

Legislation Text

File #: 21-213, **Version:** 1

Presenter

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SUBJECT:

Public hearing and first reading of proposed amendments to Chapter 6, Animals, related to tethering, keeping of rabbits, general standards of pet care, and penalties, as recommended by the Animal Services Advisory Board.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

Council District: All

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Chapter 6 of the City's Code of Ordinances includes standards for the care and treatment of pets and animals in New Braunfels. State of Texas statutes include minimal standards that the City of New Braunfels codified initially in 1961. Amendments over the years have built upon those minimum state standards to meet the community's local desires and goals for animal care. The Animal Services Advisory Board (ASAB) has considered a collection of additional amendments over the last year:

Tethering

In response to calls for service, Animal Control staff periodically encounter instances of dogs being chained or tied up at the bare minimum of three feet. Such a limited tether length not only limits a dog's radius of movement, but sometimes puts shade, shelter and even food and water out of reach. Amendments were drafted to provide standards for tethering to ensure a pet's health and safety.

Rabbits

Historically, New Braunfels' rules have been very limiting on rabbit ownership. Several years ago, the City adopted more flexible rules for chickens due to increased interest and trends toward locally sourced food. Interest in keeping rabbits for pets (outside of the typical agriculture programs) is also becoming a trend. However, if owners release their pet rabbits to the Humane Society's Animal Shelter, the shelter cannot adopt them out due to the current limiting regulations. The proposed amendments are intended to provide added flexibility for pet rabbit ownership.

General Care

After instances of concern from the public regarding observed owner mistreatment of pets, staff received requests from citizens to examine the ordinances for opportunities to strengthen the rules. Staff researched ordinances in other Texas cities, and worked with the ASAB to develop some amendments that clarify requirements associated with food, water, shelter, and inclement weather.

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

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| Envision New Braunfels Comprehensive Plan | Action 3.6: Pro-actively provide a regulatory environment that remains business and resident friendly. Action 3.35: Support local non-profits whose mission includes Envision New Braunfels goals. |
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FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Animal Services Advisory Board considered and recommended approval of these consolidated amendments at their meetings in 2020 and 2021.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Draft Ordinance
- ASAB Minutes