



County of Hamilton State of Indiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tammy Sander

Phone: (317) 517-9520

Email: tammy.sander@hamiltoncounty.in.gov

County Commissioners to Vote on Proposed Amendments to Animal Ordinance Proposed Changes Address Extreme Weather & Strengthen Penalties for Neglect

(NOBLESVILLE, AUGUST 27, 2019) – The Hamilton County Commissioners are working in collaboration with the Humane Society for Hamilton County to update the County’s animal ordinances which were last revised in 2006. They are inviting the public to review the proposed revisions and FAQ’s and to offer feedback at their next meeting on September 9th.

“Last winter we had some residents concerned about the safety and well-being of animals during a bitter cold snap,” County Commissioner Mark Heirbrandt says. “That discussion provided a great opportunity to reevaluate our animal ordinance, introduce new guidelines, and more clearly define some ambiguous language.”

The committee assembled to update the ordinance presented its proposed ordinance to the County Commissioners Monday, August 26th. The proposal includes new temperature guidelines to protect animals from extreme weather conditions. It also more clearly defines “adequate” food, water, shelter, space, ventilation, and veterinary care as it pertains to domesticated pets. New definitions and penalties have also been added for backyard breeders and puppy mills. The proposed changes also further define and strengthen the penalties for animal abuse and neglect.

“We believe this is a precedent-setting ordinance,” says Rebecca Stevens, president and CEO of the Humane Society for Hamilton County. “We’ve studied local ordinances across the United States and surveyed law enforcement in other counties to gauge the effectiveness and enforceability of their current ordinances. We’ve done our due diligence to develop an ordinance we feel could serve as a best practice for other communities.”

The proposed does not have an impact on livestock animals as that is governed by Indiana State Law by the Indiana State Board of Animal Health. The ordinance will be enforceable in unincorporated areas of the County, but the hope is other cities and towns in Hamilton County will consider adopting it as well.

“Currently all other municipalities utilize their own local animal ordinances and personnel for enforcement that take precedent over Hamilton County’s ordinances,” says Hamilton County Animal Control Deputy Doug Sanford.

“It is our hope Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville, and Westfield will consider adopting the same language to make for easier and more consistent enforcement.”

County Commissioners will vote on the proposed changes at their next meeting on Monday, September 9th in the Commissioner’s Chambers at the Judicial Center at 1:00 p.m. If approved, the updated ordinance will go into effect November 15, 2019. The proposed ordinance, along with an FAQ section, can be found on the County’s website at www.hamiltoncounty.in.gov. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Commissioners’ Office at 317-776-9719.