

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 05/29/07		Item Number: <u>A-4</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: 1) Discussion Regarding the Licensing of Cats, Including the Consideration of Mandatory Microchipping and Alteration of Cats, and Cat Licensing Fees and Fee Exemptions; and 2) Introduction of Related Ordinances and Adoption of Related Resolution if Deemed Appropriate.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Shelly Wolfberg or Heather Iker		Phone Number: (310) 253-6008 or (310) 253-5660	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☐	
Public Notification: Master Notification List, Friends of Culver City Animals, Friends of the Culver City Dog Park (05/24/07)			
Department Approval: Martin R. Cole (05/24/07)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Iker) (05/24/07)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (05/24/07)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (05/24/07)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council discuss the licensing, vaccination, alteration and microchipping of cats, and cat licensing fees and fee exemptions, and consider first reading and/or adoption of related ordinances/resolution if deemed appropriate. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> At the September 11, 2006 City Council meeting, the City Council introduced Ordinance 2006-010 for first reading. On September 25, 2007, upon second reading, Ordinance 2006-010 was adopted and, by its terms, will become effective on July 1, 2007. Ordinance 2006-010 re-adopted Title 10 of the Los Angeles County Code (Title 10) as the animal control ordinance in the City of Culver City. As part of the re-adoption of Title 10, cat licensing and vaccination will become required in the City of Culver City along with the requirement to license, alter, vaccinate, and microchip dogs on July 1, 2007. At the meeting of September 11, 2006, the City Council expressed its initial intent to consider requiring microchipping and alteration of cats and directed staff to return to the City Council with a proposed Ordinance once it was determined the County of Los Angeles could provide the relevant services. Since the September 11, 2006 meeting, staff has confirmed the County could provide services relevant to the enforcement of mandatory cat alteration and micro-chipping As part of improving customer service and in anticipation of the effective date of the new licensing requirements on July 1, 2007, on February 26, 2007, the City Council			

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

approved an in-house pet licensing program and the establishment of a licensing, microchip, and spay/neuter amnesty program (amnesty program) for dog and cat owners who license their pets during the amnesty period (April 1, 2007 to June 29, 2007).

DISCUSSION:

In preparation for the amnesty program, staff notified residents of the program and announced the County-run low cost dog vaccination and free dog microchipping clinics scheduled for April and June 2007. The notification announced the requirement for pet owners to license their dogs and cats with a new Culver City license. To qualify for the amnesty program, dogs and cats were required to be altered, vaccinated, and microchipped prior to licensure (and in anticipation of the new requirements becoming effective on July 1).

Since the beginning of the Amnesty Period on April 1, 2007 and at the dog licensing clinic on April 21, staff has received a number of communications from residents inquiring about the new pet licensing requirements. Some have expressed concern relating to the new requirements primarily related to the following: 1) pet owner income limitations; 2) multiple cats who never leave the residence; 3) costs pertaining to veterinarian appointments for vaccination, microchipping and alteration; and 4) no clinic offered by the County for low cost vaccinations or free microchipping for cats.

At this time, Council is asked to consider the proposed requirements for cat microchipping and alteration, to be introduced in proposed ordinances this evening. Cat licensing and cat vaccination are already included in Title 10 as adopted by the City Council on September 25, 2007 and as is currently scheduled to become effective on July 1, 2007.

The following is a point-by-point discussion of the additional items related to cat licensing:

Cat Microchipping

Cat microchipping is not required under Title 10. The County currently offers free microchipping as part of a grant through the Animal Found Foundation **for dogs only**, and according to the County, the grant funded program for free microchipping cannot be extended to cats. The County charges a fee of \$20 for cat microchipping at a County shelter. Based upon preliminary information, the City could offer an annual cat microchipping clinic in Culver City at a cost of around \$25 per cat. And,

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

while it is possible to offer a cat licensing clinic, the logistics of doing so would be more complicated as compared to holding one for dogs.

Cat Alteration

Cat alteration is not required under Title 10. The City Council may decide to adopt the same standards for alteration exemptions as exist for dogs (including a breeder's exclusion) in Title 10. Cat License Fee

Currently the City's ordinance has a voluntary \$10 cat license fee for an altered or unaltered cat. The license fee for an altered dog is \$20 and \$40 for qualified unaltered dogs (e.g. a breeding certificate from a licensed veterinarian.) The City Council may wish to consider a mandatory \$10 fee for altered cats and a \$20 fee for unaltered cats, if alteration exemptions meet the County Code exemptions that currently exist for dogs. Alternatively, City Council may elect to adopt one uniform pet license fee of \$20 for altered dogs or cats, and \$40 for unaltered dogs or cats (which qualify under the alteration exclusions). This would represent a 100% increase in the previous voluntary cat license fee.

