



## Executive Summary

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**Issue Description:** Animal Control Citizens Advisory Committee - Recommendations

**Meeting Date:** August 12, 2013

**Attendees:** Eric Baker and Angie Silva

**Action Requested At This Meeting:** Review the recommendations of the Animal Control Citizens Advisory Committee and discuss next steps for their consideration.

**Background:** The Board of Commissioners formed the Animal Control Citizens Advisory Committee in early 2013 to review the state and local animal control regulations and taxpayer responsibilities for their enforcement.

This Committee met twice-monthly, through June and prepared a set of recommendations to streamline animal control services, increase pet licensing compliance and update fees based upon 2013 circumstances.

Their process, findings and recommendations are included in the attached report.

**Attached:** Animal Control Citizens Advisory Committee Review and Recommendations

# **KITSAP COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

July 2013



Kitsap County Special Projects  
614 Division Street, MS-4  
Port Orchard, WA

## MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the Kitsap County Animal Control Citizens Advisory Committee (ACCAC) was to provide recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) regarding taxpayer responsibilities for specific animal control and animal welfare services required by state law or historically provided in unincorporated Kitsap County. The focus of the ACCAC was on priority, enforcement and taxpayer responsibility for the following elements of animal control:

- Animal cruelty
- Dangerous animals
- Livestock at-large
- Collection of domestic animals at-large (stray animals)
- Veterinary care of stray animals (vaccinations, spay/neuter, emergency care)
- Kenneling duration for stray animals (length of stay)
- Adoption/relocation programs
- Feral animals and trap, neuter and release programs
- Animal noise complaints
- Pet licensing program

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee consisted of nine members appointed by the Board; two from each District and three at-large members. These appointments included citizens with expertise in animal welfare issues, veterinary care, large organization budgeting and animal control enforcement or code implementation. The appointed members included:

### **District 1 (North Kitsap)**

Steve Maxim  
James Moore

### **District 3 (Central Kitsap)**

Heidi Wakefield  
Laura Woodrum

### **District 2 (South Kitsap)**

Tim Anderson  
Carrie L. Thompson

### **At-Large (Countywide)**

Jim Sommerhauser  
Gordon Walgren  
Sean Reichle

County staff, with direction from the Board, focused meetings on the documented mission, expected deliverables and provided administrative support such as preparing meeting agendas and circulating documents and materials.

## SCHEDULE

The Committee met twice monthly through June 24, 2013 to discuss:

- **Existing Laws.** Reviewed State law and County Code requirements regarding animal control services.
- **Countywide service challenges.** Presentations from Kitsap Humane Society on challenges in the provision of animal control/animal welfare services on a countywide level.
- **Other jurisdictional review.** Reviewed techniques of other jurisdictions such as King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Mason Counties.
- **Operational revenue and expenditures.** Information was provided by the Kitsap Humane Society on existing budget information that included costs of specific animal welfare services, as well as assumptions on the direct and indirect public benefits of each service.

These meetings were held on the second and fourth Thursday evenings of the month beginning at 6:00PM. The meetings at the beginning of the process focused on presentations to establish a baseline of information for the Committee to use in their deliberations. Specific dates and topics for each of the seven meetings are included below.

Meeting Date	Location	Topic	Goal
March 28	Port Blakely Conference Room	<b>Presentation:</b> County Budget <b>Discussion:</b> State RCW and current County Code requirements	Understanding of budget issues, breadth of RCW requirements and current Code obligations/limitations.
April 11	Port Blakely Conference Room	<b>Presentation:</b> Kitsap Humane Society Budget and Activity Reports	Understanding of the scope of KHS activities and their distributed costs by element and jurisdiction.
		<b>Presentation:</b> Animal Control investigation practices <b>Discussion:</b> Question and Answer	Understanding of current animal control investigation practices for various types of complaints.
April 25	Kitsap Humane Society	<b>Presentation:</b> Tour of Kitsap Humane Society facilities <b>Discussion:</b> Question and Answer	Understanding of shelter and veterinary activities and origins of costs for stray pets and livestock as well as other impounded animals.
May 9	Port Blakely Conference Room	<b>Presentation:</b> Animal Licensing through Auditor (2011-2012) <b>Discussion:</b> Animal Licensing and other revenues	Understanding of current licensing process, outreach and revenues. Discussion of licensing methods and revenue generation of other jurisdictions.

