

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: D. Kay Johnson, Director Environmental Services

COPIES: Scott Moore, Interim City Manager
Karen Sublette, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to Chapter 6.04 Animal Control and Protection

DATE: January 22, 2009

The Environmental Services Department (ES) has been preparing revisions to the City's Animal Code Chapters 6.04 Animal Control and Protection for some time. Council last approved revisions to the ordinances in December 2007. The ordinances were revised to increase community safety and pet owner responsibility. Wichita has been experiencing a growing number of unwanted dogs, dog bites, dogs running at large (RAL), and increasing pit bull issues including severe attacks on children and adults. After adopting the revisions, the Council directed ES to track dog and pit bull statistics for 2008 and to provide these results in a workshop format. As requested, the Animal Statistical Report for 2008 is attached and the Council Workshop is scheduled for January 27, 2009 to review and provide further recommendations.

During 2008, additional issues were raised by the Council members and the community including:

- Complaints regarding the City's annual rabies vaccination requirement with requests to revise the ordinance to allow multi-year vaccinations;
- Complaints regarding animal nuisance situations including those identified during the public portion of a 2008 City Council meeting;
- Animal maintenance complaints including keeping horses and other livestock animals in the city; and
- Complaints about conditions at pet grooming facilities (pet groomers are unregulated).

Additionally, the Law Department has further reviewed the 2007 revised ordinances and recommends code modifications to improve clarity and enforcement. ES and Legal staff also recommend combining all of the city's domestic animal codes into a single chapter (6.04) to ease code administration. Currently, codes for keeping animals including animal maintenance permits are in Chapter 6.12 Keeping of Animals, and codes for regulating the control of cats are in Chapter 6.16 Cats.

Staff will seek guidance during the workshop regarding some of the recommended ordinance changes. Other recommendations will be provided in draft form for Council and District Advisory Board members to review and consider. Stakeholder meetings will also be held for discussion and the documents will be posted on the City's website to obtain public comments prior to presenting a revised ordinance recommendation for Council's final consideration and vote.

The following information provides a brief summary of information and current efforts to develop 2009 revisions to animal ordinances:

- ES has taken 2008 statistics into consideration for added recommendations on the control and management of pit bulls. While the number of total dog related issues somewhat decreased in 2008, pit bull dogs continue to occupy twenty-five to thirty percent of Animal Service's time and resources aimed at controlling dogs in Wichita. No other dog type consumes such efforts and resources. The Wichita Police Department also encounters pit bull dogs in a disproportionate manner as 95% of all dogs WPD encountered in 2008 were pit bull dogs.
- To date, staff has gathered valuable input regarding rabies vaccination schedules. This summer, ES convened an ad-hoc committee that consisted of area veterinarians, local public health officials, and other experts in animal control and care. ES also partnered with Wichita State University's psychology department to conduct an electronically administered survey to gather additional information from as many local practicing veterinarians as possible. The survey was developed to address concerns of some veterinarians serving on the ad-hoc committee. Stakeholder comments have also been taken into consideration for developing a revision to the city's required rabies vaccination schedule. Survey results have been informally transmitted to ES. A WSU doctoral student is currently finalizing a formal report on the survey results that will be made public upon completion and receipt.
- Citizen complaints and other input have triggered recommending additional codes for dealing with animal nuisances and changes to animal maintenance requirements, including horses.

Reviews by the Law Department and ES enforcement experience in 2008 have been taken into consideration for recommending modification and addition to a number of animal ordinances. ES staff and the Law Department are currently working on a draft ordinance and are nearing completion.

Council will also be briefed on two additional issues which will require action in the near future, a new ordinance for dog parks and an operating agreement with the Kansas Humane Society (KHS). ES will also provide a short overview of a new pet animal adoption program called "New Beginnings" (partnering with the Wichita Fire Department and Kansas Humane Society) and will update the Council on the construction and planned openings of the new Wichita Animal Shelter and KHS Shelter, both being built at the Murfin Animal Care Campus.

Attachment:

1. ES Animal Services 2008 Annual Dog Statistics Report
2. Wichita Pit Bull Dogs in 2008

1900 E. Ninth Street – Wichita, Kansas 67214
Telephone (316) 268-8351 – Fax (316) 268-8390
www.wichitagov.org

Protecting People, Preserving the Environment