

ORIGINAL

ORDINANCE NO.: 2026-053

Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 4, Animals

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia, South Carolina has deemed it necessary to revise the City's Animal Ordinances to come in line with its current practices and legal requirements;

WHEREAS, promoting humane care for animals, guidelines regarding their condition and control, and adequate protection for the public are all important functions of municipal governments; and *THEREFORE*,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council this 4th day of August, 2026, that the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina *Chapter 4, Animals*, has been repealed in its entirety and amended to read as follows:

This ordinance is effective upon final reading.

CHAPTER 4. ANIMAL SERVICES
ARTICLE 1. IN GENERAL

Sec. 4-1. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Animal shall mean, in addition to dog and cat, any organism of the kingdom of Animalia, other than a human being.

Abandon or abandonment means the owner or custodian's failure to provide for its animal the necessities of life and well-being or to desert, forsake, or give up absolutely its animal without securing another owner or custodian. This section does not include the responsible return of community cats trapped, sterilized, and returned to the area from which they were trapped.

Aggressive animal means any animal that exhibits unprovoked behavior which causes a person to reasonably believe and Animal Services confirms that the animal may cause harm to a person or another animal for which an adequate enclosure, confinement, restraint, muzzling or training would protect the public or other animals from harm or the threat of harm by the animal. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, growling, baring teeth, snarling, snapping, or charging.

Animal services shelter means any premises designed by the city for the purpose of impounding and caring for all pets found at large or otherwise in violation of this article, or which are surrendered to the city by the owner.

Animal services superintendent means that person employed by the city to direct and administer the animal services program.

Animal services worker means any person employed by the city to enforce the animal services program.

Commercial pet breeder. A person, partnership, corporation, association, or establishment engaged in a business, occupation, profession, or activity in which one or more dogs are owned,

kept, harbored, or boarded and used for a stud for which a fee is charged and/or used for breeding purposes for which a fee is charged for the offspring.

Community Cat means a cat that is socialized to humans that lives indoors and outdoors (sometimes called free-roaming) and/or a feral cat, which means a cat that is un-socialized or unaccustomed to human interaction. Socialized cats referred to in this section may or may not be owned by a custodial party. Pets and/or house cats which are outdoors periodically are specifically excluded from this definition.

Community Cat Diversion Program describes the program designed to limit the growth of a feral, reproducing cat population and is further described in section 4-17 below.

Duty to impound. It shall be the duty of the animal services officer or any police officer to seize any and all animals and/or fowl, other than common household pets, that may be found in violation of the provisions of this article within the city.

Dangerous animal.

(1) Dangerous animal means:

- a. Any animal which the owner knows or reasonably should know has a propensity, tendency or disposition to attack unprovoked, to cause injury or to otherwise endanger the safety of human beings or pets for which an adequate enclosure, confinement, restraint, muzzling or training would not or does not protect the public or other animals from harm or the threat of harm by the animal; to be determined with consideration given to the following factors, which are listed by way of illustration and not limitation: the animal's behavior, its size, its temperament, its breed, and its capacity for inflicting serious injury; the likelihood that the conditions pertaining to the animal are detrimental to the safety or welfare of citizens in the immediate surrounding area; that there is a child under the age of 12 or a vulnerable adult, as defined in S.C. Code Ann. Section 43-35-10 (2006), who lives in close proximity or walks by or is otherwise in close proximity to the property occupied by the animal; that the animal has bitten a human being or domestic animal without provocation or a trespass or has approached a person in an apparent attitude of attack; or other similar factors which would be relevant.
- b. An animal that attacks a human being or a pet without provocation;
- c. An animal owned, kept or harbored primarily, or in part, for the purpose of dogfighting.
- d. An animal used to threaten or intimidate citizens or other animals.

(2) An animal shall not be deemed dangerous if:

- a. It bites, attacks or menaces:
 1. Anyone assaulting the owner;
 2. A trespasser on the property of the owner; or
 3. Any person or other animal who has tormented or abused it;
- b. It is otherwise acting in defense of an attack from a person or other animal upon the owner or other person; or

- c. It is protecting or defending its young or another animal.