Meeting Date	Location	Topic	Goal
May 23	Port Blakely Conference Room	<b>Discussion:</b> Findings on Animal Control services	Development of problem statements, observations and “facts” regarding service provision issues in unincorporated Kitsap. Grouped by element of animal control (revenue, enforcement, code, etc.)
June 13	Port Blakely Conference Room	<b>Discussion:</b> Proposals for preliminary recommendations and Code revisions (contract, procedures, revenues)	Preliminary recommendations to address findings with pros and cons of each proposed recommendation.
June 24	Port Blakely Conference Room	<b>Discussion:</b> Deliberation on recommendations to Board	Final recommendations of the committee in the areas of code, contract, procedures and revenues.

Meetings were well attended, both by the Committee members and other interested parties.

## FINDINGS

With its establishment, the Board expected the Committee to develop written recommendations that addressed:

- Prioritization of animal control functions
- Animal control functions that should be discontinued, if any
- Taxpayer responsibility for animal control functions
- Cost savings in provision of animal control services
- Revenue generation alternatives for specific services

The Committee discussed many topics during the process. Below are general observations of the majority of the Committee that lead to their recommendations.

### General

- The County Code is primarily clear regarding animal control regulations.
- The County Code covers responsibilities specifically required by Washington State law.
- Certain aspects of County Code restrict the ability to amend fees to reflect rising costs or other factors.
- Coordination between the Kitsap County and the animal control authority (currently the Kitsap Humane Society) should be improved.
- Animal control regulations, fees and procedures should be as consistent as possible amongst all Kitsap jurisdictions (County, cities and US Navy).
- Spay/neuter programs provide a significant benefit in controlling the pet population and reducing the need for animal control services.

- The current County contract does not cover all animal control services or costs as currently administered. However, the amount of the contract deficit is less clear.
- Stray animal investigations and impound comprise a majority of all animal control costs, primarily due to sheltering and veterinary care.
- The reporting of animal control services funded by the County contract should continue to improve to better capture the true costs of service to unincorporated citizens.

### **Pet Licensing**

- There is poor track record of pet licensing compliance countywide.
- There is a significant disconnect between adopted animals and subsequent licensing on an annual basis.
- Lack of online or other user-friendly payment methods affects compliance.
- Lack of options to annual pet licensing (multi-year or lifetime licenses) affects compliance.
- Disconnect between pet licensing and the sale or adoption of pets at certain locations (pet stores, feed stores, etc.) reduces compliance.
- While license fees should be collected through multiple venues, only one agency should be responsible for dispensing license tags and responsible for subsequent renewal notices.
- License fee categories should be contracted and the fees themselves increased to reflect 2013 realities.
- License fee revenues should directly fund animal control service contract rather than other general fund services.
- Pet licensing provides an excellent opportunity to ensure animals have been vaccinated against rabies.
- Education regarding the benefits of pet licensing is not well known within the community.
- Microchipping of animals at the time of licensing can expedite the reuniting pet owners with their animals in a timelier manner, reducing sheltering costs.

### **Investigation and Impound**

- Animal cruelty and dangerous dog investigations should be highest priority.
- Stray animal collection and impound is a significant benefit to animals, pet owners and the citizens at-large by controlling the spread of disease and other public nuisances.
- Current animal noise regulations have lead to investigations that are extremely time-consuming and not regularly successful.
- Certain offenses should be reclassified from civil infractions to civil penalties to allow flexibility in fine amounts and the venue in which they are heard (District Court versus a Hearing Examiner).
- Stray animal hold times should be amended to create a greater benefit of pet licensing and to expedite adoption of animals unlikely to be reclaimed.
- Redemption fees should be increased to reflect current costs.

**ANIMAL CONTROL CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATIONS MATRIX**

**ANIMAL CONTROL INVESTIGATIONS – ANIMAL NOISE**

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Educate citizens on methods of minimizing animal noise.</b> Provide written materials at the point of first report that help residents quiet their animals and reduce potential complaints.</p>			<p>Provide written materials regarding animal noise with methods to minimize their impacts to neighbors.</p>
<p><b>Require multiple reports to trigger full investigation.</b> Currently, complaints from only one neighbor providing the necessary documentation is enough to require a penalty. They do not have to appear in court to substantiate the claims. This can allow animal control services to be used inappropriately as a weapon in neighborhood disputes. Require complaints from a minimum of two neighbors to pursue penalties and both neighbors must appear at any penalty hearing (similar to King County model).</p>	<p>Amend section 7.14.030 to require a minimum of two neighbors documenting a noise issue prior to assessing penalty.</p>		

