



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:17-5369

Agenda Item Number: 14.

Agenda Date: 10/5/2017

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Animal Care Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Heber Lefgren

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

An Ordinance amending Chapter 5 of the City Code entitled Animals and Chapter 20 entitled Municipal Court and providing for criminal penalties and publication; and confirming the continuation of the current Animal Care Services Strategic Plan.

SUMMARY:

An Ordinance amending Chapter 5 of the City Code entitled Animals and Chapter 20 entitled Municipal Court and providing for criminal penalties and publication; and confirming the continuation of the current Animal Care Services Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In September 2011, the Animal Care Service Department (ACS) updated its Strategic Plan by focusing on three key Departmental Priorities: (1) Enhanced enforcement; (2) Controlling the stray animal population; and (3) Increasing the City's Live Release rate. In FY 2015, ACS added a fourth Strategic Priority to engage and educate the community.

During the February 8, 2017 "B" Session, ACS provided City Council with an update on key ACS FY 2017 initiatives. One of those initiatives included revising and updating the Chapter 5 of the San Antonio City Code.

Between February and June 2017, ACS held nine community meetings across the City and collected over 1,000 surveys from the public and stakeholders. The surveys provided community input regarding local animal laws and the current applicability of the ACS Strategic priorities.

During the June 15 “B” Session, ACS provided City Council with an update on the ACS engagement process and presented the survey results to council. ACS also presented to City Council for discussion preliminary recommended revisions to the San Antonio City Code based on the received feedback.

Between June and August 2017, ACS held five additional community meetings across the City to receive feedback on the preliminary recommended revisions to Chapter 5 of the San Antonio City Code. During that time, ACS collected over additional 4,000 surveys from the public and stakeholders regarding updates to local animal laws and enhancements to the ACS Strategic Plan.

The Animal Care Services Advisory Board has been briefed at every regularly scheduled Board meetings since February 2017 and also created a Chapter 5 Subcommittee to assist in the revision process. The Chapter 5 Subcommittee was comprised of Rita Braeutigam, ACS Board Chair; Karen Speer, ACS Board Secretary; Val Moore, ACS Board Member; and, ACS staff members Heber Lefgren, Director; Shannon Sims, Assistant Director; Michael Rodriguez, Assistant to the Director and ACS City Attorney liaison Monica Hernandez. The Chapter 5 Subcommittee held four meetings throughout the community outreach process to review the recommended changes line by line and provide input.

Based upon the feedback received between June and August 2017 (from community and the Advisory Board Subcommittee), ACS made additional adjustments to the preliminary recommendations and presented them to the ACS Advisory Board on August 16. Those recommendations were unanimously approved by the board members to be sent to City Council for discussion and consideration for approval.

During the September 20, 2017 “B” session, ACS provided City Council with the final recommended revisions to Chapter 5 and Chapter 20 of the San Antonio City Code and the confirming the continuation of the current Animal Care Services Strategic Plan.

ISSUE:

The proposed recommended revisions to Chapter 5 and Chapter 20 of the San Antonio City Code and confirming the continuation of the current Animal Care Services Strategic Plan have gone through a comprehensive community engagement process that included 14 Community meetings, three Community Surveys, three City Council “B” Session” meetings, four Animal Care Services (ACS) Advisory Board Meetings, and four ACS Chapter 5 Sub-Committee Meetings. The proposed recommended revisions were discussed with and unanimously approved by the ACS Advisory Board.

Utilizing feedback from the Mayor and City Council, the ACS Advisory Board, the community and key stakeholders, ACS is proposing recommended revisions to eight key code changes in Chapter 5 of the City Code as well as recommended clean-up language in order to improve enforcement of existing laws. All changes to Chapter 5 and Chapter 20 of the City Code will become effective immediately after City Council Approval. However, ACS will provide a grace period for the enforcement of the new animal laws and begin a targeted education campaign beginning in late October 2017. The enforcement grace period will end in February 2018 and full enforcement will begin in March 2018.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should these recommendations not be approved, Animal Care Services will continue to analyze best practices and seek additional community input on local animal laws and the current applicability of the ACS Strategic priorities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends City Council approval of this Ordinance amending Chapter 5 and Chapter 20 of the San Antonio City Code and confirming the continuation of the current Animal Care Services Strategic Plan.