

Proposed Changes to Animal Ordinance

Sept 23, 2022

Field Services--Officers

- ◆ Enforce current county ordinances in unincorporated Chatham County and those municipalities that have adopted current ordinance
- ◆ Assist authorities on Hunter Army Air Force Base through an agreement with US Government
- ◆ Respond to animal calls in other municipalities to educate animal owners but without citation ability

Major Ordinance Changes

- ◆ Dogs must have 100 square feet of space to be kept outside
- ◆ Details added to the tethering restriction
- ◆ Remove restriction on invisible fences
- ◆ Decreases the times a dog is impounded before must be spayed/neutered from 3 to 2
- ◆ Animal Services officers duties clarified with respect to enforcement and impounding animals
- ◆ Temperature restriction on dogs being left in automobiles
- ◆ Set up appeal system to manage potentially dangerous dogs
- ◆ Stray hold for cats increased to 5 days
- ◆ Adequate veterinary care is defined

Dogs must have 100 square ft of space to be kept outside

- ◆ Officers respond often to calls where dogs are kept in small kennels outside
- ◆ Currently officers can cite for inhumane treatment
- ◆ This change helps to educate the public and allow better enforcement

More specifics on Tethering Ban

- ◆ Current ordinance bans single point tethering
- ◆ This change still bans single point tethering.
- ◆ Adds specific requirements for the use of a trolley system
- ◆ Educates the public and helps with enforcement

Removal of restriction on invisible fences

- ◆ Current ordinance does not allow invisible fences as a form of containment
- ◆ By ordinance, a dog is considered at large if its not under the owner's control and off its property.
- ◆ Prevention of dangerous dog ordinance allows for officers to address issues with dogs that may run through invisible fences

Mandatory spay/neuter of dogs if impounded two times

- ◆ Current ordinance specifies that dogs impounded a third time must be spay/neutered before being released. With every impound, owners are encouraged to have dogs altered.
- ◆ Most dogs (over 70%) that are impounded are intact. Intact animals are more likely to roam and the likelihood that they may breed with other roaming dogs is high.
- ◆ Requiring dog to be altered before release should decrease the amount of dogs roaming and those that come into the shelter.

Clarification of ASOs Duties

- ◆ We receive calls about what happens when officers respond to various calls especially relating to the impounding of animals.
- ◆ §22-111 spells out guidelines for how/when/why ASOs impound animals
- ◆ 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.

Temperature Restriction on Animals in Cars

- ◆ Animals, particularly dogs, being left in cars is a prevalent issue in Chatham County year round
- ◆ Current ordinance allows animals to be removed if conditions warrant
- ◆ This change adds a temperature limit
- ◆ If outside temperature is over 79 degrees F, animals cannot be left unattended in a car
- ◆ This will help protect animals from potentially life threatening conditions

Appeals for Potentially Dangerous Dogs

- ◆ Chatham County uses the State code to classify dangerous dogs
- ◆ ASOs encounter many cases involving bites and near bites that may not meet conditions for classification but intervention is needed to prevent attacks
- ◆ Current ordinance allows for restrictions to be put in place to prevent further incidents
- ◆ An appeals process ensures that enforcement is fair for all parties

Changes to stray hold for cats

- ◇ Currently, stray hold is 3 days for cats
- ◇ This was established to help manage the large influx of stray cats into the shelter
- ◇ TNVR program has helped to significantly decrease cat intake
- ◇ Changing the stray for to 5 days for all animal eliminates confusion in our community
- ◇ This proposed changed also allows for animals to be diverted the shelter to help with overcrowding

Definition of “Adequate Veterinary Care”

- ◆ It is considered neglect to not properly care for an animal.
- ◆ This change adds needed detail to the definition of adequate veterinary care.
 - ◆ “Medical care under the direction of a licensed veterinarian needed to maintain the health of an animal based on age, species, and breed or to prevent an animal from suffering from ongoing infections, parasitism or other condition/injury where not providing such care would endanger the health or welfare of the animal or promote the spread of disease.”
- ◆ It helps to educate the public as well as help enforcement