

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Chicago City Council to Consider Mandatory Spay/Neuter

The Chicago City Council Committee on Finance will hold a joint hearing with the Committee on License and Consumer Protection on Tuesday July 29th to discuss a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. It is vital that responsible dog owners and breeders attend the hearing to oppose this measure.

The ordinance will require that all dogs cats and over the age of six months be spayed or neutered unless they qualify for one of the following exemptions:

A licensed veterinarian certifies that the animal's health would best be served by spaying/neutering after a specified date, or that due to age or poor health it is unsafe to sterilize the animal at this time.

The owner of the dog or cat has a valid \$100 breeding permit.

Applicants are required to undergo a criminal background check.

Residents are permitted to whelp only 1 litter per year unless they receive a special exemption from the commission. A separate permit is still required for each animal, even if it is not being bred that year.

This permit is in addition to the \$50 intact license fee.

The breeding permit number must be displayed in any advertisement for sale.

Breeders are required to provide contact information for new owners to the city and to present the new owner with an application for a pet license.

The dog or cat is registered with a registry approved by the commission and is kept for the purposes of competing in legitimate shows or competitions. (It is unclear how an owner would demonstrate this.)

The dog has earned, or is actively being trained and is in the process of earning an agility, carting, herding, protection, rally, hunting, working or other title from an approved registry or association. (It is unclear how a resident would prove an animal is being "trained.")

The dog is trained or in the process of being trained as a guide, signal or service dog or is enrolled in a licensed breeding program for these activities.

The dog is trained or in the process of being trained and is actively used by law enforcement agencies or the military.

The ordinance makes a variety of findings, many of which are related to dangerous dogs and dog fighting. It is not reasonable to believe that individuals who are engaging in dog fighting, which is a felony under Illinois state law, would comply with animal control regulations, the violation of which generates only the issuance of a citation. Enactment of this ordinance would only serve to punish responsible dog owners and breeders for a problem they did not create.

The proposal allows animals to be impounded simply because they are not sterilized, a situation that is likely to increase the number of animals in shelters, not decrease it. To reclaim an animal it must be sterilized and microchipped and the owner must pay the full costs of those procedures in addition to penalties. Again, this is likely to force more abandonments and increase shelter populations.

The American Kennel Club opposes the concept of breeding permits, breeding bans, or

the mandatory spay/neuter of purebred dogs. Instead, we support reasonable and enforceable laws that protect the welfare and health of purebred dogs and do not restrict the rights of breeders and owners who take their responsibilities seriously. Additionally, we strongly support and actively promote a wide range of programs to educate the public about responsible breeding practices and the responsibilities of dog ownership.

What You Can Do

Attend the Committee meeting at 10am on July 29th
Chicago City Hall
121 North La Salle Street,
Chicago, IL

Chicago residents, send a letter to the Alderman who represents your district. Please click here for a sample letter. Remember that this letter must be personalized and you need to include your full name and mailing address so you will be recognized as a constituent. To find out who represents you, please click here.

Fanciers who have traveled to Chicago to attend dog events, please personalize this sample letter and send it to the authors, Aldermen Burke and Rugai as well as Alderman Schulter, Chair of the Committee on Licensing and Consumer Protection.

Club Officers please have your club author a letter opposing this ordinance and send it to the Aldermen listed below. A sample letter to personalize can be found here.

Contact Information for the Aldermen Burke, Rugai and Schulter

Alderman Edward Burke
Chair, Committee on Finance
121 N. LaSalle St., Room 302
Chicago, IL 60602
eburke@cityofchicago.org
FAX: (312) 744-1955

Alderman Virginia Rugai
121 N. LaSalle St., Room 300
Chicago, IL 60602
vrugai@cityofchicago.org
FAX: 773- 238-9049

Alderman Eugene Schulter
Chair, Committee on License and Consumer Protection
121 N. LaSalle St., Room 300
Chicago, IL 60602
ward47@cityofchicago.org
FAX: 312-744-1509

Marjorie Martorella
Marjetta Pointers & English Cockers
www.marjetta.com