



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 24, 2010

TO: Council Ordinance Committee

FROM: City Attorney's Office

SUBJECT: Discussion Of Animal Licensing Ordinance Amendment To Include Consultation With Veterinarian Prior To Ownership Of An Unaltered Animal

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Ordinance Committee review a draft City ordinance to amend Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 6.12 to require proof of a veterinarian consultation prior to the issuance of a City license for a non-spayed or non-neutered dog and establish similar licensing requirements for cats and, if appropriate, refer the proposed ordinance to the City Council for possible introduction and adoption.

DISCUSSION:

In January 2010, Santa Barbara County adopted a County-wide ordinance recommending the spay or neuter of all dogs and cats prior to licensing. The County ordinance further mandates that, prior to an owner retaining an unaltered animal, the owner must consult with a veterinarian to consider the overall circumstances of the animal and the owner, and the appropriateness of the animal remaining unaltered. Shortly after the adoption of this County program, Councilmembers House and White asked that this subject be placed on an agenda of the City Council for possible reference to City staff and the Council Ordinance Committee for their consideration and the drafting of a City ordinance similar to the County's. Following discussion and public comment, on March 2, 2010, the City Council referred this matter to the Ordinance Committee.

As discussed with the Ordinance Committee on June 29, 2010, there are currently no requirements in the City of Santa Barbara to license cats. In addition, while the City provides for a lower annual license fee for spayed or neutered dogs as a way to encourage owners to have a dog spayed or neutered, there is currently no Municipal Code requirement that dogs be altered or mandating consultation between a dog owner and the owner's veterinarian.

Council Agenda Report
Discussion Of Animal Licensing Ordinance Amendment To Include Consultation With
Veterinarian Prior To Ownership Of An Unaltered Animal
August 24, 2010
Page 2

Since the Municipal Code does not currently require a license in order to own a cat, the Municipal Code would also need to be amended to add this requirement for all cats and to also mandate consultation between a cat owner and a veterinarian if the owner chooses to keep the cat unaltered.

At the conclusion of the June 29th meeting, the Ordinance Committee asked staff to return with a proposed draft ordinance which required a City-issued license for the ownership of a cat and which provided for consultation between a pet owner and a veterinarian whenever the owner chooses to have an unaltered dog or cat.

As requested by the Committee on June 29th, the attached draft ordinance would require an annual City license for the ownership of a cat within the City and it mandates that, before an unaltered dog or cat may be licensed by the City as required, the owner of such a pet must consult with a licensed veterinarian on the options available for altering a pet and concerning the problems sometimes caused by unaltered pets. On hand for questions will be staff from the Police Department who supervise the City's Animal Control Operations as well as staff from City Attorney's Office responsible for preparing the draft ordinance.

ATTACHMENT: Draft Ordinance

PREPARED BY: City Attorney's Office

SUBMITTED BY: City Attorney's Office

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office