



REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2011

TITLE: ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS

Brian Frisk

Director of Community Services

Sean Joyce

City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the City Council discuss the matters addressed in the attached memorandum from Mayor Sukhee Kang dated January 10, 2011, and provide staff direction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If the City Council concurs that the matters raised in the memorandum should be addressed at a future meeting, staff will prepare corresponding ordinance(s).

COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

ANALYSIS

In 2010, animal welfare advocates met separately with Mayor Kang and then Mayor Pro Tem Agran to request that the City consider implementation of several animal welfare ordinances.

Proposed ordinances:

1. Prohibiting retail sale of dogs/puppies and cats/kittens at retail establishments located in Irvine.

Several pet stores voluntarily no longer sell dogs, puppies, cats or kittens. There is only one retail establishment in Irvine that still does. Several cities nationwide have also implemented ordinances banning retail sales of "companion animals" including West Hollywood, South Lake Tahoe, Albuquerque and El Paso.

2. Requiring dogs and cats over the age of six months be spayed or neutered.

There are approximately 11,000 dogs registered in Irvine. Of these, it is thought that as many as ten percent have not been spayed or neutered. Of those that are brought in to the Irvine Animal Care Center as "strays", the percentage is over 65 percent. Cities such as Denver, Los Angeles and Chicago all have ordinances in place requiring cats and dogs to be spayed or neutered once they reach the age of six months.

3. Ban traveling animal exhibit performances in Irvine.

This item pertains to traveling animal acts such as circuses and rodeos, while exempting petting zoos and farm animal exhibits. Several cities no longer allow traveling animal shows including Huntington Beach, San Marcos, Sacramento, Honolulu, Sausalito and Albuquerque, as well as Marin County.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The City Council may choose to direct staff to research one or more of the proposed ordinances and report back to the City Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Direction to staff to develop ordinances for consideration will have no financial impact.

REPORT PREPARED BY Jana Ransom, Community Services Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. January 10, 2011 memo to City Manager Joyce from Mayor Sukhee Kang

Memo

To: Sean Joyce, City Manager
From: Mayor Sukhee Kang *SK*
Date: January 10, 2011
Re: **Proposal to Consider Adopting Ordinances Relating to Animal Welfare**

Councilmember Larry Agran and I have met separately with local Animal Welfare proponents who have asked that the City Council consider adopting ordinances similar to those now in effect in several cities and counties in California and throughout the United States. The three proposed actions include:

- 1) Prohibition of retail sale of dogs/puppies and cats/kittens from stores located in Irvine, with a "grandfather" provision that would protect the one store in Irvine that currently sells pets for some defined period;
- 2) Mandating that dogs and cats over the age of six months be spayed or neutered when the animal is stray and picked up by Animal Control or housed at the Animal Care Center for the third time; and
- 3) Prohibition of performances featuring large or exotic animals in Irvine (e.g., rodeos or circuses featuring elephants, lions and tigers).

Additional information on each proposed item is attached.

The City has been on the forefront of providing the "gold standard" of municipal animal care at the Animal Care Center not only in Orange County, but in the nation when in 2007 it was recognized as Shelter of the Year by "Dog Fancy" magazine. Irvine has a large percentage of homes with household pets, a highly active volunteer program at the Center and a very popular dog park. In general, Irvine residents have shown great interest in animal welfare. The ordinances proposed by the group would position Irvine with other progressive cities implementing ordinances to prevent mistreatment and exploitation of animals within their respective city boundaries.

I respectfully request that this material be forwarded to the City Council and be agendaized for discussion and staff direction.