Custodian means a person who, regardless of the length of time, keeps, has charge of, shelters, feeds, harbors, or takes care of any animal, or is otherwise acting as the owner of the animal. A custodian is not necessarily the owner. This definition does not apply to citizens engaged in humane trap, sterilize, and release activity associated with community cats.

Feral describes any individual animal or its descendent that was once domesticated but is no longer in a domesticated environment, as well as any animal which is not naturally tame or gentle, and which is of a wild nature or disposition, and which is capable of killing, inflicting serious injury upon, or causing disease among human beings or domestic animals and having known tendencies as a species to do so.

Fresh water is defined as clear, clean water that is not contaminated with algae, fungi, or other microorganisms, particularly those visible to the naked eye, and which is provided to the pet in a container that is not excessively dirty, broken, or inadequate in size for the pet.

Guard dog and *attack dog* mean any dog that has been trained to attack persons independently or upon oral command and any dog which, while not so trained, is reasonably expected to perform as a guardian of its owner and/or the property upon and within which the dog is located and is owned by a licensed security service or is owned or used by law enforcement agencies.

Impound and *impoundment* mean the entry of an animal into the Animal Services system for humane confinement, regardless of the reason for the same, and whether voluntary surrender or involuntary capture.

Kennel means the premises of any person engaged in the business of breeding, buying, selling or boarding dogs or who keeps four or more dogs on the premises.

Owner means any person owning, keeping, harboring, acting as custodian of, or allowing a pet to stay on its premises.

Pet means any animal or hen kept for pleasure rather than utility or commercial purposes.

Positively identifiable animal is one that bears or wears a legible and traceable current permanent number (microchip), city license or tag, or rabies vaccination tag pursuant to section 4-3 or a traceable registration number, tattoo, or microchip pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. 47-3-510 (Supp. 1999), **none** of which lead to a reachable owner who can reclaim the animal.

Shelter, unless stated otherwise, means a structure reasonably expected to protect the animal from exposure to the elements of weather or adverse conditions where such exposure could cause the animal physical suffering or impairment. This is a basic definition and is defined more thoroughly in Sec. 4-15.

Stray means an animal, the owner of which has not been identified. These animals may be impounded and kept for five (5) days.

Tether means a mechanism to anchor an animal to a fixed object, as further defined below in Sec. 4-5(b).

Traceable animal is one that bears or wears a legible and traceable current permanent number (microchip), city license or tag, or rabies vaccination tag pursuant to section 4-3 or a

traceable registration number, tattoo, or microchip pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. 47-3-510 (Supp. 1999), any of which leads to a reachable owner who can reclaim the animal.

Sec. 4-2. Impoundment for any infraction.

An animal may be impounded for any infraction of any section of this ordinance. Disposition of the animal shall be at the discretion of the superintendent of animal services or his or her designee and in accordance with the policies outlined herein.

Sec. 4-3. License for dogs and cats; rabies vaccination.

