

**ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS**  
**PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS**  
**Lt. Sibrava Substation, 10401 Holly, NE**  
**3-26-08 6:00 – 7:25 P.M.**

Approximately 20 people from the public attended, in addition to four Animal Control Department staff. Commissioner Cummins was unable to attend; however, greetings were extended on his behalf. The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. and proposed changes were reviewed.

Following are general comments received:

Add mandatory spay and neutering for cats and dogs. It was mentioned that when County animals are impounded at the City shelters, unless the owner has an intact permit for the animal, the City requires the animal to be spayed or neutered before it can be reclaimed or adopted.

Add a ban on chaining. It is cruel.

The question was asked how many animals impounded at the City shelters are from the unincorporated portion of the County. It is estimated that between 6 – 8% are from the County.

Dog ownership is a responsibility. Must keep animals safe. One woman said she had been raised in a culture to believe that dogs are property like a toaster or yard ornament, but she has been educated and now believes they are more like companions. She has rescued many dogs, including some that are loose with a tether attached. She stated she has had problems with Santa Fe County and Bernalillo County Animal Control offices in responding appropriately or at all.

The term chaining is derisive. Dogs need humane treatment. The ordinance should address equitable needs of the animals, including shelter, exercise, protection, water, food, movement in an area not restrictive, and attention. Should define animal rights. Humans must provide these things.

What happens to a chained female dog in heat? It was mentioned that the current ordinance makes a provision regarding confinement of female dogs or cats in mating season.

There should be positive equity for animals.

Guard dogs on a chain cannot guard the house. Some guard dogs are on trolley/tethers that run in front of the house, and dogs guard the house that way.

The notice of violation, intent to prosecute, criminal complaint, Metropolitan Court process was described. One person commented that people should be given less time to comply.

Chaining is a public safety issue. Children may approach a dog on a chain and the child gets bit.

One person commented that not spaying or neutering an animal that shouldn't breed is abuse.

Should have protection for animals on the chain.

One individual mentioned rescuing 13 dogs in 4 years. Microchips help a lot to return dogs to the owner. This can occur before an animal is ever taken to the shelter.

Education is important. One individual wants to see "wallet fines" for breaking the law or animal control ordinance. If a person does not follow the law, penalties should be imposed.

Some people are very resistant and officers are required to cite after a certain number of visits.

Animal Control should look at livestock care and maintenance. Zoning requirements for number of animals and space requirements were discussed.

It was suggested that an animal court be set up – like children's court, etc. – find a judge who cares about animals and is knowledgeable about animal laws and have defendants go to that court.

Pet stores should not be allowed to sell pets.

One person spoke out passionately against chaining, stating: No way in the world is a chained dog taken care of. How do 99% of dog owners have dogs without chains? Chaining is evil. How can you live with dogs being chained? Please stop the chaining; it's unacceptable.

It was asked if people can report anonymously. The answer is yes, but if a barking dog case is to proceed to court, it cannot be anonymous.

Feral cats and trapping were discussed. It was mentioned that an animal rescue group has a feral cat program.

It was stated by one attendee that people vented on a number of questions, but this individual wants to see an animal rights ordinance. This ordinance should state what the animal deserves. Animal Control needs minimum standards that show responsible

animal care. New inexperienced officers can benefit from clear guidelines for responsible pet care.

It was recommended that Animal Control Officers issue citations, not just notices of violations.

One person stated that good responsible pet owners should be rewarded, and raising the license and permit fees does not reward responsible pet owners. Another person said bad deeds should be punished – financially and with possible jail sentences.

At the end of the meeting, one individual who did not speak up during the meeting stated that he appreciated the pragmatism of animal control and states that all is not black and white on issues such as chaining.

The meeting ended at 7:25 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.