



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

First Reading for the City Council Meeting of May 18, 2021
Second Reading for the City Council Meeting of May 25, 2021

DATE: April 27, 2021
TO: Peter Zanoni, City Manager
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Ordinance amending Chapter 6 of the Code of Ordinances Governing Care and Treatment of Animals

CAPTION:

One-reading Ordinance amending Chapter 6 of the Code of Ordinances regarding Animal Care and Control by adding and clarifying definitions, creating and revising sections including microchipping registration, failure to reclaim pets, impoundment of abandoned or unrestrained animals, dangerous and aggressive dogs, adequate sheltering of canines, and the feeding of animals; providing for severance, publication, and establishing an effective date of the new laws.

SUMMARY:

The Chapter 6 Ordinances were adopted on March 25th, 1981 and have not had a complete revision since December 14, 2014. The revisions were presented to and approved by the Corpus Christi Animal Care Services (CCACS) Advisory Board on January 20, 2021. Additional consultation and approvals were conducted with the Corpus Christi City Attorney's Office and Corpus Christi Police Department.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

This revision provides an update in the current Code of Ordinances regarding animal care in the City of Corpus Christi. Additions, updates, and changes are being proposed in order to bring the ordinances up to current animal welfare standards and practices which will allow the City to continue to provide essential services through its animal control program. Revision to Ordinances will take effect on May 18, 2021.

Highlights of the revised ordinances include:

- Define "impound" which means:
 - a. the taking of an animal into custody for purposes of transporting the animal to the city's animal care services facility.
 - b. an officer in pursuit of an animal, and in lieu of taking custody of the animal, elects to return the animal to its owner with proper written notices, warnings and admonishments.

This definition supports an update to Section 6-103 which states “Any animal found at large must be spayed/neutered within 30 days unless the animal was free of restraint due to a vis major. Is not to be misconstrued that a spayed/neutered animal can be at large, excluding cats.”

- Define “reclaim” which means to retrieve or recover an animal from the City’s animal shelter after quarantine or impound.
- New Section 6-162 of the City Code: Failure to reclaim impounded animal allows the Animal Care Services (ACS) Department the ability to issue a citation to a person/owner who knowingly fails to reclaim an impounded animal from ACS after being notified their animal is at the facility.
- Define “shelter” which means a structure that has three sides, a roof, and floor. This definition outlines the requirements of what is considered shelter in the City of Corpus Christi.
- Define “abandoned animal” which shall mean an animal left without care by the owner and or keeper without making reasonable arrangements for assumption of custody by another person.
- New Section 6-164 Impounding Abandoned, or Unrestrained Animals: Allows ACS the ability, after investigation, to declare an animal abandoned, and impound said animal in lieu of pulling an Animal Cruelty warrant which could result in longer hold time for that animal at ACS.
- Define “microchip” which shall act as a City license indefinitely. The microchip will be required to register a pet with ACS.
- New Section 6-28 Microchip as Required: Transitioning from a “metal tag” as the city license that requires a yearly registration to an implanted microchip that will have a lifetime registration. This will help support the vision of ensuring that animals found in the field or brought to the ACS campus have a higher chance of being returned to their owner.
- New Section 6-29 Maintaining Current Registration Information: Requires the owners of animal(s) to keep updated information with microchip company and ACS will include a requirement to transfer the ownership of a pet if the pet is rehomed.
- Update to Section 6-32 Dangerous Dogs: Updated to current city ordinance pertaining to Dangerous Dogs which provides clear understanding of the Dangerous Dog process and requirements of owning a deemed Dangerous Dog by ACS in the City.
- New Section 6-39 Aggressive Dogs: This is a new section that will replace Section 6-163 Vicious Dogs which was unenforceable. This section deals directly with Animal to Animal attacks either where a domesticated animal was injured or killed by an owned dog. This section will enhance the enforcement of ACS to hold owners accountable for their dog’s actions. Section does allow the declassification of a deemed Aggressive dog after the owner has complied for either one or two years without incident.
- Update to existing Sections 6-51 – 6-58 Commercial Permits: The updates to this section now require permitted establishments to have an evacuation plan, medical records, and guarantee of good health for two weeks after date of sale. Additionally, failure to provide records to ACS upon request results in the immediate revocation of permit for two years. Updates also include outlines for appropriate methods and size of housing for animals. Permit can be revoked if animals are being neglected and failure to comply and/or operate without a permit will result in animals deemed prohibited and seized.

- New Section 6-161 Adequate Shelter of Canines: This new section states that no animal is to be restrained outside without shelter. Shelter must have room for animal to move comfortably, be structurally sound and well ventilated, sanitary, keeps animal dry and clean, kept in shade or provide shade by means of tarp. Area around shelter must be clean and free of debris. If temperature falls below 50 degrees, bedding must be placed within the shelter. No animal may be outdoors for any period of time without access to shelter if the temperature is below 32 degrees or a heat advisory has been issued by a local or state authority.
- New Section 6-163 Feeding of Animals: This section prohibits citizens from feeding any animal on private or public property and creates a public nuisance. This section will now allow ACS to take enforcement action for people causing a public nuisance by feeding for example:
 - a. Raccoons
 - b. Seagulls
 - c. Stray animals
 - d. Excessive amounts of cats or dogs.

These ordinance revisions will help ensure that the City of Corpus Christi has effective codes in place pertaining to animal care. The long-term goal of this revision is to be in line with the growth and progressive vision of City Government Leadership.

ALTERNATIVES:

Reject the proposed revisions and follow the current ordinances in place.

FISCAL IMPACT:

ACS projects a fall in revenue for the issuance of City License. The offset is that with more animals microchipped, ACS will have a better chance of returning those animals to their owners without having to bring them to our campus. We project that this will have a reduction in costs associated with housing animals.

Funding of the microchips is through a contract with AKC Reunite, which is a microchip company, for a five-year term. The fiscal impact for FY 2021 is an amount of \$38,900. The total estimated cost over the five-year period is \$194,500. The remaining cost will be budgeted through the annual budget process.

FUNDING DETAIL:

Not applicable. ACS is planning on having free microchip drives monthly (following COVID-19 safety precautions) to help citizens come into compliance with the transition to the microchip as the city license.

RECOMMENDATION:

ACS staff and the ACS Advisory board support these revisions to our Chapter 6 Ordinances

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

1. Clean version of Chapter 6 Revisions
2. Redline version of the Chapter 6 Revision
3. Chapter 6 Highlights document
4. City Council PowerPoint presentation.