- (a) License required; proof of rabies vaccination. It shall be unlawful for the owner of any dog or cat to fail to provide any dog or cat over four months of age with a current city license tag. The owner of any dog or cat over four months of age must also have a current rabies vaccination tag showing that such animal has been vaccinated. No license shall be issued unless proof of inoculation is shown. No new license shall be issued to a person, or anyone who resides with a person, who has been convicted of a violation of section 4-31 in the preceding five (5) years. These persons may, however, renew a license for an animal that was licensed at the time of the conviction, provided that a license shall never be renewed for the animal that provided the basis of the conviction. Any dog or cat owner who moves in the city for the purpose of establishing residency or who becomes a resident as a result of annexation shall have 30 days in which to obtain the license.
- (b) Fees generally; expiration and renewal; duties of veterinarians. The city license fee for fertile dogs and cats shall be \$100.00 per year. The city license fee for sterilized dogs and cats shall be \$5.00 per year. Each license required by this article shall be good for one year from the date of its issuance and no longer. Licenses shall be renewed annually and may be renewed 60 days in advance of expiration. At the end of each month, all licensed veterinarians shall transmit complete and legible copies of all rabies vaccination certificates issued during the month to the city's superintendent of animal services. Any dog or cat that is sterilized, microchipped and vaccinated for rabies may receive a one time, life time license for \$25 (in lieu of the annual \$5 license).
- (c) Exemptions from differential license fees.
 - (1) Any dog or cat that has been examined and certified by a licensed veterinarian as being medically unsuited to undergo a spay or neuter procedure due to the endangerment of the dog's or cat's health due to its age, infirmity, disability, or other medical consideration. This certification shall indicate the medical basis for the endangerment to the dog or cat and whether the unsuitability is temporary or permanent. If temporary, the certificate shall indicate the anticipated duration of unsuitability for the spay or neuter procedure. This exemption shall only be valid for the duration of medical unsuitability as certified by the veterinarian;
 - (2) Any owner of one or more purebred dogs or cats who can furnish proof of participation in at least three nationally recognized conformation or obedience shows within the past 12 months. These animals must be of breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club or Cat Fanciers' Association.
- (d) Tags. The public services department shall annually provide a sufficient number of durable tags suitable for dogs and cats numbered from "1" upwards, on which shall be stamped the year and the words "dog/cat license." Such tags must be worn by all dogs and cats in the

city at all times, except that an animal shall not be required to wear a tag if the animal has been permanently marked in a painless manner with an identification number issued by the public services department for that purpose. The permanent mark must be located in a position approved by the public services department. Pets that receive the life time license will receive a one-time tag and be linked to the pet's microchip.

- (e) Records. The public services department shall obtain the name and address of each party to whom a license and tag or permanent number has been issued under the provisions of this article and shall keep the name and address on file in the offices of the department for the purpose of identification.

Sec. 4-4. Kennels and breeding.

- (a) *Certification of inspection.* No person shall own or operate a cattery or dog breeding facility on his premises within the city without first obtaining a certificate of inspection from the animal services division, issued pursuant to this section, for which an annual inspection fee of \$100.00 shall be paid.
- (b) *Standards for commercial kennels.* Commercial kennels are those built and maintained as defined by "commercial pet breeders" in Sect. 4-1. These facilities shall be constructed, maintained, and operated in conformance with the current standards and procedures promulgated by industry standard, such as those outlined by Humane World for Animals, formerly known as the Humane Society of the United States.

1) It shall be unlawful for a commercial pet breeder to fail to obtain a city commercial pet breeder permit from city animal services. To obtain a commercial pet breeder permit:

- a) Before applying for a permit, the applicant must first have obtained:
 - i. A City Business License issued by the City of Columbia Business Service Center; and
 - ii. City pet licenses and rabies vaccinations for all pets over four (4) months of age kept or harbored by the breeder as set forth in Section 4-3; and
 - iii. Have no prior animal cruelty or maltreatment convictions; and
 - iv. Have no history of a revoked or refused commercial pet breeder permit; and
 - v. Verified with City Zoning that the property can be used for business purposes.

b) The permit applicant must complete a commercial pet breeder permit application. An application is complete when filled out properly and accompanied by a copy of a valid city business license, proof of appropriate zoning, and proof of pet licensing and vaccination, where applicable. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

c) The permit applicant must pass an inspection. The Animal Services Department, through its Animal Services Officers, shall conduct an inspection of the premise upon which the pets are primarily kept to ensure the following requirements, along with the care requirements set forth in this chapter, are met:

- i. The enclosure or other area(s) where the pets are kept is constructed in such a manner that pets housed there will be adequately and comfortably kept in any season of the year;
- ii. The enclosure or other area(s) where the pets are kept is able to be easily cleaned and sanitized and kept clean and free from accumulations of feces, filth, mud, and debris;
- iii. Every pet on the premises has constant access to a clean and fresh water supply and an adequate amount of food appropriate to maintain each pet's normal condition of health;
- iv. The premise where the pets are kept is set up in such a manner as to prevent pets from straying beyond their enclosed confines or other areas and prevents the public and stray animals from obtaining entrance thereto or making contact with the pets on the premise;
- v. Permits shall be displayed in a conspicuous place inside of the physical location shown on the application; and
- vi. The above-listed requirements must be maintained throughout the period of time for which the permit is issued and failure to maintain these requirements may result in a revocation of the permit.

