



Board Agenda Item 49

DATE: July 12, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: David Luchini, RN, PHN, Director Department of Public Health

SUBJECT: Adoption of Amendment to Fresno County Ordinance Code, Title 9 - Animals, Adding Chapter 9.10, "Community Cat Population Management"

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Conduct second hearing and adopt an Ordinance amending the Fresno County Ordinance Code, Title 9 - Animals, to add Chapter 9.10, "Community Cat Population Management" and waive reading of Ordinance in its entirety.

The recommended action will add Chapter 9.10, "Community Cat Population Management" to Title 9, "Animals" of the Ordinance Code of Fresno County to properly recognize the County's support of managing the community cat population in the unincorporated areas of Fresno County in the most humane way possible. It introduces the Community Cat Protocol and provides clarification regarding the County's support to help manage the cat population. The Community Cat Protocol is the cat population control service delivery system preferred by national animal welfare organizations and is currently being used by the Animal Control contracted vendor to implement the Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) program. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your Board choose not to adopt the above-listed Chapter in Title 9 - "Animals", the animal control enforcement procedures for the County will remain unchanged; however, the above-listed Chapter in Title 9 - "Animals" will continue to lack clarity regarding the County's supported method to address the cat population control issues in the unincorporated areas.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost with the recommended action. Mandated animal control services are fully funded with a yearly allocation of County General Fund dollars. The yearly County General Fund allocation offsets both contractor cost and operational costs associated with the Animal Control Shelter Services. Services related to cat population management are currently funded and provided under the existing contract with Fresno Humane Animal Services, at a cost of \$30,000 per year. This cost will continue to be included in the contractor's yearly budget.

DISCUSSION:

On June 21, 2022, your Board conducted the first hearing to amend the Fresno County Ordinance Code, Title 9 - Animals, to add Chapter 9.10, "Community Cat Population Management," which introduced the

Community Cat Protocol and provided the County's support to manage the community cat population in the unincorporated areas of Fresno County in the most humane way possible.

By adopting the Ordinance, the County will establish definitions and protocols surrounding the management of the County's community cat population and prioritizes TNR as the most humane method for the stabilization of the population. TNR is a management technique by which community cats are humanely trapped, evaluated by a licensed veterinarian, sterilized and vaccinated against rabies, and returned to their original habitat. TNR is recognized nationally as one of the most effective and efficient methods of reducing and controlling the population of community cats, as well as disease control. TNR provides a humane, safe, cost saving alternative to help shelters keep community cats from entering their facilities and reduce the number of free-roaming cats in the jurisdictions they serve.

It is estimated there are currently approximately 66,000 free roaming ("community") cats in Fresno County. Local jurisdictions struggle to manage the community cat population and for many years have utilized the trap and remove technique that typically results in the killing of cats.

The proposed amendment will add Chapter 9.10, "Community Cat Population Management" to provide further clarification regarding the County's support to help manage the cat population in the unincorporated areas of Fresno County in the most humane way possible. It introduces the Community Cats protocol as a preferred cat population control management system, which is currently being used by the Animal Control contracted vendor to implement the TNR program.

The recommended amendments to the Fresno County Ordinance Code, summarized on Exhibit A, add Chapter 9.10, Sections 9.10.10 Definitions, 9.10.20 Funding, 9.10.30 Community Cat Protocol, and 9.10.40 Record Keeping

The sections recommended for addition include the following (summarized):

9.10.10 - Definitions establishes terms used in the Community Cat Population Management.

9.10.20 - Funding provides that the County may (limited to resources available), assist the County animal control vendor by providing funding to offset the costs of carrying out Community Cat Management Population services in unincorporated areas of Fresno County.

9.10.30 - Community Cat Protocol establishes the procedure by which County animal control shelter will incorporate practices to assist caregivers with trapping, neutering and returning the Community Cat back to its established location.

9.10.40 - Record Keeping mandates that all records pertaining to Community Cats be kept separately and apart from other shelter animals.

The Department has posted the recommended ordinance amendments to its website, sent proposed revisions to all animal control agencies in Fresno County, and held a public meeting June 9, 2022 to hear public comments and concerns.

With your Board's approval, the Ordinance would take effective 30 days after.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #9, June 21, 2022

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Amended Animal Control Ordinance

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander