
CHIEF OF POLICE

DATE: 11/1/2005
TO: CITY COUNCIL, VIA RALPH JAECK, CITY MANAGER *af*
FROM: THOMAS R. HITCHCOCK, CHIEF OF POLICE
RE: ADDENDUM TO ANIMAL CONTROL STAFF REPORT

At the last City Council meeting, several questions were raised concerning the "model" Animal Control Ordinance. The three primary areas that we received feedback on were the restriction of numbers of animals per household, the licensing of cats, and spaying/neutering of animals. I would like to address each issue.

Other agencies restrict the number of animals. Some reasonable control is appropriate but the numbers permitted is subjective. The department recommends limiting the numbers of animals per household and 3 dogs and 3 cats is a reasonable approach. Provisions allow residents to have more animals, but having a standard provides law enforcement with a mechanism to deal with those owners who do not adequately care for their animals. For example, in my past history, I had a complaint of someone having 50 rabbits in their backyard. The smell was bothering the neighbors. Because that jurisdiction had limitations on numbers of animals, I had a tool available to get the owner to be a more responsible caretaker. Attached is a list of cities in San Mateo County that restrict numbers in their jurisdictions and the norm is for reasonable regulation.

Cat licensing is included in the model ordinance, but is not a crucial item. The Peninsula Humane Society (PHS) recommends it because licensed cats brought to the shelter are more likely to get reunited with their owners. If the cat is licensed, it is likely to be returned to its owner; if not, it is very unlikely the cat will be claimed.

Spaying/neutering is recommended by PHS precisely because they want to avoid euthanasia. In 1970 PHS had to destroy 37,680 animals. That same year the county ordinance was changed to require spaying and neutering. Last year that number was down to 2,700. PHS policy is not to kill animals that are healthy and whose behavior is sound, thus spaying and neutering is important in determining the population numbers. Most feral cats do not fit that definition and are a major concern.

I hope this meets the information you required. Staff would be happy to answer any additional questions you might have.

Staff recommends that the council adopt the model ordinance as recommended in the original staff report.

SAN MATEO COUNTY
DOGS AND CATS ALLOWED PER PREMISE

Below is a list of the number of dogs and cats that each city allows per premise. If a permit procedure is available which allows for more, it is noted and the issuing department is also included. The Peninsula Humane Society does not contract with the county to enforce these provisions. In the unincorporated areas, the San Mateo Planning/Zoning Department handles this type of violation; it varies within incorporated cities, some have code enforcement officers; some have building or zoning officers, and some have none. If a citizen calls to complain solely about excess number of cats/dogs being kept by a person, please refer them to their respective city. Of course, if there is another violation involved such as leash law, cruelty, trespass, and neglect please take the complaint. Do not confuse this with cat population problems, which we do handle by trapping. If you have any questions regarding enforcement please see a Department of Animal Control Supervisor.

- Atherton: 3 dogs (4 months or older).
- Belmont: 4 animals (any combination of dogs and cats) unless in Conformance with a Fanciers Permit (which allow up to 10 animals) or a kennel/cattery license (for more than 10 animals).
- Brisbane 3 dogs, 4 cats (4 months or older). May obtain permit from an Animal Control Officer.
- Burlingame 2 dogs (9 months or older), 3 cats (2 months or older). May obtain Permit from City Council for more.
- Colma 2 dogs, 2 cats (4 months or older).
- Daly City 2 animals per premise.
- East Palo Alto No restrictions.
- Foster City 2 dogs, 2 cats (6 months or older).
- Half Moon Bay 2 dogs, 2 cats.
- Hillsborough 5 dogs (either male or female or both).
- Menlo Park 3 dogs, 3 cats (4 months or older). May obtain permit from City Manager for more.
- Millbrae No restrictions.
- Pacifica 5 animals (combination of 2 cats or 3 dogs or 2 dogs, 2 cats and a parrot). May obtain permit in the building commission.
- Portola Valley 2 dogs per premise within ½ mile adjoining residence.
- Redwood City 2 dogs, 2 cats (3 months or older).
- San Bruno 4 cats, 2 dogs (4 months or older). May obtain permit from city clerk.
- San Carlos 3 animals (any combination).
- San Mateo 4 animals (any combination of dogs and cats).
- S. San Francisco 7 or more dogs or cats need kennel requirements (Code Enforcement Officer).
- Woodside 3 dogs. May obtain permit from town hall.
- Unincorporated San Mateo County 4 animals (any combination of dogs and cats) unless in conformance with a Fanciers Permit (which allow up to 10 animals) or a kennel/cattery license (for more than 10 animals).