(2) Restrictions:

a) A permit will not be issued to an applicant who has been previously found guilty of violating any federal, state, or local laws or regulations pertaining to animal cruelty within five (5) years of the date of application.

b) A permit will only be valid if there also exists a valid business license and only for the applicant and location listed on the application. The permit is nontransferable.

c) Any violation or alleged violation of this chapter shall be grounds for the revocation of the permit. The city Animal Services Department shall determine, in its sole discretion, whether the permit is to be revoked and shall communicate the revocation to the breeder in writing. Revocation means the breeder shall cease all commercial breeding activity until a new valid permit is issued or the revocation is rescinded and failure to do so will subject the breeder to penalties. The breeder may appeal the revocation by submitting to the Superintendent of Animal Services a writing setting forth the reasons for the appeal. Only what is submitted in writing will

be considered. The written appeal must be received by the Superintendent of Animal Services within seven (7) business days of the revocation notice and the superintendent of Animal Services will review the written appeal and issue its determination to rescind or uphold the revocation within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

(3) The annual fee for a commercial pet breeder permit is \$500 and is non-refundable. The permit shall expire one (1) year after the date of issue.

(4) The city Animal Services Department shall maintain the name and address of each party to whom a permit has been issued under the provisions of this section and shall keep the same on file in the offices of the department for the purpose of identification.

Sec. 4-5. Tethering, restraint or confinement of dogs.

(a) All dogs must be kept under restraint or confinement within the city limits. Restraint or confinement means (1) on a leash held by a person of sufficient judgment and physical strength to control the dog and to prevent the dog from attacking, threatening or annoying other people or other animals; (2) confinement in an appropriate enclosure as defined in this article, particularly in 4-15; or (3) confinement to the property or specific areas of the property of the owner by way of "invisible fencing" or electronic control by way of a transmitter which directs a radio signal to a pet collar which corrects the dog's approaching a perimeter or confinement area wire. Electronic fencing equipment must be approved by the American Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Humane World for Animals (formerly known as Humane Society of the United States), or the superintendent of animal services for the City of Columbia. Any perimeter or confinement area must be flagged or signed in a conspicuous way so as to provide notice of confinement to pedestrians. Any dogs not so restrained or confined will be deemed unlawfully running at large within the city limits.

(b) Tethering, specifically:

(1) It shall be unlawful to tether any pet outdoors for more than two (2) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period. These pets and conditions must meet the following criteria:

- a. The pet is older than six (6) months;
- b. The tether is a minimum of twelve (12) feet in length and has swivel-type termination at both ends and the tether weight does not exceed ten (10) percent of the pet's body weight. Logger chains, towing chains, and other similar tethering devices are not acceptable;
- c. Any pulley, running line, or trolley system to which a tether is attached shall be no less than twelve (12) feet in length between stopping points;
- d. The tether must be attached to the pet with a buckle-type collar or a body harness. Logger chains, towing chains, and similar items are not permitted to be used as collars or harnesses;

- e. The pet is tethered so as to prevent injury, strangulation, or entanglement with objects, vegetation, or other tethered animals;
- f. The pet has access to fresh water and shelter, as defined in this chapter, that it can reach while tethered;
- g. The pet is not sick or injured;
- h. Every female confined by a tether and unattended is sterilized; and
- i. The temperature is above forty (40) degrees and less than ninety (90) degrees Fahrenheit, EXCEPT:
 - i. If the temperature is below forty (40) degrees Fahrenheit for a sustained four (4) hour period, the animal may be tethered for thirty (30) minutes in a consecutive four (4) hour period so long as adequate bedding and shelter, as defined in this chapter, are provided to protect the animal from the elements; or
 - ii. If the temperature is above ninety (90) degrees Fahrenheit for a sustained four (4) hour period, the animal may be tethered for thirty (30) minutes in a consecutive four (4) hour period so long as shade is provided to protect the animal from the elements.