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Increase penalties for repeated violations.</b> Animal noise penalties will increase with each found committed. Second offense doubles the penalty. Third offense doubles the penalty yet again or may lead to seizure of the animal.</p>	<p>Amend section 7.14.030 to reflect escalating penalties. Also, include penalties in the fee/penalty resolution.</p>		
<p><b>Utilize dispute resolution as an option.</b> For issues with only one complainant direct them to dispute resolution as an option. This will hopefully create a better environment for neighbors to work through the uses (which are not always limited to animal noise).</p>			<p>Provide written materials regarding the use and benefits of dispute resolution in neighborhood disputes.</p>

### ANIMAL CONTROL INVESTIGATIONS – ANIMAL CRUELTY

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Animal cruelty holds.</b> Sometimes, animals associated with cruelty cases are held by KHS for extended periods. Improved coordination with the Prosecutor and Courts may help reduce these costs.</p>			<p>Work with Prosecutor and Courts to expedite animal cruelty cases.</p>

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Allow owners to post a bond after 15 days to have their animal returned to them.</b> To reduce the time and associated costs of holding animals involved in animal cruelty cases, allow owners to post a bond (up to \$2,500) to retrieve the animal while the case is pending. This bond would be released upon the completion of the cruelty case.</p>	<p>Amend 7.10.010 to reflect process for animal cruelty investigations.</p>		<p>Work with Sheriff and/or animal control officers to collect all necessary evidence at the time of intake.</p>

### ANIMAL CONTROL INVESTIGATIONS – DANGEROUS DOGS

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Follow the process established in Section 7.12.020(c).</b> Current code provides for a clear process for potentially dangerous and dangerous dog investigations that is consistent with state RCW requirements.</p>			<p>No changes.</p>

## ANIMAL CONTROL INVESTIGATIONS – OTHER

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Infractions.</b> Remove animal control infractions from District Court and move them to a Hearing Examiner process. This allows a greater local capture of paid penalties (currently, through District Court, the vast majority goes to the State).</p> <p>Penalties should be dependent on the infraction rather than grouped together where possible.</p> <p>Penalties should be decoupled from County Code and established with license and redemption fees through Board resolution. This will allow their update with the County budget or contracting for services.</p>	<p>Amend KCC 7.14.040 to reflect new hearing body and how penalties will be set (by resolution).</p> <p>Resolution should include specific penalties for specific infractions.</p>		<p>Public outreach will need to be conducted to notify of procedure changes.</p> <p>Training will need to be provided to KHS staff on policy changes.</p>
<p><b>Remove animal in heat as a violation.</b> These investigations are very hard to prove and are generally addressed by other violations (animal at-large, etc.)</p>	<p>Amend Chapter 7.14 to remove animal in heat as a violation.</p>		

## STRAY ANIMALS – PICK-UP AND INTAKE

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Spay/Neuter.</b> Many unaltered stray animals add to the pet population before they are brought to KHS. This adds to the pet population problem. After the second impound, require stray animals brought to KHS to be spayed or neutered prior to them being redeemed by their owners.</p>	<p>Amend section 7.10.010 to reflect the requirement for spay/neutering after second impound.</p>		<p>Public outreach will need to be conducted to notify of procedure changes.</p>
<p><b>Stray animals returned to their owners without KHS intake.</b> Often unlicensed animals can be returned to their owners without taking them to the shelter (with some form of identification). This has been done free of charge. Propose assessing a \$45 civil infraction prior returning them to their owners. This bill would be paid by mail.</p>	<p>Amend sub-section 7.01.010(a) to reflect the procedure for returning an animal to its owner without full impoundment.</p> <p>Amend sub-section 7.01.010(e) and/ or 7.14.030 to reflect the fee associated with the animals return without impound.</p>		<p>KHS officers will need to inform the citizen of the fee prior to release of the animal and administrative staff will need to follow up with a formal bill by mail or other method.</p>

## STRAY ANIMALS – HOLDS AND OTHER SERVICES

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Stray animal hold times.</b> Currently, all animals are held for 96 hours before being available for adoption. Revise hold times to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72 hours for unlicensed adult dogs and cats.</li> <li>• 7 days for licensed adult dogs and cats.</li> <li>• 48 hours for kittens and puppies under 6 months of age.</li> <li>• 24 hours for litters of kittens or puppies.</li> </ul> <p>This would encourage licensing and move animals to the adoption phase faster. The short hold time for litters is due to almost no litters every being redeemed.</p>	<p>Amend Section 7.10.010 for Redemption Hold Time</p> <p>Amend Section 7.08.040 for licensing procedure changes.</p>		<p>Public outreach will need to be conducted to notify of procedure changes.</p> <p>Training will need to be provided to Auditor and KHS staff on policy changes.</p>