Cat License Penalty Fee

A penalty fee may be adopted for cat licenses that are in arrears. There is currently a \$25 penalty for dog licenses in arrears, but no penalty fee is set for expired cat licenses.

Senior Citizen/Qualified Disabled License Fee Exemption

Under Resolution 2005-R006 adopted by the City Council on February 28, 2005, the City Council provided a "Senior Citizen/Qualified Disabled License Fee Exemption" under the following circumstances:

- (1) "Residents of Culver City aged 60 years old whose total adjusted gross income, as used for purposes of the California Personal Income Tax Law, was no more than \$18,200 for the least calendar year and the combined adjusted gross income of all members of the household in which an individual resides was no more than \$21, 500 are exempt from paying a license fee for the first dog with all subsequent dogs requiring a license and tag fee of \$10.00 for an unaltered dog and \$5.00 to license an altered dog" and,
- (2) Culver City residents who meet the criterion of Disability as established by the Social Security Administration's Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Program for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled...shall be subject to the same exemption...”

Currently there is no comparable cat license fee exemption in a City ordinance. The Council could decide to offer the same provisions to cat owners.

Accompanying this staff report are a number of ordinances and a resolution presented for the City Council’s consideration. The following table indicates the purpose of each ordinance/resolution:

Ord./Reso.	Purpose	Effect
Ord. – Version “A”	Mandatory Cat Microchipping and Alteration (Also clarifies that all fees and fee exemptions for dog and cat licensing shall be established by resolution of the City Council; and certain provisions of Chapter 9.01 of the CCMC shall preempt Title 10)	Provides for an addition to the general provisions of Title 10 to require cat microchipping <i>and</i> alteration
Ord. – Version “B”	Mandatory Cat Microchipping (including additional changes indicated above)	Provides for an addition to the general provisions of Title 10 to require cat microchipping
Ord. – Version “C”	Mandatory Cat Alteration (including additional changes indicated above)	Provides for an addition to the general provisions of Title 10 to require cat alteration.
Resolution	Licensing Fees (including penalties and license replacement fees) and Fee Exemptions	Rescinds Resolution 2005-R006, implements fees and fee exemptions for licensing.

Should the City Council adopt any of the above items, any fees associated with such an adoption would be included in the final fee resolution presented to the City Council in June.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Currently, the General Fund pays for the animal care and control program, which includes the City’s contract with the County of Los Angeles for field and shelter

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

services. Additionally, on February 26, 2007, the City Council authorized a budget amendment in the amount of \$20,000 to fund the purchase and start-up costs for a pilot in-house City pet licensing program. Staff will be returning to the City Council on July 23, 2007 with a report on the results of the first quarter (April-June) of the animal licensing program.

According to the County, it is estimated that 5% of Culver City households have cats. However, participation in the cat licensing program, although mandatory, would not necessarily yield 100% compliance. Actual compliance would affect the revenues received by cat licensing. If the City Council determines that the City should offer cat microchipping vaccination clinic(s), staff would return at a later date with details on offering such a program. It is expected that there will be fiscal impact for the implementation of this program.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Ordinances and Resolution.
2. Excerpt of Minutes: February 28, 2005
3. Resolution 2005-R006
4. Chapter 9.01 (Animals and Fowl)
5. Excerpt of Minutes: September 11, 2006
6. Chapter 10.90 (of Title 10)

MOTION:

That the City Council:

With respect to implementing mandatory conditions for licensing of cats:

1. Introduce an ordinance requiring the mandatory microchipping and alteration of cats, with exemptions similar to those currently offered to dogs (if appropriate for cats) (Ordinance – Version “A”); or
2. Introduce an ordinance requiring the mandatory microchipping of cats, (Ordinance – Version “B”); or
3. Introduce an ordinance requiring the mandatory alteration of cats with exemptions similar to those currently offered to dogs (if appropriate for cats) (Ordinance – Version “C”).

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

With respect to establishing fees and fee exemptions related to licensing of cats:

4. Adopt the proposed resolution; or
5. Provide other direction to staff.

With respect to additional items related to cats:

6. Direct staff to return to Council with options for a low cost vaccination and free microchipping clinic for cats; or,

With respect to all of the above items:

7. Provide other direction to staff.