



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 1/11/2022

ALL

Item Creation Date: 11/19/2021

ARA - Chapter 6 Amendments

Agenda Item#: 13.

Summary:

NOT A REAL CAPTION

ORDINANCE amending Chapter 6 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinance relating to animals.

Background:

The Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA) requests the approval of various changes to Chapter 6 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances.

Chapter 6 was last amended in May 2014. Since that time, there have been substantial changes in State law and improvements in animal licensing and tracking technology. Specifically, new State laws enacted include revisions to aggressive and dangerous dog procedures; dog restraint standards for sheltering outside animals, and mandated access to clean drinking water and adequate shelter at all times for these animals.

The proposed amendments also include mandatory microchipping for all owned animals, eliminating the traditional rabies tag and replacing it with a microchip. A City pet license will still be required; however, rather than issuing a physical metal tag for the pet's collar – which can easily be lost or damaged – BARC will use the microchip number as the proof of licensing. This change will allow BARC Animal Enforcement Officers to scan and return a pet to its owner while the officers are in the field, eliminating the need to bring the animal back to the shelter for intake. BARC is also proposing to reduce the stray hold from 72 hours to 48 hours for animals without a microchip allowing for quicker adoptions and transfers.

The proposed amendments would also require all pet stores located within the city limits to sell *only* dogs and cats sourced from a humane organization or a municipal/county animal shelter. A humane organization is a not-for-profit organization that does not breed animals or does not obtain a dog or cat from a person that breeds or sales animals. Currently, there are five pet stores in the Houston area that sell puppies and kittens from breeders. It is important to note that although this provision will be effective immediately for any new entrant to the Houston market, existing pet stores will be given one year to come into compliance.

Other matters addressed by the proposed amendments include updates to the several definitions in Chapter 6, as well as correcting scrivener's errors from the 2014 amendments.

The proposed amendments to Chapter 6 were presented by ARA to the Regulatory and Neighborhood Affairs Committee on December 14, 2021.

Fiscal Note:

There is no impact to the fiscal budget or no additional spending authority. Therefore, no Fiscal Note is required as stated in the Financial Policies.

Departmental Approval Authority:

DocuSigned by:

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Tina Paez, Director
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Other Authorization

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