

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORT
2019 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-046-2019

Draft No.: 2

Committee: TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 10/10/2019

Action: FAV(A)

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable with amendments, 3-0 (In Favor: Council Members Turner, Dernoga and Glaros)

The TIEE Committee convened on September 26, 2019 and October 10, 2019 to review CB-46-2019, which proposes the comprehensive update of the County's Animal Control Ordinance. The Committee's review began on September 26, 2019 with a presentation by the County Department of the Environment (DOE), which has primary responsibility for enforcement of the ordinance. DOE provided a summary of proposed revisions, which include:

Definitions related to: animal cruelty or neglect (adds criminal and civil penalties for serious and aggravated offenses and defines less serious infractions); Anti-diggers; Care of animals (replacing "adequate" with "proper"); cruelty; dangerous animal; feral; potentially dangerous and wild animals.

Animal Control Commission Updates regarding: membership, hearings/investigations, hearing officers and Commission orders.

Enforcement provisions establishing: criminal penalties for violations of dangerous dog laws; procedures for dealing with feral cats; conditions of ownership for dangerous animals; definition of irresponsible animal owner, and; trap-neuter-return process for free-roaming cats.

Updating fees and standards for Animal holding facilities, cruelty and unlawful restraint, as well as establishing prohibitions for abandonment, poisoning, unsafe vehicle transport and confinement, sexual assault and canned hunting.

The bill was held at the 9/26 meeting and the discussion continued at the committee meeting on October 10, 2019, where the following amendments were considered:

Amendment #1 – allows an owner to petition for the removal of the "potentially dangerous" designation and the requirements lifted from an animal that has not had any further issues for two years after the designation.

Amendment #2 – allows multi-year collection of \$5 cat licensing fee, to coincide with Health Department rabies vaccination (staff directed to draft amendment language)

Amendment #3 – changes name to “Animal Services and Adoption Center”; clarifies language referring to specified exemptions from the “Animals at large” prohibition, and; increases the annual license fee (from \$5 to \$10) for spayed or neutered animals

Amendment #4 – excludes free-roaming cats from the definition of “animal at large” and clarifies that free-roaming cats (and the feeding and caring for them) do not create a public nuisance

Amendment #5 – removes all language from the Animal Control Ordinance specifically relating to and prohibiting Pit Bull Terriers

The committee voted favorably on each of the five amendments by a vote of 3-0.

After the review and discussion, the Committee voted favorably on CB-46-2019 as amended by a vote of 3-0.