

**ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS
PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS
SOUTH AREA COMMAND STATION
11-26-07 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.**

Approximately 72 people attended, including Commissioner Teresa Córdova and Animal Control staff. The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. and proposed changes were reviewed.

Following are general comments received:

Show animal – dog or cat – not used for breeding - AKC regulations require show animals to be intact. Also in the definition for show animal, show animals are typically shown for strengthening the breed and for the purpose of ultimately being bred for their qualities. Delete “not used for breeding.” Also, in the definition for multiple animal site, leave the words in that say “except show animals.”

Qualified assistance animals definition should be expanded to include therapy dogs used to visit hospitals and nursing homes.

Why require mandatory microchipping? Don't make microchipping mandatory. Some individuals shared the concern that microchipping can cause cancer.

Some people spoke in favor of microchipping. One woman finds stray animals and in 50% of the ones she has found and scanned have been microchipped and she has been able to return the animal to the owner.

One person was opposed to microchipping, increased fees, site inspections, searches, licenses, mandatory spay neuter for multiple animal permits, permit laws, and government requirements.

Opposed random searches. Strike site inspections unless owner permits it, a warrant has been issued, or it is necessary for the issuance of a permit.

Explain the wording on “probable cause” and “deems necessary.”

Commission not in favor of door to door enforcement.

County should be sensitive to the needs of the unincorporated area.

Warrants from the courts are necessary for searches.

Microchip companies, such as AVID and Home Again, are increasing registration fees. Different vendors require different scanners. There is a universal scanner for all chips.

Do away with the owner surrender fee. Charging an owner surrender fee leads to people abandoning unwanted animals.

Fencing was discussed. If electronic gates or fences are in place, this restrains the animals.

The ordinance allows 6 foot leads/leashes. In rural areas, many dog owners use retractable leashes that can extend to 25 feet. When other people or animals pass by, the lease is retracted. Consider allowing this. Also, 10 foot show leads are often used for training purposes.

In many places, the general word “animal” is used and it should be changed to dogs, cats or ferrets, as necessary.

Sale of sterilized animals is not provided. For sterilized animals, you would not need a litter permit to sell it. How can one sell sterilized animals under this ordinance and proposed amendments?

Some people spoke out against chaining. One person suggested allowing chaining for up to 12 hours.

Animal Protection of New Mexico spokesperson supports any laws to make kinder choices for animals.

Housing for extreme weather was discussed. Livestock should have some sort of shelter, such as a barn, for extreme weather.

Multi animal site permits require all animals to be sterilized. This should not be. There should be exemptions for show animals, purebred or working animals, herding animals, pest environment animals, seeing eye dogs, police dogs, and sled dogs. These dogs are bred for specific functions and should not be required to be sterilized.

Section 6-66 deals with sale and display of animals. Support the ban of curbside sales. Several people supported limiting sales of puppies and kittens to the residential location listed on the litter permit as proposed in Section 6-41 (d).

One person wants the intact animal permit revocation (Section 6-40) to be a three strike deal, not two.

Section 6-42 (g) should state what the cost of confinement is. On Section I (1) of this section, add “who is” after a person “who is” unlawfully...

Section 6-43 on animal license was questioned – “If we are already paying for a kennel license fee, why get an individual one.”

Under restraint of animals, add a section about training. Sometimes 25 foot leads are used to teach the recall without letting the dog off the leash. Will trainer’s permits be sold?

Medical waivers are good.

The addition of new language in Section 6-60, cruelty to animals, is good.

The new language on 6-61 fights is good.

One individual likes the new section on animal fighting paraphernalia.

In the definition for kennel, delete the word “commercial.”

Define exotic animals. Why is there a fee for exotic animals when there are no regulations addressing care of these animals? Is a wild animal the same as an exotic animal? Wild animals are addressed in Section 6-70.

Propose different fees for shelters, small adoption groups, and rescue groups. For example, if a rescue group maintains fewer than 25 animals, charge \$50. If a rescue group maintains over 100 animals, charge \$100.

On the proposed new fee structure, one individual feels honest kennel people are being singled out. The ordinance only regulates the honest people. The others don't care and won't comply anyway. County should make fines heavier and not hurt the small rescue groups who are doing their best to help animals.

If you are charging \$100 for an intact animal permit, why bother charging \$100 for a hobby breeder site permit?

Suggest adding more medical waivers for rabies, microchipping, sterilization. Medical waivers should be permanent and not require annual renewal.

Section 6-55 on vehicle transport should include a shade requirement.

Add a conditioning scale for dogs, cats, horses, cows, sheep, goats.

*****Page 11, 4 and 5, requires the outside space to be concrete also. If a person uses their yard for the outside run, this area should not be required to be concrete. (JON, I don't see this—do you know where this is?)

Change the footage requirements for kennel space Section 6-39A.

Page 8, #13 – Keep unsterilized animals segregated by sex. Add “when in season” to this. Otherwise, the genders can be kept together.

Page 3, Section 6-33. Procedures for complaints – false reports – Keep this. Good job.

It was suggested that the summaries of the public meeting comments be posted on the County's web page.

Like a penalty for false reports.

Commissioner Teresa Córdova thanked all for attending. She has asked Animal Control staff to mail copies of changes after their made to people who request this and leave their addresses. A timetable for finalizing changes to the animal control ordinance was discussed. A meeting is being scheduled in the East Mountains area. A tentative goal is to present the final proposed changes to the Board of County Commissioners for their consideration in January 2008.

Cockfighting memorabilia was discussed. Some individuals want to be able to keep their fighting paraphernalia, which would be outlawed by the proposed regulations. It was suggested that they keep in a sealed box or trophy display case. One individual stated he still takes the roosters to Mexico and sells them.

The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m. People were thanked for attending and encouraged to write comments on public comment sheets or the County web page comment area if they did not say all they wanted during the meeting.