



REPORT TO PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMISSION

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Public Safety Advisory Commission

From: Nicole Dailey, Assistant to the City Manager

Date: November 20, 2018

Subject: Discuss and Review Existing Municipal Codes Related to Animals

Recommendation

Discuss and recommend proposed amendments to Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Title 6 regarding Animals including adding Chapter 6.06 regarding mandatory spay, neuter and microchip and amending Chapter 6.04 to remove cat licensing requirements.

Background

The City of Lake Elsinore has contracted with Animal Friends of the Valley (AFV) to provide a full range of animal control services to safeguard the health and safety of the citizens of the City and its domestic animals for nearly 30 years. These services include field services, after-hours emergency response, humane treatment of animals, public education, and enforcement of animal control municipal codes.

The City has agreements with AFV for animal control sheltering and field services, which are governed by separate agreements. The City's animal sheltering services are covered by an agreement with the Southwest Communities Financing Authority (SCFA) administered by Riverside County on behalf of the City and our neighboring cities.

This fiscal year, the City budgeted \$655,410 for animal control field and shelter services. Part of the City's annual fiscal year costs related to sheltering services are based on the percentage of animals taken into the shelter for our City. Each year, the City of Lake Elsinore has amongst the highest percentage of cats and dogs going into the shelter in the region. Last year, the City was responsible for more than 24% of the total animal population brought into our local animal shelter, which was by far the highest for the six areas covered by AFV in Southwest Riverside County. For context, the second highest percentage was in the unincorporated County areas, which was responsible for 20.5% of all animals brought in.

Discussion

As the Southwest Riverside County region has grown, so have the demands and costs for animal control and sheltering services. At the urging of AFV, the SCFA Board has agreed that

Mandatory Spay, Neuter and Microchip

steps must be taken now to create long-term changes that will positively impact pet overpopulation and save more animal lives.

Therefore, AFV and the SCFA is asking that Southwest Riverside County cities to adopt mandatory spay, neuter and microchipping provisions within their municipal codes to reduce the number of stray animals, reduce animal populations within shelters, and, ultimately, reunite more sheltered animals with their owners.

Last calendar year, the SCFA sheltered 744 dogs and 481 cats from Lake Elsinore alone. Of these, only 48.5 percent of the dogs and only 3.95 percent of the cats were reunited with their owners. To date, Riverside County and the cities of Riverside and Menifee have adopted these provisions.

In addition, staff is encouraging the consideration to remove requirements for cat licensing in Lake Elsinore. Currently, the City is the only entity in Southwest Riverside County that requires cat licensing. Originally, the policy of mandatory cat licensing was adopted in an attempt to address and reduce the cat population. Each year, the City and shelter struggle to address an increasing number of feral and stray cats in our community. Therefore, upon evaluation, this provision has proven to be ineffective and difficult to enforce.

Rather, staff believes mandatory microchipping will greatly improve AFV's ability to reunite cats and dogs with their owners, eliminating the need for mandatory cat licensing. In the City of Lake Elsinore, residents have shown an increased interest in microchipping their pet. In 2017, more than 25% of all microchip implants conducted by AFV were in the City.

Upon close review of Title 6 of the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code (LEMC) regarding Animals, it is clear many sections may be in need of review by AFV and City staff regarding applicability. However, at this time, staff would like to ask the Commission to review the existing municipal codes and the proposed chapter regarding mandatory spay, neuter and microchip. Specifically, staff seeks recommended changes and considerations related to these provisions including the removal of mandatory cat licensing.

Upon recommendations by the Commission, staff will work closely with AFV and the City Attorney to streamline our existing municipal codes prior to taking them forward as an ordinance to the City Council. This includes developing an appropriate fee schedule related to these new provisions to be adopted by resolution by the City Council at a later date.

Fiscal Impact

None at this time. However, additional revenues related to these new provisions are expected to offset related costs to enforce and implement these new programs.

Exhibits

- A – LEMC Chapter 6.04 Redlined to Remove Cat Licensing
- B – LEMC Chapter 6.06 Mandatory Spay, Neuter and Microchip (Proposed)