



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 13-1191

Agenda Item Number: 31.

Agenda Date: 12/19/2013

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Animal Care Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Kathy Davis

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Proposed Chapter 5 Ordinance Changes

SUMMARY:

This action authorizes the amendment of Chapter 5 of the City Code to allow the Animal Care Services Department (ACS) to reduce the required holding period for those pets that have a live outcome.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In FY 2012, ACS began implementing its newly revised strategic plan by incorporating the three (3) strategic priorities of: enhanced enforcement, controlling the stray animal population, and increasing the Live Release rate. As evident in the drastic increase in the Live Release rate from 30% in FY 2011 to 77% in FY 2013, or in the increase in number of spay/neuter surgeries performed by ACS from 11,000 in FY 2012 to 17,500 in FY 2013, ACS continues to improve the services it provides to the community.

It is the anticipation of ACS to continue its success in FY 2014 through the implementation of innovative solutions. In particular, ACS anticipates focusing its efforts and resources in FY 2014 by: (1) enhancing field enforcement; (2) increasing community spay/neuter services; (3) maximizing kennel capacity, and (4) maintaining its successful Live Release program. The following initiative was presented to the City's Quality Life of Committee on the 15th of October and to the Animal Care Services Advisory Board on October 16th.

Chapter 5 of the City Code requires ACS to hold all healthy pets for a period of three (3) days, not including the day of impoundment, before the pet can be adopted, rescued, fostered, or humanely euthanized. On average, ACS is currently holding pets for a period of 6 days.

While the stray hold period allows time for the pet to be reunited with its owner or to find an individual to adopt/rescue, ACS frequently is required to hold the pet for additional time. For instance, as required by law, spay/neuter surgeries cannot be performed until after the end of the stray hold period. Therefore, even if a live outcome (adoption or rescue) for a pet is identified on the first day of impoundment, ACS cannot begin the adoption/rescue process (which can take a full day to complete) until after the third full day of impoundment.

By reducing the hold period from three (3) full days to (2) full days, ACS would be able to outcome pets with a live release quicker thereby freeing up additional kennel capacity. As indicated in the proposed amendment, ACS would not be able to reduce the hold time for any pet that does not have a live outcome. ACS anticipates that with this change, the City will be able to maximize its kennel capacity by bringing in up to an additional 770 stray/roaming pets annually or by allowing pets that do not have a live-outcome to remain in ACS care a little longer in order to find a rescuer/adopter.

ISSUE:

This amendment to the Chapter 5 Code will allow ACS to take ownership of all strays after the second day of impoundment, not including the day of impoundment resulting in a reduction of one day. The Code will also be change to prohibit ACS from euthanizing any healthy stray pets until after the third day not including the day of impoundment. By reducing the hold period one day, ACS would be able to maximize its kennel capacity by bringing in up to an additional 770 stray/roaming pets annually.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should this amendment to Chapter 5 not be approved, ACS would be required to hold every stray pet for a minimum of three days (excluding the day of impoundment) even if that pet found a live outcome during its first day of impoundment. Not approving this amendment would result in ACS' inability to impound an additional 770 stray pets as part of the Department's FY 2014 strategy and would seriously jeopardize the City's plan to close the Brooks Auxiliary Shelter.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial impact associated with the approval of this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends amending the Chapter 5 ordinance of the City Code to allow ACS to reduce the required holding period for those pets that have a live outcome.