## PET LICENSING

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Coordinate amongst local jurisdictions:</b> Discuss with the various cities a consistent license fee structure and process.</p>	<p>Amend KCC 7.08.010, 7.08.020, 7.08.030 and 7.08.040.</p>	<p>Amend Task 12.0</p>	<p>Public outreach will need to be conducted to notify of procedure changes.</p> <p>Outreach and coordination with local veterinarians and pet stores on new program.</p> <p>Training will need to be provided to Auditor and KHS staff on policy changes.</p>
<p><b>Increase animal licensing by recapturing lost revenue.</b> Require license fees to be collected at the time of animal adoption (KHS) or sale (pet stores). Also, require at the time of stray animal redemption and spay/neuter at KHS.</p>		<p>Amend Task 13</p>	
<p><b>Encourage micro-chipping with every license.</b> Provide education regarding benefits of micro-chipping. Ensure chip numbers can be tied to license tags. Require micro-chipping of all animals redeemed at KHS.</p>		<p>Amend Task 13</p>	<p>Public outreach will need to be conducted to notify of procedure changes.</p> <p>Outreach and coordination with local veterinarians and pet stores on new program.</p>

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Rabies vaccination verification.</b> Require rabies vaccination verification at the time of license renewal either by affidavit (current procedure) or rabies card.</p>	<p>Amend section 7.08.030 to require certification prior to license issuance.</p>	<p>Amend Task 13</p>	<p>Training will need to be provided to Auditor and KHS staff on procedure changes.</p>
<p><b>All collected fees administered by one agency.</b> While collection can occur at many locations, all fees are transmitted to one agency for entry, distribution of tags and future renewal notices. Renewal notices must be consistently sent for 1 and 3 year licenses.</p>	<p>Amend section 7.08.030 to reflect license fee collection and tag distribution.</p>	<p>Amend Task 13</p>	
<p><b>License fee costs.</b> License fees are detailed in County Code and were last established in 2002. Update the fees to reflect 2013 and condense the number of categories as shown below. Fees should be similar to those of Bremerton or Pierce County.</p> <p>Maintain reduce fees for spayed or neutered animals.</p> <p>Remove fees from Code and allow for them to updated annually with the County budget or contracting process.</p>	<p>Amend section 7.08.010, 7.08.020 and 7.08.030 to reflect fees to be updated via resolution by the Board (see attached table). Such updates shall not occur more often than on an annual basis with the County budget or contracting for services.</p>	<p>Amend Task 13</p>	<p>Public outreach will need to be conducted to notify of any fee changes.</p> <p>Training will need to be provided to Auditor’s Office and KHS staff on policy changes.</p>

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Offer 1-year, 3-year and lifetime license options.</b> Each license fee would be graduated to ensure the recapture of costs while providing an incentive for multi-year licensing. Lifetime license should be based on the average life span of the animal. See attached table. Lifetime licenses only issued with associated microchip to reduce potential fraud.</p>	<p>Amend section 7.08.010, 7.08.020 and 7.08.030 to reflect fees to be updated via resolution by the Board (see attached table). Such updates shall not occur more often than on an annual basis with the County budget or contracting for services.</p>		
<p><b>Remove juvenile and senior fee reductions.</b> Will help streamline process for agencies and pet store collecting the fee.</p>	<p>Amend section 7.08.010, 7.08.020 and 7.08.030 to reflect fees to be set via resolution by the Board (see attached table). Such updates shall not occur more often than on an annual basis with the County budget or contracting for services.</p>		
<p><b>Allow online licensing.</b> Create an online licensing program for new and renewals.</p>			<p>Public outreach will need to be conducted to notify of new access portal. Training will need to be provided to Auditor's staff of website and new intake procedures.</p>

