K projected revenue in FY 14 with goal of 59,604 pets registered

Annual Registration

- Proposed Changes to City Code
 - 3-year registration required (after 1st year)
 - Reduced administrative costs
 - Aligns with industry best practices
 - Recommended effective: January 1, 2015
 - Move to annual renewal is proven to enhance compliance
 - Coincides with 3-year rabies vaccination requirement
 - Results in increased compliance
 - No impact to existing revenue or fee structure

Dangerous Dog Appeals

- Current Practice
 - Complaints are filed and investigated through Code Compliance
 - An administrative review hearing is held by the Department for the animal owner and complainant to present the evidence and a decision is made by Code Compliance
 - Appeals to municipal court are a review of the administrative hearing, not a new trial (de novo)

Dangerous Dog Appeals

- Proposed Change
 - Animal Shelter Commission requested a change to mirror state ordinance
 - Bring existing City Code in line with the State Codes
 - Investigation and determination to be made by the animal control authority (Director of Code Compliance)
 - Expedites case processing and results
 - Appeals to municipal court are heard as new trial (de novo)

Next Steps

- Request the Quality of Life & Environment Committee's input and support for proposed changes
- Prepare ordinance for City Council consideration