

Ocampo, Gabriela

From: Mackey, Lawrence J.
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2019 11:15 AM
To: Ocampo, Gabriela
Subject: Fwd: LC Animal Regs - proposed amendments

----- Original message -----

From: Judy Franklin [REDACTED]
Date: 7/5/19 7:10 PM (GMT-06:00)
To: "Mackey, Lawrence J." <LMackey@lakecountyl.gov>
Subject: LC Animal Regs - proposed amendments

5 July 2019

I write in opposition to the proposed changes to the Lake County Animal ordinances.

First, the ordinances regarding dangerous animals are adequate if properly enforced, and proposed changes are unnecessary and confusing at best.

Second, you should be aware that those so-called "local animal welfare advocates" advocating for more and stronger regulation of animal owners and breeders are in fact animal rights advocates, with a quite different agenda than animal welfare. They look upon any animal breeding as cruelty, and breeders as evildoers who are interested only in the money they are able to make raising and selling purebred dogs. In fact, there is little money to be made in breeding dogs, and most purebred dog breeders do so for the love of their breed. A recent DNA study of shelter resident dogs (Gunter et al) showed only 4.9% were purebred, proving that breeders are not the "overpopulation" villains they are made out to be:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0202633>

In fact, there are no puppy mills in Lake County, and these animal rights advocates know it, but in their minds, all breeders are puppy mills, so the truth be damned. Former HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle put it concisely: "I don't want to see another cat or dog born." – as early as 1994. Neither do these people.

Waukegan's venture into breeder regulation ended badly, you will recall, with the theft under color of law (by sworn law enforcement personnel) of a number of purebred dogs, and ended unhappily for Waukegan taxpayers in an expensive but clearly justified lawsuit.

Pet limits are unlikely to make an irresponsible pet owner or breeder responsible, and mandating permitting and inspections for those who exceed an arbitrary limit only serves to put both animals and their owners in an untenable position. Many who find themselves in the position of caring for an aging former breeding animal, the pet of an ailing family member, or the pets of an individual military person on deployment will be affected by these arbitrary rules and will face an unfortunate choice.

Health Department/Animal Control agencies should not put pet owners and breeders in an adversarial position. The Health Department and its Animal Control Department have a responsibility to protect the public from the threat of rabies, to ensure the public is protected from zoonoses, from uncontrolled or dangerous animals, and to ensure the health and safety of our canine and other animal companions in their homes, kennels, or local shelters and rescues. Their issue is public health, and that is where their stewardship should begin and end. Lake County's purebred dog breeders, and many pet owners as well, are the experts in animal husbandry, and should not have their livestock and pets put at a health risk when the County "doggie inspector" tracks disease from door to door. We already are seeing a problem in that dogs imported by "animal rescues" from outside the state/country are importing their exotic diseases as well. (Rabies as was recently found in a dog imported from Egypt, for instance.) We should not have to worry about our own Health Department putting animals at risk, too.

Third, I must acknowledge that I am a long time critic of Lake County's outdated animal control regs, and I believe serious corrections are necessary and should be accomplished before any new responsibilities whatsoever are considered, to wit:

First, the County's differential licensing rates are excessive, and harm both breeders and serious dog owners and hobbyists. Licensing fees are collected by the vets at the time of vaccination for rabies (\$50/yr for intact animals: dogs AND cats.) But, for several years now, vets have been learning about the negative effects of too-early spay and neuter which can include cancers, orthopedic and even behavioral problems. (If you would like to read a few articles on this contact me.) Some breeders are even specifying in their sales contracts that their pups are not to be neutered until a certain level of maturity has been reached, which in larger dogs can be 24 months or more.

Lake County ignores theses studies, and almost spitefully continues to penalize owners financially for not neutering by nine months, contrary to the best interests of the animals.

Further, it is common knowledge that the one year vaccine and the three year vaccine are identical save for labeling. Rabies is one of the nastier vaccines with dangerous side effects, and most informed pet owners do not wish to put their pets at risk unnecessarily. They opt for the three year shot after the first rabies given as a pup, and then get hit with a three year licensing fee if their dog is still intact. Or perhaps they will skip it altogether. Interestingly, Dr. Jean Dodds' Rabies Challenge, which aims to determine the rabies vaccine Duration of Immunity (DOI) is now proven at five years. This research hopefully will spare our pets from dangerous vaccine reactions. But for some reason, and despite this research, the Health Department's "low cost" rabies clinics persist in offering only the one year vaccines, and continue to charge the associated mandatory license fee differential to those informed and responsible owners who decline to neuter a pet at too young an age. (Offering low cost spay/neuter is a help to some, but is only a partial answer to real or perceived pet overpopulation, and is an issue needing discussion in another forum.)

How many people with intact or even neutered pets are avoiding the vets because you have made them into the puppy police, and licenses can be just too expensive? Multiply by the cities such as Waukegan that also charge licensing fees? Multiple dogs? Forget it. If the number of vet visits in general goes down significantly due to owners' fear of being reported, who loses? The vets? The dogs? The owners? This outdated and ill-advised regulation needs to be changed so that everybody benefits. The many low income residents on this County deserve the opportunity to keep pets, and pricing them out of the market with excessive fees and regulation is unacceptable; making them afraid to visit a vet is cruelty.

A reasonable goal should be to license every dog so it can be returned to its owner if it is lost, and if the cost were a few dollars a year for all with only a small intact differential, they might be. Then everybody wins.

Again, the Health Department must become both animal and owner friendly, and has much work to do to catch up with current veterinary and social reality. Giving them more busy-work that only serves to harass owners and breeders would be counterproductive. The problems I noted above are much more critical and should be corrected ASAP for the good of the dogs and their owners. (End of rant.)

Finally, to reiterate, the Health department's job is public health, not to regulate breeders and pet owners out of business. Some people wish to go to a rescue to find a dog; let them. That dog for the most part, however, will have no health or genetic history, let alone a behavioral one. There have been documented cases of rescues rehoming (read reselling) a dog with a known bite history, with tragic consequences; some rescues have had to be sued when they have arbitrarily opted to keep a dog from its proven owner(see Piper the Sheltie's case) or taken under color of law as in the Waukegan case(the Olde English Bulldog while still in transit out of the County after seizure had a posted facebook price tag of \$600 by the "retail rescue" he was slated to go to, before the public brouhaha put an end to that nonsense). There may be bad breeders, but there are also many bad rescues. Some people, like me, are partial to a particular breed we have kept for years. Hence, I opt for the breeder, from whom I can choose a dog that suits my needs. Then my pup and I can look forward to a good life together, hopefully free from the interference of the animal rights crowd, or the politicians who fail to grasp the very real difference between animal rights and real animal welfare.

Judy Franklin

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Waukegan, IL

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