

# Proposed Changes To Chatham County Animal Services Ordinance

PUBLIC MEETING JANUARY 7, 2020

---

COMMISSIONERS MEETING JANUARY 17, 2020



# Proposed Changes Summary

---

1. Age requirement for rabies decreased from 6 months to 14 weeks
2. Reinstate local code to address animal neglect and cruelty
3. Change requirements for found animals
4. Limit on number of owned dogs
5. Removal of ordinance addressing Service Dogs/ESAs
6. Removal of cat feeding restrictions



# Change age requirement for Rabies Vaccination from 6 months to 14 weeks

---

## Recent Experiences with Rabies Quarantine requirements

### Current ordinance requires vaccine by 6 months of age

- Vaccine approved for use in dogs and cats at 12 weeks of age
- Waiting until six months could risk rabies exposure
- Unvaccinated animals exposed to rabies risk euthanasia or 4 month quarantine



### Vaccinating at 14 weeks

Protects younger animals

Allows for splitting vaccines in cases where veterinarian worried about reactions





# Reinstate animal neglect and cruelty as local code violation

---

## **Currently using State code to charge for violation**

- Requires local police officers to make arrests
- Cases heard in state court
- Process can be lengthy resulting in long stays for the animals in the shelter

## **Local code for neglect and cruelty**

- Allows Animal Service Officers to cite without police involvement
- Judicial process quicker in most case
- Still allows for citing using state charges if necessary



# Requirements for Found Animals

---

## Currently all found animals are required to be brought to Animal Services

- Animal Services serves a clearinghouse for lost animals
- On average, 4500 animals are taken in by shelter each year
- Dogs are required to stay 5 days (cats, 3) before they become property of County
- This creates situation where animals may be euthanized if not able to be adopted or transferred



## Many animals are still not brought to shelter when found.

Change would require citizens that find animal to file a lost pet report but not necessarily bring animal to shelter

This would decrease intake numbers.

Decrease potential for euthanasia due to lack of capacity for care.

**LOST CAT**



**Reward**  
From Cal. 51520125



# Limitation on Owned Dogs

---

**Citizens will be limited to no more than 10 dogs if they live on less than one (1) acre of land.**

This provides a guideline but the neglect and cruelty ordinance give officers ability to assess each situation and make judgements on an individual to care for their animals properly regardless of number.





# Removal of Service Animals/ESAs from Ordinance

---

Current Ordinance establishes requirements for Service animals.

This is addressed by Federal government and the County can not regulate these animals.



# Removal of Cat Feeding Restrictions

---

Cat Intake by year: 2018 – 2,636      2019 – 2,407



Current ordinances with relation to cats have done little to change feral cat population.

Feeding bans increase complaints because the cats roam more looking for food.

They are difficult and expensive to enforce.

By “decriminalizing” cats, it would open up the opportunity for different groups to help manage this population.

Nuisance ordinance still in place to manage problems and cite for issues that affect human health.



# Next Steps

---

Chatham County Board of Commissioners will consider adoption of the proposed Ordinance Changes on January 17, 2020 at their regular Commission meeting

Questions can be addressed to Chatham County Animal Services

(912) 201-4390

[cjharper@chathamcounty.org](mailto:cjharper@chathamcounty.org)

[ilewis01@chathamcounty.org](mailto:ilewis01@chathamcounty.org)

