

CITY OF COVINA
AGENDA ITEM COMMENTARY

MEETING DATE: September 19,2006

ITEMNO.: NB 1

STAFF SOURCE: Kim J. Raney, Chief of Police
Rachel Leo, Support Services Manager

ITEM TITLE: Consider Los Angeles County amendment to Title 10-Animals/Mandatory Spay and Neuter and Microchipping Program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Receive report from County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors regarding amendment to Title 10 – Animals and provide staff direction on whether or not to adopt this portion of the County Code for Covina.

GENERAL FUND IMPACT:

Should Council adopt the changes to Title IO, the increase in dog license fees would add approximately \$30,000 in revenue, annually.

BACKGROUND:

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance No. 2006-0029 on May 2, 2006 establishing a Mandatory Spay and Neuter and Microchipping Program for all dog breeds in the County of Los Angeles. To ensure Countywide implementation the Board is urging each city in Los Angeles County to consider adoption of this ordinance. It is their belief that this ordinance will improve public safety, reduce animal control costs and reduce the euthanasia of dogs in Los Angeles County area animal shelters.

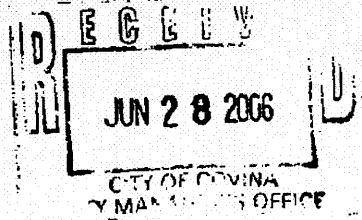
This ordinance amends the County Code, Title IO- Animals, to establish a Mandatory Spay and Neuter Program for all dogs; adds a requirement that all dogs over the age of four months be implanted with an identifying microchip; amends the definition for “Hobby breeder”, adds definitions for ‘Competition dog’ and “Unaltered”; and increases annual dog license fees for altered dogs from \$15 to \$20 and for unaltered dogs from \$30 to \$60.

EXHIBITS:

A. Letter from Marcia Mayeda, Director, County of Los Angeles Animal Care and Control.

Paul Philips
City of Covina
125 East College Street
Covina, CA 91723-2199

June 26, 2006



Marcia Mayeda
Director

Administrative Office
5898 Cherry Ave.
Long Beach, CA 90805
(562) 7284882
Fax (562) 422-3408
<http://animalcontrol.co.la.ca.us>



Shelter locations

11258 S. Garfield Ave.
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 940-6898

216 W. Victoria St.
Gardena, CA 90248
(310) 523-9566

4275 No. Elton
Baldwin Park, CA 91706
(626) 962-3577

5210 W. Avenue I
Lancaster, CA 93536
(661) 940-4191

31044 N. Charlie Cyn. Rd.
Castaic, CA 91384
(661) 257-3191

29525 Agoura Rd.
Agoura, CA 91301
(818) 9914071

Dear Mr. Philips:

As you may know, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recently adopted a measure that requires the identification microchipping and the spaying and neutering of all dogs over the age of four months kept in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

I am writing to ask that your city adopt legislation modeled on the County ordinance, a copy of which is attached for your information.

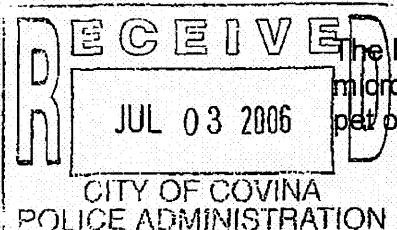
Essentially, this new measure has two equally important goals, both of which would benefit the City of Covina.

The first is to decrease the number of dogs being humanely euthanized at Los Angeles County animal shelters by reducing the number of dogs being impounded in the shelters. Since your City must pay for the housing and emergency medical costs for unclaimed stray animals taken up from within your jurisdiction, any drop in that number means animal control cost savings to you.

The second is to require that all owned animals be implanted with identifying microchips. Only a tiny fraction of the stray animals that come into our shelters wear any kind of traceable identification. The advantage of microchips is that they are reliable and, unlike the traditional tag-and-collar method of identification which can get lost or misplaced, microchips are implanted beneath the skin at the base of the dog's neck, so they function as an on-body ID system.

Finding and reading a microchip speeds up owner reunification, meaning dogs spend less time in the shelters, face less exposure to communicable diseases in kennels and cost less in terms of overall upkeep, all of which are positive results.

The Found Animal Foundation has agreed to provide free microchips and free registration to a national animal database to pet owners who have their dogs microchipped under this program,



Our agency is proud of our record of placing unclaimed stray dogs and returning dogs to their owners. Even so, during 2004-05, we had to humanely euthanize almost 19,000 unwanted dogs. While many of those animals could not be placed because of aggressive behavior or because they had serious and debilitating medical problems, we also had to put down animals that were adoptable.

We see our mission as being animal placement, not animal euthanization. And, given the steady influx of animals into our shelters, our choice is to spend millions of dollars to expand our existing facilities and build new ones or save money by reducing the number of animals coming into our shelters.

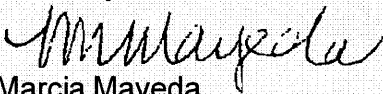
It seems to us that an intake reduction is more cost effective and has better long-term benefits than shelter expansion. More than a decade ago, the County of Santa Cruz adopted a measure similar to the one recently approved by our Board of Supervisors. Animal control officials in Santa Cruz reported a 57% drop in the number of dogs impounded in the city since that time. So, clearly this approach works and has merit.

Our agency worked closely with the Board and the Office of the County Counsel to craft the best measure we could create. We even included exemptions for dogs used in law enforcement work, animals that veterinarians would certify as medically unfit for alteration, service dogs and purebred dogs used for competition or breeding.

We hope your City will adopt this ordinance as part of your Municipal Code so the beneficial effects of the measure can occur in the City of Covina.

If you have any questions about this measure, please call me at (562) 728-4610.

Sincerely,


Marcia Mayeda
Director

Attachment