(2) If a pet does not meet these criteria, they shall not be tethered at all.

- (c) Pet-safe metal collars, chain collars, prong collars, or choke collars are only permitted to be used while the pet is accompanied by its owner/keeper or custodian while on a lead/leash. These are not appropriate methods for tethering.
- (d) Owners of dogs allowed to run at large within the city are guilty of a misdemeanor and are subject to the penalties provided by law for violation of this article. The citation will prescribe the amount of bond to be posted by the violator at the municipal court. A warrant will be issued and served on violators who fail to post bond within three days after issuance of the citation.

Sec. 4-7. Impoundment of pet animals; voluntary surrender of animal by owner.

- (a) Any animal found within the city limits in violation of the provisions of this article shall be caught and impounded by city authorities. If an animal cannot be caught in a safe, efficient manner, animal services personnel may tranquilize the animal by use of a tranquilizer gun. Impounded animals not redeemed within five days may thereafter be humanely destroyed by the animal services division. Animals that are deemed by the superintendent of animal services to constitute a danger to other animals or persons at the shelter, or that are infectious to other animals, in pain or near death, may be humanely destroyed immediately.
- (b) Any animal may be surrendered to the animal services division provided there is a properly completed animal surrender form provided to the animal services division for the animal concerned. Owner-surrender appointments are only obtained by following current animal services intake policies. Any exceptions to the intake policies are at the sole discretion of the superintendent of animal services.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for any person to furnish false information on the animal surrender form.

- (d) The owner of a positively identifiable impounded animal shall be notified at the owner's last known address by regular mail and registered mail that the animal has been impounded. The owner has ten calendar days from the date of impoundment to contact the shelter for pick-up. Redemption costs will include the cost of mailing, any established costs, fines, fees or other charges. If the owner does not make contact within ten calendar days of the date of impoundment, the animal will be deemed abandoned and becomes the property of the animal services division. The animal services superintendent shall then have the authority to place the animal for adoption or transfer to another facility, but may not humanely destroy the animal before the passage of 14 calendar days. If the owner does not redeem the animal after 14 calendar days, it may be humanely destroyed. S.C. Code Ann. 47-3-540 (Supp. 1999). Animals that are deemed by the superintendent to constitute a danger to other animals or persons at the shelter, or are infectious to other animals, in pain or near death, may be humanely destroyed immediately.
- (e) When successful contact has been made with the owner of an animal that has been impounded as a stray at the City shelter, it is then considered a traceable animal. The owner shall have 24 hours to redeem the animal unless an extended hold is authorized by the shelter superintendent.

Sec. 4-8. Redemption of impounded pet animals.

- (a) The owner or keeper of any pet which has been impounded under the provisions of this article shall have the right to redeem such pet at any time within five days upon payment of a fee as follows:
 - (1) For a pet that has been properly inoculated, licensed, microchipped and neutered or spayed, the owner shall pay an impoundment fee of \$30.00 plus other applicable fees, such as room and board. This fee shall be waived for any pet that meet these criteria, has never before been impounded, and is redeemed within 48 hours.
 - (2) For other pets, the fee shall be \$30.00 plus the appropriate license fee, plus the charge for vetting, boarding, and caretaking. No fertile animal shall be redeemed or adopted from the shelter. No animal will be released from the shelter without proof of inoculation and without an implanted microchip. The requirement of spaying or neutering may be waived if the owner meets the criteria under the exceptions provisions in subsection 4-3(c). The requirement of spaying or neutering shall not be waived for the second or subsequent impoundment.
- (b) The fees set out in this section may be doubled for any animal impounded twice or more within the same 12-month period.

Sec. 4-9. Adoption of impounded pet animals.

- (a) Any pet impounded under the provision of this article may at the end of the legal detention period be adopted, provided the new owner will agree to comply with the provisions contained in the animal adoption contract, as promulgated by the animal superintendent, and the provisions contained in this chapter.
- (b) Any pet surrendered to the shelter may be adopted at any time provided there is a completed and signed surrender form on file for the animal concerned.

Sec. 4-10. Nuisance animals.

- (a) *Generally.* The actions of an animal constitute a nuisance when an animal disturbs the rights of, threatens the safety of or damages a member of the general public, or interferes with the ordinary use and enjoyment of their property.
- (b) *Prohibited acts.* It shall be unlawful for any person to own, keep, possess or maintain an animal in such a manner as to constitute a public nuisance. By way of example and not of limitation, the following acts or actions by an owner or possessor of any animal are declared to be a public nuisance and are therefore unlawful:
 - (1) Failure to exercise sufficient restraint necessary to control an animal as required by any provision of this chapter.
 - (2) Allowing or permitting an animal to damage the property of anyone other than its owner, including but not limited to turning over garbage containers or damaging gardens, flowers or vegetables.
 - (3) Maintaining a dangerous animal as defined in this chapter.
 - (4) Maintaining animals in an environment of unsanitary conditions which results in offensive odors or is dangerous to the animal or to the public health, welfare or safety.
 - (5) Maintaining his property in a manner that is offensive, annoying or dangerous to the public health, safety or welfare of the community because of the number, type, variety, density or location of the animals on the property.
 - (7) Maintaining an animal that is diseased and dangerous to the public health.
 - (8) Maintaining an animal that habitually or repeatedly chases, snaps at, or attacks pedestrians, bicycles or vehicles.
- (c) *Impoundment.* Any pet found in continued violation of the provisions of this section or identified as a public nuisance may be impounded and not released unless authorized by the animal services superintendent or his or her designee.

Sec. 4-11. Interference with animal services workers.

It shall be unlawful for any person to interfere with, hinder or molest the animal services worker in the performance of his duty or seek to release any pet in his custody without his consent.

Sec. 4-12. Prohibition; impoundment of unattended animals.

It shall be unlawful for a person to leave any animal in a vehicle unattended by a person of such maturity so as to be responsible for the animal's health and safety. An animal services officer, or other law enforcement officer will remove the animal by reasonable methods under the circumstances if the animal is reasonably believed to be in distress. Unattended animals left in vehicles shall be impounded. Redemption shall include the assessment of the fine resulting from the violation of this section.

Sec. 4-13. Duties of person striking animal with vehicle; disposition of injured or diseased animals received by animal shelter.

Anyone striking an animal with a motor vehicle or bicycle shall notify the animal services shelter or the police department, who will then take action necessary to make proper disposition of the pet. Any pet received by the animal services shelter in critical condition from wounds, injuries or disease may be destroyed if the owner cannot be located. If the animal is in severe pain, it may be destroyed immediately.

Sec. 4-14. Killing, injuring or disturbing squirrels or birds.

It shall be unlawful for any person to kill, maim or otherwise annoy with firearms, air rifles or slingshots, or in any other manner, the squirrels and birds within the limits of the city or within the limits of any park or playground owned by the city, or to disturb the nests of such birds and squirrels; provided that any owner, authorized agent, lessee or tenant of real estate in the city frequented by squirrels in number sufficient to create a nuisance on or cause damage to any property thereon may be authorized, upon request to Animal Services, to humanely trap or have humanely trapped by a private wildlife or pest control agency and then appropriately relocate the squirrel(s) or birds.

Sec. 4-15. Animal care, generally.

- (a) It shall be unlawful for an owner to fail to provide his or her animal(s) with sufficient and wholesome food and water, proper shelter and protection from the weather, veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering, and humane care and treatment.
 - (1) Proper outdoor shelter for dogs defined:
 - (a) The shelter should be of weatherproof construction, have a roof, enclosed sides, a doorway, and a solid level floor raised at least two inches from the ground. There shall be no cracks or openings other than the entrance except rainproof openings for ventilation are acceptable in hot weather.
 - (b) The shelter shall be small enough to allow the dog to maintain warmth and body heat, but large enough to allow the dog to stand, turn around, and lie down.
 - (c) When the real or effective temperature is forty (40) degrees Fahrenheit or below, a sufficient amount of dry bedding, such as cedar shavings or straw, must be provided to insulate against the cold and dampness.
 - (d) The following is not considered proper shelter: Storage buildings, sheds, crates, pet carriers, barrels, screened porches, patios, or balconies, nor the areas under lean-tos, covered porches, decks, vehicles, or houses.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for a person to beat, cruelly treat, torment, overload, overwork, or otherwise abuse an animal, or cause, instigate, or permit and dogfight or other combat between animals or between animals and humans.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for the owner or custodian of any animal to abandon it within any incorporated area of the city. This section does not apply to the responsible release of cats involved in the Community Cat Program.
- (d) No dog shall be kept on any property that its owner does not occupy on a permanent basis.

- (e) No person, except a licensed veterinarian, shall perform an operation to crop, notch, or split an animal's ears and/or tail.
- (f) Any person violating any provision of this article shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor offense and shall be subject to the penalties outlined in section 1-5. Each day of violation shall be considered a separate offense. Punishment for violation shall not relieve the offender of liability for penalties, and costs provided for this article.

Sec. 4-16. Sale of animals.

- (a) No person shall sell, trade, barter, auction, lease, rent, give away, or display for commercial purpose an animal, on any roadside, public right-of-way, public property, commercial parking lot, or sidewalk adjacent thereto, or at any flea market, fair, or carnival, regardless of whether such access is authorized by the owner. This section shall not apply to the display of dogs or cats by municipal and/or county animal care facility or licensed pet rescue organization, or the display of dogs or cats as part of a state or county fair exhibition, 4-H program, or similar exhibitions or educational programs.
- (b) No person shall offer an animal as an inducement to purchase a product, commodity, or service.
- (c) No person shall sell, offer for sale, or give away a pet under eight (8) weeks of age except to surrender to a municipal and/or county animal care facility or to a licensed pet rescue organization.
- (d) Retail sales of dogs and cats prohibited.
 - (1) No pet shop shall sell, deliver, offer for sale, barter, auction, trade, give away or otherwise transfer cats or dogs.
 - (2) Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit pet shops from collaborating with municipal and/or county animal care facilities or licensed pet rescue organizations to showcase dogs or cats available for adoption; provided that the pet shop shall not have any ownership interest in the animals offered for adoption and shall not receive a fee for providing such space.
 - (3) "Pet shop" means a retail establishment where animals are sold, exchanged, bartered or offered for sale to the general public at retail.

Sec. 4-17. Community cat diversion program.

- (a) Feral or free roaming cats may be allowed in the City of Columbia as long as all of the following requirements are met:
 - (1) Cat must be assessed by a veterinarian and deemed healthy.
 - (2) Cat must be spayed or neutered.
 - (3) Cat must be vaccinated for rabies, feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia.
 - (4) Cat must be ear tipped.

- (b) A feral or free roaming cat shall be scheduled for spay/neuter the day after entering the shelter or as soon as practicable thereafter and then returned to the area where it was trapped on the third day, or as soon as practicable thereafter. Any cats already meeting the requirements in Sec 4-17 (a) 1-4 may be returned immediately. Treatment and return of any program cat shall be subject to the discretion of the superintendent of animal services.
- (c) The city shall have no liability for the disposition of any cat entered into a free roaming cat or feral colony program. No person shall have any ownership interest or property rights to any program cat.
- (d) The city may suspend or eliminate the program at its sole discretion.
- (e) Community cats are exempt from licensing provided that they meet all the requirements contained herein.
- (f) The City of Columbia recognizes the need to prevent or reduce cat overpopulation, and that citizens voluntarily engage in humane activity to achieve this goal. City of Columbia Animal Services remains committed to assisting in this goal, but encourages the engagement of private and/or nonprofit services when vetting and altering these animals. Nothing in this section places responsibility on the City of Columbia to provide care or resources to accomplish this reduction in feral population, and the City of Columbia Animal Services retains the discretion to service these colonies as it deems fit.

Secs. 4-18—4-30. Reserved.

ARTICLE 2. DANGEROUS ANIMALS

Sec. 4-31. Prohibited; exceptions.

