

**MEMORANDUM**

Agenda Item No. 13(L)

TO: Honorable Chairperson and Members
Board of County Commissioners

DATE: June 17, 2003

FROM: Steve Shiver
County Manager

SUBJECT: Ordinance Establishing the
Licensing of Cats and
Request for Approval to
Raise Current Dog
Licensing Rates

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve the attached ordinance establishing a \$10 annual license fee for both sterilized and unsterilized cats. In conjunction with the attached ordinance, approval is requested to raise current dog licensing rates from \$20 to \$25 annually for sterilized dogs and from \$32 to \$35 annually for intact dogs. If the ordinance and the recommended rates are approved, Administrative Order 4-51 will be amended accordingly. The effective date for the ordinance and new dog licensing rates will be October 1, 2003.

BACKGROUND

Miami-Dade County has established the largest completely free spay and neuter program in the country, bringing the County very positive national and international recognition. Additionally, the Miami-Dade Police Department's Animal Services Unit has committed its resources to end the euthanasia of healthy, adoptable animals, and has implemented a number of additional adoption strategies to promote adoptions, rather than the killing of these stray and abandoned animals. This progressive approach is designed to provide a long-term and lasting solution to the pet overpopulation, reported dog bites, and nuisance animal concerns of the County. As fewer litters of animals are being born, the County will expend fewer resources in terms of animal pick-ups and calls for service.

The Animal Services Unit currently works closely with three humane societies and more than 70 animal rescue/welfare groups to provide euthanasia alternatives, adoption and pet owner education opportunities to the community. Dogs are no longer killed after a five or 10-day statutory holding period. Cats are held for adoption rather than immediately killed upon intake at the shelter. This policy change was brought about by community concerns and at the request of animal welfare groups and activists in our community. Miami-Dade County has gained national recognition for placing value on these companion animals and for creating euthanasia alternatives.

The Animal Services Unit's budget remains self-proprietary in nature, operating from fees and fines collected under Chapter 5 of the County Code and from a \$700,000 allocation from the General Revenue Fund for enhanced dead animal removal. The Animal Services Unit has traditionally operated under a very tight budget, relying in part from an infusion of funds from the Animal Trust where budget short falls have occurred.

Although the Animal Services Unit projects a balanced budget for fiscal year 2002/2003, it projects a budget shortfall for fiscal year 2003/2004, because of increased personnel, salary and fringe costs, without an increase in the current fee structure.

Cat licensing is the industry standard for communities across the country. Previous concerns regarding the licensing of cats in Miami-Dade County have focused around the wearing of collars and rabies tags. Miami-Dade County would not be mandating that collars and tags be worn, only that the cat owner maintains a copy of the rabies certificate. The purchase of a cat license would be a requirement of the County's free spay and neuter program. Because of the County's commitment to addressing the pet overpopulation problems associated with feral cats, and the spay and neuter program offered to its residents, initial reaction to those contacted regarding this licensing proposal has been positive.

In addition to the attached recommended ordinance, the Miami-Dade Police Department Animal Services Unit is recommending an increase in the current licensing rates for dogs which have been in place since 1993. Because of the County's free spay and neuter program (designed in part to increase compliance with licensing) and the value now attached to licensing, as well as the County's commitment to reducing the surplus animal population, initial reaction to those contacted regarding this proposed rate change has been extremely positive.

Should the recommended ordinance and the rate changes be approved, first year revenues are projected as follows:

Cat License Rates

Intact Cats	\$10	10,000 licenses @ \$10 per license =	\$100,000
Sterilized Cats	\$10	10,000 licenses @ \$10 per license =	\$100,000

Dog License Rates

Intact Dogs from \$32 to \$35	67,088 licenses @ \$3 per license =	\$201,264
Sterilized Dogs from \$20 to \$25	82,845 licenses @ \$5 per license =	\$414,225

Projected first year revenues = \$815,489

Honorable Chairperson and Members
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Should the recommended ordinance and proposed rate changes not be approved, the Animal Services Unit would be forced to make policy changes to meet budgetary constraints. Those policy changes may include:

- A return to the euthanasia of healthy dogs immediately following the statutory 5-10 day holding period.
- A return to the immediate euthanasia of stray and feral cats.
- A reduction in community adoption and pet education outreach events.
- Discontinuation of the County's free spay and neuter program.

