

Sonoma County Animal Services Partnership
Animal Ordinance Review Workgroup – Meeting Notes
 December 18, 2013, 2:00 - 4:00pm
 415 Humboldt Street, Santa Rosa – Humboldt Conference Room

Present: Brigid Wasson, Darryl Roberts, Ellen Bauer, Esther Molina, Mark Penn, Mickey Zeldas, Richard Pope, Sandi Potter, Sheri Cardo and Becky Lunders (facilitator)

Topic	Discussion	Action/Decision
Input and feedback from Animal Services Partnership	Brigid shared our findings at the last Animal Services Partnership and gave the supporting “why” behind the proposed changes with the goal being to improve the ordinance and improve consistency between jurisdictions.	Ordinance Workgroup members are invited to attend the next ASP meeting to show support for the Partnership. If available, mark your calendar for February 13 th 10:30am-Noon at the Finley Center.
Ordinance Review discussion	<p>We further discussed several areas of the ordinance. Below is a summary with action items in the next column:</p> <p>Overall Ordinance: There is interest in developing a matrix of county and city ordinance issues so we can see where there is consistency and where there is a big gap. [Example: the number of days an animal is in our possession before you are considered the owner – RP = 30 days; Sonoma County = 15 days.]</p> <p>Brigid noted that ACC’s top priorities are rabies control and public safety.</p>	<p>Group recommends changing ordinance to 30 days in which one becomes the owner of the pet, with flexibility for fosters.</p> <p><u>Ellen:</u> Develop matrix of ordinance-related issues and how each jurisdiction handles them.</p>
Licensing	Cat licensing is still an option. Rohnert Park and Novato both require it. Mickey likes it because it treats cats equally to dogs (fee is the same). She noted that shelters deal more with cats than dogs and they are a bigger burden to the system. They enforce on redemption and adoption, not proactive citation. Feral cats are exempt.	<u>Brigid:</u> create definition of “community cat” so that, if cat licensing becomes mandatory, they can be exempt. Consider fee increase as County cat license is only \$5.75.
Standards of Care	<p>Standards of Care – this applies to all animals, not just cats and dogs and is based on AVA standards.</p> <p>We may be able to omit some areas of the ordinance when we add standards of care.</p>	<p><u>Richard</u> is working on an educational brochure that can be used to define standards of care and can be given out to the public.</p> <p>We’ll also need to develop a checklist for enforcement based on Standards of Care.</p>

Sonoma County Animal Services Partnership
Animal Ordinance Review Workgroup – Meeting Notes
 December 18, 2013, 2:00 - 4:00pm
 415 Humboldt Street, Santa Rosa – Humboldt Conference Room

Topic	Discussion	Action/Decision
Assistance Dogs	<p>Esther recommended we change “service” dogs to “assistance” dogs to be inclusive of guide, service, hearing, and diabetic alert dogs (from Assistance Dog International). We need to better define what assistance dogs are in the ordinance.</p> <p>Emotional support dogs are not included in CA law. Businesses can’t ask about disability, but can ask, “What special task is your dog trained to do?” (Although business owners have been sued for even asking this question).</p> <p>There is also a desire to look at the proof needed to get a service dog tag (which is not the same as a license tag – owners of service dogs are required to follow the same laws as everyone else) due to the large use of fraudulent /companion dogs and the impact that has on true assistance dogs. Marin may require a prescription to get a service tag (Sheri to explore).</p>	<p><u>Esther</u> will recommend language to use to define assistance dogs based on CA law.</p> <p>Discontinue free licensing for “service dogs” which is not mandated and costs ACC over \$30,000 in lost yearly revenue.</p>
Spay/Neuter	<p>The key takeaways for Spay/Neuter are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the requirement to alter “at large” dogs (this is the stick) • No mandatory spay/neuter (those that have it don’t seem to see more compliance) • No breed-specific verbiage • Use low cost spay/neuter and education as the carrot to get people to alter their animals. 	<p>Brigid/Sheri: document stats for dog bites in relation to breed and sex to show the effect of BSL on public safety.</p>
Barking Dogs	<p>This is a high complaint area for ACC. We need to ensure the ordinance is strong and that the procedure supports it. While the Orange County ordinance is not much different than Sonoma County’s, the procedure is very different. Education needs to be the precursor to solving barking dog problems.</p> <p>May want to consider holding focus groups of individuals involved in successfully resolved dog barking problems so solutions can be identified.</p>	<p>The group likes a hybrid between current Sonoma County and Orange County ordinance.</p> <p><u>Sandi</u> will look into the noise definition from the General Plan when it comes to the noise nuisance issue.</p>
Next Steps	<p>Brigid will work on taking all the input we’ve received and do a new draft of the changes to the ordinance so we can get proposed changes to county counsel in January.</p>	<p><u>Brigid</u> will make revisions to ordinance; workgroup will review at next meeting.</p>
Next meeting	<p>Agenda Items for next meeting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize changes to the ordinance and prepare to send to County Counsel for review 	<p>Next meeting is January 23, from 3:00 to 5:00 at the PRMD front conference room. The PRMD office is located at the County Campus: Permit and Resource Management Department, 2550 Ventura Ave., Santa Rosa</p>