

**ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS
PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS
RAYMOND SANCHEZ COMMUNITY CENTER
10-15-07 6:00 – 7:00 P.M.**

ATTENDEES:

27 people attended. Commissioner Armijo's Assistant Mary Salazar welcomed the attendees. The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. and proposed changes were reviewed.

The proposed amendment prohibiting sidewalk, corner or storefront sales or giving away of animals was addressed, asking how mobile adoptions, adopt-a-thons, and other animal rescue organizations would be affected by this. It was suggested they be exempt from this amendment.

Fees for neutered and intact animals were discussed. It was mentioned that with the proposed fee structure, senior citizens are paying more for unneutered than neutered pets. A provision needs to be added for the fee for senior fees for neutered pets.

A hobby breeder stated that this is a 400% increase in permit fees, said it seems excessive, and asked whether this was for administrative costs or to discourage hobby breeding. It was explained that administrative costs have increased—more animal control officers are performing permit inspections, more clerical staff time is needed; and that animal control officers will be more strict in adhering to the Animal Code than has occurred in the past.

The question was raised as to whether the requirement to euthanize animals after two bites would be retroactive. The answer was no and that this must be court-ordered.

Discussion was held about microchips and licenses. It was suggested that a microchip number be put on a license.

Chaining was discussed. Three of the people present spoke out against chaining and asked that chaining be banned or similar to the City's HEART ordinance. Several people advocated for chaining. One representative from the Rio Grande Kennel Club stated that tethering or chaining is an emotional issue and that people always present the extreme horror stories but that some dogs are actually tethered because of their breed or type, such as hunting dogs, in controlled environments. Tethering can be better than leaving dogs loose on property because dogs can climb fences or walls sometimes. Another person mentioned community projects to identify chained animals and the community may sponsor fences, such as Runs for Rover or Fences for Fido. Several people said not to outlaw chaining completely. One individual wants chaining outlawed completely. He wants Section 6-45(a) eliminated and wants the County to use the City's HEART ordinance provisions about chaining. He provided County Animal Control with copies of his letters to the Commissioners and the Governor and copies of animal ordinance provisions from Texas and from Albuquerque. Another person suggested that only dogs

that bite be addressed. One woman stated that if you are not allowed to chain dogs, those dogs will end up being euthanized. Another person said don't go to the opposite extreme. Compromise. A member of the Rio Grande Kennel Club stated again this is an emotional issue and that to be effective, an ordinance must be reasonable and enforceable.

Problems with zoning were discussed, relating to hobby breeder licenses. One person stated that anything in an R zoned area can be done in an MH zoned area.

Mandatory microchipping was discussed. It has been reported to cause cancerous tumors. The proposed language should allow for permanent identification, such as microchipping or tattooing. Another person said it can be hard to scan for microchips because the implants can move.

A lawyer for the Rio Grande Kennel Club motioned that the proposed change for Section 6-39 allowing warrantless inspections has been found to be unconstitutional by court order of Judge Lang, and the County should not implement this. An individual provided County Animal Control with a copy of the Memorandum Opinion and Order from 10-2-06.

It was suggested that the license fees be waived for service dogs, assistance animals and dogs in training for search and rescue, tracking, police or sheriff, or any public or private agency involved in these activities. Section 6-43 H does include limited language about service animals.

A hobby breeder wanted to know exactly what has to be paid for a hobby breeder permit—licenses, permit?

The discrepancy between intact permit requirements of the City and of the County was discussed.

Stray cats were discussed. A trap, neuter and release or trap, neuter and return (TRN) program was mentioned. The Rio Grande Kennel Club could assist with wording to have such a program that it not in violation of a jurisdiction's ordinance.

An individual read an excerpt from a paper by the United States Humane Society regarding the problems of chaining.

Another woman mentioned that many places sell kennels that are 6 by 10 and those are just as bad as chaining, but people switch to that when chaining is prohibited.

Fighting paraphernalia was discussed. Some training organizations use treadmills for show dogs and trotters for show dogs. Many protection agencies use bite sleeves for police protection training. The fighting paraphernalia language needs to be modified to allow this.

Two participants stated this was a well-run meeting and it did not resemble the City's HEART ordinance meetings, which they said was a good thing.

The meeting ended at 7:00 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.