

Animal Welfare and Community Safety Act Motion Overview

Citizens of Hyattsville are concerned about how the City handles dangerous, at-large, or neglected dogs. To advocate for better administration of animal control these citizens formed the group Residents United for Furry Friends (RUFF). Problems identified with existing animal control administration in Hyattsville include inconsistent enforcement, unclear regulations, and inadequate public communications. RUFF has been meeting for the last year looking at ways to strengthen Chapter 52 (Animal Control) of the Hyattsville Code. As proposed, the Animal Welfare and Community Safety Act would update Ch. 52 of the City Code in the following ways:

- Updates animal welfare provisions to reflect modern standards and to be consistent with Prince George's County legislation, such as restrictions on tethering and exposure to severe weather;
- Categorizes animal control violations as a Public Nuisance violation (less severe) or a Public Threat violation (more severe);
- Clarifies enforcement procedures by:
 - Requiring the City to designate persons responsible for responding to Chapter 52 municipal infractions;
 - Specifying when violations require a municipal infraction;
 - Requiring the City to review and adapt Police General Orders to the requirements of Chapter 52 and applicable Prince George's County laws;
 - Requiring the City to develop a Standardized Response Protocol for violations;
 - Requiring annual training for the City's designated responding agents;
 - Requiring coordination and reporting to Prince George's County Animal Services Division (PGCASD) following animal aggression incidents;
- Enhances public awareness and preparedness on animal control issues by:
 - Ensuring residents are informed of incidents that may present a threat to public health or safety;
 - Requiring the City to collect and maintain data on animal control complaints and on actions taken in response to complaints and violations;
 - Requiring the City to prepare an annual report on Chapter 52 complaints and actions to present to the Mayor and City Council, and to be made available to the public.

Staff Comments

1. Updates to Chapter 52 regarding standards and enforcement to align with new County standards, through Municipal Infractions, will, as always, require review by the City Attorney.
2. In order to determine fiscal impact, additional information will be required specific to proposed scope of services, if the City becomes the enforcement agent and/or if there is intent for a position to be created to manage animal control related workflow. These are very different scopes of work and related personnel and capital costs. If the request is for additional staffing for either a liaison or dedicated enforcement, in lieu of County services, a fiscal analysis will be required by the City Treasurer to determine adjustments to tax differential and projected expenditures.
3. The City has the ability to leverage PGC Animal Control data through our GIS operation, and could create a story map reporting and an annual report to City Council. Staff would create a mapping tool that would be appropriate for 'animal control incidents. It will include the City's response to Chapter 52 incidents. however for the purposes of providing an example 'story map' please visit:
 - a. <https://hyattsville.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=235a77075d0b403eb45e18ec04598540>