



Legislation Text

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Clerk 5/30/2007

A MOTION relating to the provision of services to animals and requesting the county executive to transmit a report to include recommendations to improve the humane care of animals.

WHEREAS, the survival of domestic animals is dependent on the provision of care by people, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals is of value to the citizens of King County, and

WHEREAS, King County provides shelter to domestic animals who are lost, abandoned, surrendered or unclaimed, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals in King County shelters includes the provision of medical care, treatment, rehabilitation and hygiene, and

WHEREAS, the provision of medical care to animals requires the skills of licensed veterinarians and technicians, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals in King County shelters includes the provision of temperament testing of dogs to determine whether the dogs are irreparably vicious towards humans, and

WHEREAS, the temperament testing of dogs requires the establishment of protocols and the skills of an expert who is educated and experienced in the study of canine behavior, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals in King County shelters includes the provision of nutrition that is appropriate for an animal's age and health condition, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals in King County shelters includes the provision of opportunities for socialization and exercise, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals in King County shelters includes the provision of facilities that are sanitary, well lit, ventilated and include adequate space for socialization, exercise, medical care and isolation as necessary to prevent the spread of disease and minimize stress and discomfort to animals, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals in King County shelters includes the prevention of euthanasia of animals that could be placed in homes or surrendered to other rescue groups, with the exception of those dogs whose temperament has been tested by an expert in canine behavior and found to be irreparably vicious towards humans, and those animals whose medical conditions have been evaluated by a licensed veterinarian and have been found to preclude a reasonable quality of life due to a poor or grave prognosis for rehabilitation and irremediable suffering, and

WHEREAS, the policy of preventing the euthanasia of savable domestic animals is known as a "no-kill" policy and is the progressive trend in humane animal care nationwide, and

WHEREAS, the implementation of a "no-kill" policy requires a strong community commitment to spay and neuter pets to prevent the future breeding of unwanted animals, and

WHEREAS, the implementation of a "no-kill" policy requires a community and government commitment to save, adopt and place animals that are abandoned, surrendered or unclaimed, and

WHEREAS, the implementation of a "no-kill" policy may be expected to result in a live release save rate of ninety percent of all domestic animals that enter the King County shelter, excluding those animals returned to their owners, and

WHEREAS, the adoption of domestic animals requires shelters to be open to the public beyond standard work hours and to reach out for assistance from volunteers, rescue groups, nonprofit organizations and the community, and

WHEREAS, volunteers are willing and able to assist King County Animal Control staff in the provision of humane care and services to domestic animals, and

WHEREAS, the development of a "no-kill" community requires the support of a Trap-Neuter-Release program for feral and free roaming cats, and

WHEREAS, King County was once nationally recognized as an animal services leader as the second jurisdiction in the nation to implement a mandatory spay/neuter program in its shelters, and

WHEREAS, the humane treatment of domestic animals requires the prevention of animal cruelty, the vigorous investigation of animal cruelty complaints, follow-up with law enforcement officials and the reduction of recidivism, and

WHEREAS, the vigorous investigation of animal cruelty complaints and follow-up with law enforcement officials requires a significant amount of responsibility, time, coordination, and accountability, and

WHEREAS, the reduction of recidivism for people found guilty of or charged with animal cruelty requires preventative action to reduce access to animals, and

WHEREAS, the animal control citizen's advisory committee is responsible for making recommendations on the program goals, objectives, policies, organizational structure and facilities necessary to attain a model animal control program and advise the county executive and council in all aspects of animal welfare and safety, and

WHEREAS, the success of the animal control services section to implement humane standards of animal care should be measured by the percentage of animals that are saved from euthanasia and adopted or placed with homes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The county executive is requested to file with the clerk of the council by August 31, 2007, twelve copies of a report, for distribution to all councilmembers and the lead staff of the committee of the whole, to determine how the King County Animal Control Services Section will become a model program for the humane treatment of animals. The county executive is to work with the animal control citizen's advisory committee, or its successor, and seek the expertise of individuals and organizations in the animal sheltering field with experience

in implementing "no-kill" policies to develop the report. The report shall include the following:

A. An analysis on how King County might implement a "no-kill" policy, with a comparative study of other jurisdictions that have adopted "no-kill" policies, including San Francisco, California, Tompkins County, New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Richmond, Virginia, Reno, Nevada, and Charlottesville, Virginia;

B. Recommendations on staffing levels and qualifications necessary to provide for the humane treatment of animals; including an animal bill of rights to set standards of care and address access to medical attention, hygiene, behavioral evaluation, nutrition, socialization, exercise and appropriate facilities;

C. Recommendations on strengthening community relations through partnerships with individuals, volunteers, rescue groups, nonprofit organizations and educational outreach;

D. Recommendations on increasing the marketing of animals and spay/neuter programs to the public using community partners, local media outlets including newspapers, newsletters, King County Civic Television, public service announcements, newscasts and the Internet;

E. Recommendations on supporting community based programs for the Trap-Neuter-Release of feral and free roaming cats;

F. Recommendations on how to improve the humane treatment of animals in King County shelters through the leveraging of private funds, grants and donations;

G. Recommendations related to the prevention of cruelty to animals, including the benefits of a dedicated staff member to oversee animal cruelty investigations, follow-up with law enforcement officials and oversee a database of persons convicted of or charged with animal cruelty for the restriction of animal licensing; and

H. The development of performance measures that address standards of animal care, adoption, euthanasia rates, the investigation of animal cruelty and coordination with law enforcement officials.