

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

May 3, 2016

Page 1 of 1

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF ANIMAL ORDINANCES**

The purpose of this Informal Report is to inform City Council of upcoming public meetings to review and update animal ordinances and policies. Much like the Comprehensive Plan and other planning processes, Code Compliance periodically reviews animal ordinances and policies for current applicability, congruency with State Statutes and opportunities to improve voluntary compliance, alternative dispute resolution and other similar benefits.

The meetings will seek input on proposed staff changes and input on other topics raised by the community. Current staff items include:

- *Should the City allow a microchip in lieu of a displayed license tag to comply with City licensing requirements?*
 - Other cities have recently approved ordinances requiring pet microchips, discontinuing pet licensing, or replacing license tags with microchip requirements.
- *Should the City amend its current Dangerous Dog and Dangerous Animal Ordinances? Should the Dangerous Dog ordinance include animal to animal attacks??*
 - Under current State law, only dogs which attack or harm humans are subject to the Dangerous Dog declaration while dogs that attack other animals are handled through the civil courts.
- *Should the City allow home quarantine of dogs that attack other animals or dogs that attack humans resulting in minor injury or no injury and with no probable cause to suspect exposure to rabies?*
 - The current City ordinance requires the seizure and impoundment of all dogs where the City Attorney decides to file a Dangerous Dog complaint in Municipal Court.
- *Should the City include additional offenses for deferred prosecution under the Department's Educate the Offender Program, e.g., first time offenders can have the citation dismissed if they attend a class?*
 - In January 2001, City Council approved an Educate the Offender Program to allow certain offenders to have citations dismissed after completion of a Responsible Pet Ownership Class.
- *Should the City allow the release of a pet to an owner and waive reclaim fees when an owner pleads no-contest and agrees to community service?*
- *Should small, non-public nuisance wildlife on private property be abated by property owners utilizing private contractors instead of using animal control officers?*

Meetings will be widely published on the web, social media, neighborhood blogs and in the news media. The initial meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2016 at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. Additional public meetings will be scheduled based on the level of public input/research and discussion. Recommendations will be brought back to City Council at a future Pre-Council meeting.

David Cooke
City Manager