



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Regulatory Services

Date: September 11, 2013

To: Council Member Don Samuels, Chair – Public Safety, Civil Rights & Health Committee

Subject: Ordinance amending Title 4 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to *Animals & Fowl* – Adding Chapter 67: Managed Care of Feral Cats

Recommendation: Approval of ordinance amendment

Previous Directives: On February 13, 2013, the Public Safety, Civil Rights & Health Committee directed Minneapolis Animal Care and Control to work with a community task force to evaluate a trap-neuter-release feral cat program for the City of Minneapolis

Department Information

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Approved by:

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Director of Regulatory Services

Presenters in Committee: Dan Niziolek, Jeanette Wiedemeier Bower

Financial Impact

- No financial impact

Community Impact

- City Goals
 - A Safe Place to Call Home
 - Livable Communities, Healthy Lives

Supporting Information

Minneapolis Animal Care and Control (MACC) brings forward the work of the Trap/Neuter/Return Task Force and MACC's recommendation on Trap/Neuter/Return in the City of Minneapolis.

The Task Force Members represented various organizations and constituency groups. Members represented wildlife groups (Audubon Society), cat rescue and non-profit groups (MNSNAP and Pet Project Rescue), and residents.

During the Task Force Meetings, the following values resonated from the conversations:

- Ensure the safety and health of people.
- Ensure proper welfare and livability of animals (wildlife and domestic).
- Reduce the number of feral cats.
- Ensure accountability of animal caretakers and other relevant groups.
- Transparency of the program and activities.
- Monitor and evaluate the program.
- Create strong supporting, guiding and accountable legal requirements.

Based on these values and the work of the Task Force, Minneapolis Animal Care and Control recommends that the City of Minneapolis pursue allowing Trap/Neuter/Return of feral cats in the City of Minneapolis. Implementation should pursue monitoring and evaluation of the initiative.

The recommendation follows from a number of assumptions:

1. The Task Force was assigned to evaluate Trap/Neuter/Return of feral cats.
2. The feral cat issue is fully a product of free-roaming domestic cats that are not sterilized. Consequently, a key part of any solution for eliminating feral cats is the required sterilization of all free roaming domestic cats. However, this was outside the scope of the Task Force.
3. Feral cats can pose a public health risk especially if they are not vaccinated for rabies. Given rabies exists among certain wildlife (primarily skunks, bats and raccoons), feral cats may provide a potential vehicle for rabies to be reintroduced into the domestic pet population.
4. Feral cats can be a public nuisance and a serious threat to bird species and native rodents.
5. Feral cats display some level of territoriality.
6. Feral cats create costs for animal care and control departments. Costs are due to enforcement, sheltering, and humane euthanasia.
7. The Minneapolis animal community would not accept a trap/euthanasia solution.
8. Other major cities in the United States have implemented Trap/Neuter/Return programs that have proven successful in reducing a) the number of feral cats in identified colonies, b) the number of nuisance cat complaints, and c) animal care and control costs associated with feral cats. Examples include: Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Paul, Oklahoma City, Baltimore, and Jacksonville.

Based on these assumptions, Minneapolis Animal Care and Control recommends that the City of Minneapolis adopt ordinance language that reflects the model used in the Cook County, Illinois. This model works in the following manner.

The animal care and control authority approves, works with, and ensures accountability of "sponsor" feral cat non-profits. These "sponsors" are responsible for:

- overseeing and ensuring compliance of the individual feral cat colony caregivers in the community
- training and supporting individual feral cat colony caregivers
- addressing nuisance cat issues in the community
- providing annual reports to the City of Minneapolis

These non-profits would be fully self-funded. Failure of the "sponsor" to meet the requirements would result in their removal.

In this model, the names of colony caretakers are not held by the municipality. This is intended to protect the caretakers and the colonies from targeting.

Individual colony caretakers are responsible for:

- knowing and monitoring the cats in their colony (including tracking vaccinations given and health status, etc.)
- trapping, vaccinating, micro-chipping, and sterilizing cats in their colony
- addressing nuisance cat issues related to their colony
- feeding, caring for and sheltering within the approved guidelines

Individual colony caretakers that do not abide by the requirements would be removed.

The framework of this approach to Trap/Neuter/Return is built on strong partnerships between the city and the community. This reduces the costs to the City of Minneapolis, as well as ensures strong community support of the initiative.

Minneapolis Animal Care and Control will provide a 1 year report to the council in January of 2015.