

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

00-287

SYNOPSIS -

AGENDA:

JUNE 26, 2000

The Police Department is requesting modification to Municipal Code 7-31; Impoundment Period pertaining to dogs and 7-43.10; Impoundment Period pertaining to cats.

SUBJECT:

The City Legal Department and Police Department have met and agreed on the proposed change to the ordinances.

DOG AND CAT
IMPOUNDMENT
ORDINANCE
CHANGE

FISCAL IMPACT -

N/A.

TYPE:

RECOMMENDATION -

**RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE**

Modify the paragraph in 7-31 (Dogs) and in 7-43.10 (Cats) by inserting the phrase "During emergency or other circumstances which cause an overcrowding condition at the shelter, the Chief of Police, or the Chief's designee, may shorten the impoundment period for dogs with identification to a minimum of three days after being impounded, unless sooner redeemed."

SUBMITTED BY:

WILLIAM H.
MOULDER
CHIEF OF POLICE

BACKGROUND -

Presently, the ordinance requires the Animal Shelter to hold impounded dogs for a minimum of seven days. Between May and October, the number of dogs impounded exceeds the capacity of the shelter. The shelter reached capacity on May 23, 2000. The City is on notice from the Iowa Department of Agriculture that continued overcrowding at the shelter will result in revocation of the license to operate the shelter. This amendment will allow the shelter to manage the population more efficiently. Dogs that are strays, wild, or adoptable can be removed from the population in a timely manner.

The Capital Improvement Budget 1999-00 contains \$90,000 for

interim expansion of the facility. An additional \$500,000 is in the proposed Capital Improvement Budget for 2005-06. The Council directed the department to seek an alternative solution that would bypass the interim solution and to work with the Animal Rescue League to explore a fundraising effort for the benefit of both agencies.

Joint meetings with Animal Rescue League representatives and the department have not been productive. The Animal Rescue League is about to launch a major fundraising project and does not believe the partnership with the City is necessary for their success. The joint venture is further impeded by the Animal Rescue League's position that they would be the exclusive source for adoptable animals and the requirement that feral (wild) cats that are captured are to be neutered and released. They also want to be paid to accept adoptable pets from the City shelter. These positions are not sound business practices for the City.

The joint meetings identified areas of cooperation:

1. Joint Educational Programs: Both agencies have programs to provide public information on animal care, restrictions, and safety. Programs on pet safety and bite prevention offer areas for cooperation.
2. Incentive Programs to Alter Pets: The Animal Rescue League and the Animal Protection Society of Iowa support a voucher program to neuter pets. The Animal Shelter is seeking to participate in the program.
3. Sharing of information: Sharing information on individuals who have been charged with acts of cruelty or neglect would help both organizations reduce the possibility of adopting a pet to someone who is likely to mistreat animals again.
4. Creation of an Internet Web Site: The creation of an interactive Web Site where individuals could look for lost pets and adoptable pets is possible and has the potential to:
 - A. Provide a quick and easy way for individuals to look for their lost pet(s).
 - B. See what kind of animals are available for adoption at each shelter.
 - C. Reduce the number of places an individual has to go to look for the lost pets or to adopt.

D. Eventually have all metro Animal Control Unit's and Shelters link into this Web Site.

Last year (1999), 318 dogs and 274 cats were adopted from the shelter. The shelter reunited owners with 1,251 dogs and 81 cats.

The modification of the ordinance will give some interim relief to the overcrowding at the Animal Shelter while we attempt to find a way to accomplish the Council's directive to construct the necessary expansion of the shelter capacity without constructing an interim facility.