### OTHER REVENUES – REDEMPTION, ETC.

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Redemption Fees.</b> These are currently detailed in County Code and last updated in 2002. These fees should be decoupled from Code and updated to reflect 2013 (See attached table).</p> <p>The Board can then approve future updates via resolution at the time of budget approval or contracting.</p> <p>All fee collections shall be reported by KHS as program revenue.</p>	<p>Amend Section 7.10.010 to reflect fees to be set by resolution of the Board. Such updates shall not occur more often than on an annual basis with the County budget or contracting for services.</p>		
<p><b>Other fees.</b> Fees for commercial pet facilities, pet shops, grooming parlors, hobbyists and enthusiasts are also detailed in County Code and last set in 2002. Similar to pet licensing and redemption fees, allow these fees to be set by the Board via resolution.</p>	<p>Amend Section 7.08.040 to reflect fees to be updated via resolution by the Board. Such updates shall not occur more often than on an annual basis with the County budget or contracting for services.</p>		

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Dead Animal Pick Up:</b> Remove dead domestic animal pick-up from KHS to Public Works.</p>		Amend Task 4.0	<p>Assess impacts to Public Works for taking on the task.</p> <p>Training will need to be provided to Public Works on appropriate disposal methods.</p>
<p><b>General accounting/data Documentation.</b> Continue to improve reporting procedures and accounting information to separate animal control from animal welfare programs.</p>		Amend Task 1.0	<p>Continued training and potentially software upgrades to increase financial accounting and data statistics for both Auditor’s Office and KHS.</p>
<p><b>Two-year CAC review.</b> The CAC should be reconvened after two years of implementation of any recommendations to review and evaluate the successes of the changes.</p>			<p>Reconvene the CAC every two-years,</p>
<p><b>Support SB 5202 and HB 1229 regarding spay/neuter programs.</b> Bills provide a funding source for jurisdictions to provide low-cost spay/neuter programs. Board is recommended to support these bills, potentially through a resolution.</p>			<p>Pass a resolution supporting SB 5202 and HB 1229.</p>

Issue/Proposal	Code Change	Contract Change	Process Change
<p><b>Quarantine.</b> Currently, quarantined animals can only be handled by KHS employees. KHS uses a series of volunteers for some animal services (walking, etc.). This requirement creates greater expense and inefficiency of operations for KHS. KHS should be allowed to use volunteer labor to meet these service needs.</p>	<p>Amend Section 7.10.020 to allow KHS to designate volunteers to provide certain services to quarantined animals.</p>		

PROPOSED PET LICENSE FEE UPDATES				
	Current	Proposed		
	1-year	1-year	3-year	Lifetime
Dog - Spayed/neutered w/ microchip	\$10	\$10	\$20	\$40
Dog - Spayed/neutered w/out microchip	\$10	\$25	\$50	N/A
Dog - Not Spayed/neutered w/ microchip	\$35	\$50	\$100	\$200
Dog - Not spayed/neutered w/out microchip	\$35	\$60	\$120	N/A
Cat - Spayed/neutered w/ microchip	\$5	\$5	\$10	\$20
Cat - Spayed/neutered w/out microchip	\$5	\$20	\$40	N/A
Cat – Not spayed/neutered w/ microchip	\$35	\$40	\$80	\$160
Cat - Not spayed/neutered w/out microchip	\$35	\$50	\$100	N/A
Service Dog	No fee	No fee	No fee	No fee
Spay Neuter Donation (OPTIONAL)	N/A	\$5	\$5	\$5

<b>PROPOSED REDEMPTION FEE UPDATES</b>		
<b>Fee</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Domestic Animals</b>		
Impound	\$25	<b>\$45</b>
Vaccination	\$45	<b>\$45</b>
Boarding (per day)	\$15	<b>\$20</b>
Medical care	Case dependent	<b>Case dependent</b>
Microchip	N/A	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Livestock</b>		
Impound	\$50	<b>\$60</b>
Boarding (per day)	\$20	<b>\$40</b>
Medical care	Case dependent	<b>Case dependent</b>
Transport fee	\$75	<b>\$120</b>

## ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS MINORITY REPORT

While there was predominant consensus on all of the recommendations, we allowed for specific minority opinions to be presented at the committee member's request. Attached is a matrix of these comments, the committee member submitting and the areas in which they pertain.

Committee Member	Area	Comment
Steve Maxim	Animal Noise Investigations	The requirement to have two neighbors document animal noise may reduce the number of investigations but it will not solve the noise issue. My experience is that neighborhood disputes are the not the prime motivation for noise reports/complaints. Animal noise is a problem and we are not handling it well in Kitsap County. There should be enforcement for pet noise issues regardless of the number of neighbors/citizens that report it.
Steve Maxim	Animal Noise Penalties	Penalties/fines may be a deterrent for concerned pet owners but removal of pets would solve the problem for the non-concerned pet owners. There should be a definitive process of enforcement. The removal of the noisy pet should be one of the options.