The Miami-Dade Police Department's Animal Services Unit has worked hard to address community concerns regarding responsible animal welfare and management. The Unit has developed a tremendously successful rapport with animal welfare groups and activists in the community gaining national recognition in the process. Policy changes and programs implemented as a result of the County's transition of the Animal Services Unit from the Public Works Department to the Miami-Dade Police Department in 2001, have had a positive impact on the community and take a responsible approach in dealing with the pet overpopulation concerns of our community. It has been determined that the continuation of these established programs would reduce the demand for resources over time and become even more cost-effective in the future as the surplus pet population declines. It is considered that the community will overwhelmingly embrace these recommendations because the benefits of the existing programs are more significant than the cat licensing and modest fee increases.

Attachment



MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairperson and Members
Board of County Commissioners

DATE: June 17, 2003

FROM: Robert A. Ginsburg
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 13(L)

Please note any items checked.

- "4-Day Rule" ("3-Day Rule" for committees) applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Bid waiver requiring County Manager's written recommendation
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Manager's report for public hearing
- Housekeeping item (no policy decision required)
- No committee review

Approved _____ Mayor

Agenda Item No. 13(L)

Veto _____

6-17-03

Override _____

ORDINANCE NO. _____

ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE LICENSING OF CATS;
AMENDING SECTION 5-20 AND REPEALING SECTION 5-21
OF THE CODE OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA;
PROVIDING SEVERABILITY, INCLUSION IN THE CODE
AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA:**

Section 1. Section 5-20 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, Florida, is hereby
amended to read as follows:¹

Sec. 5-20. Vaccinations against rabies.

Every person who owns or harbors any cat over the age of four (4) months in the County shall, >>within thirty (30) days of ownership or the effective date of this ordinance,<< have the cat vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian of his choice, >>and shall register said cat with the Miami-Dade County Animal Services Unit and obtain a license tag. This license tag need not be worn at all times, however evidence of the vaccination shall be maintained by the owner.<< Evidence of vaccination shall consist of an official County certificate prescribed for this purpose by the Department of Animal Services and signed by the licensed veterinarian administering the vaccine. The certificate in duplicate shall show the date and type of vaccination, the name and address of the owner, the year and serial number of the registration tag, [[if issued,]] the breed, age, color and size and other pertinent data for proper identification of the cat. One (1) copy of the certificate shall be given to the owner and one (1) copy retained by the veterinarian administering the vaccine. However, no cat need be vaccinated for rabies where:

¹ Words stricken through and/or [[double bracketed]] shall be deleted. Words underscored and/or >>double arrowed<< constitute the amendment proposed. Remaining provisions are now in effect and remain unchanged.

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(1) A licensed veterinarian has examined the cat and certified that at such time vaccination would endanger the cat's health because of its age, infirmity, debility or other physiological consideration:

(2) Such certificate is presented to the enforcement agency within five (5) days of such examination; such certificate shall not be valid for more than twelve (12) months from date of issuance; and

Section 2. Section 5-21 is repealed in its entirety.

Section 3. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or provision of this ordinance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance shall not be affected by such invalidity.

Section 4. It is the intention of the Board of County Commissioners, and it is hereby ordained that the provisions of this ordinance, including any sunset provision, shall become and be made a part of the Code of Miami-Dade County, Florida. The sections of this ordinance may be renumbered or relettered to accomplish such intention, and the word "ordinance" may be changed to "section," "article," or other appropriate word.

Section 5. This ordinance shall become October 1, 2003 unless vetoed by the Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board.

PASSED AND ADOPTED:

Approved by County Attorney as
To form and legal sufficiency: RA6

Prepared by: K.B.D.

Kenneth B. Drucker