- (a) Except as provided in subsection 4-31(d), it shall be unlawful for any person to own, keep, harbor or act as custodian of a:
 - (1) “Dangerous animal” as defined by this article does not apply to guard dogs or attack dogs, and the following animals are deemed dangerous per se:
 - a. Nondomestic member of the family felidae;
 - b. Wolf-dog hybrid containing any percentage of wolf;
 - c. Badger, wolverine, weasel, skunk and mink;
 - d. Raccoon;
 - e. Bear;
 - f. Nonhuman primate to include ape, monkey, baboon, macaque, lemur;
 - g. Marmoset, tamarin and other species of the order primates;
 - h. Bat;
 - i. Alligator, crocodile and caiman;
 - j. Animals of mixed domestication and feral lineage;

- k. Constricting snake of the following species: reticulated python, python reticulatus; Burmese/Indian rock python, python molurus; rock python, python sebae, and anaconda, eunectes murinus;
 - l. Venomous reptile; or
 - m. Lizard over two feet which are members of the family varanidae.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for any person to expose to public view or contact, exhibit either gratuitously or for a fee, any wild or feral animals identified in subsection 4-31(c), or any animal of mixed domestication and feral lineage within the corporate limits of the city on public or private property, except as provided in subsection 4-31(d).
- (c) Wild or feral animal means:
 - (1) Any animal which is not naturally tame or gentle, and which is of a wild nature or disposition, and which is capable of killing, inflicting serious injury upon, or causing disease among, human beings or domestic animals and having known tendencies as a species to do so;
 - (2) Any animal declared to be illegal by the animal superintendent or the city manager or his or her designee;
 - (3) Any nondomesticated member of the order Carnivora; and
 - (4) The animals listed in Sec. 4-31(a)(1) shall also be deemed to be wild or feral animals per se.
- (d) The prohibition contained in subsections (a), (b) and (c) above, shall not apply to the keeping of wild or feral animals in the following circumstances:
 - (1) The keeping of wild or feral animals in a public zoo, bona fide education or medical institution, humane society, or museum where they are kept as live specimens for the public to view, or for the purpose of instruction, research or study.
 - (2) The keeping of wild or feral animals for exhibition to the public by a bona fide traveling circus, carnival, exhibit or show, properly licensed and permitted by state and local law.
 - (3) The keeping of wild or feral animals in a bona fide, licensed veterinary hospital for treatment.
 - (4) The keeping of wild or feral animals by a wildlife rescue organization with appropriate permits from any state or local regulatory body.

Sec. 4-32. Impoundment.

After an animal is determined to be dangerous or aggressive but improperly confined, as defined in this article, an animal services officer shall have the authority to immediately impound the animal. Upon impounding the animal, an animal services officer shall immediately attempt to serve the owner with a uniform ordinance summons for a violation of this article. Impoundment shall continue until the resolution of the criminal charge. If the owner is not known or refuses to accept personal service of the uniform ordinance summons, the animal shall be impounded for five days and the animal services division shall make a reasonable effort to locate and serve the

owner. If the owner cannot be located and served the animal may be humanely destroyed after the impoundment for the five-day period.

Sec. 4-33. Restraint of an aggressive animal.

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person owning or harboring or having the care or the custody of an aggressive animal, as defined in this article, to permit the animal to go unconfined on his premises. An aggressive animal is "unconfined" as used in this section if the animal is not confined securely indoors or confined in a securely enclosed fence or securely enclosed and locked pen or run area upon the person's premises. The pen or run area must be clearly marked as indicted in section 4-35 and must be designed to prevent the entry of the general public, including children, and to prevent the escape or release of the animal. However, this section does not apply to an animal owned by a licensed security company and on patrol in a confined area as provided for in Sections 4-35 and 4-36 of this Code.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for any person owning or harboring or having the care of an aggressive animal to permit the animal to go beyond his premises unless the animal is safely restrained and muzzled and the requirements of section 4-34(e) are met.

Sec. 4-34. Penalties.

- (a) A person who violates sections 4-31, 4-33 or subsection (e) of this section, provided the animal has not attacked or injured a human being, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, for a first offense, must be fined not more than \$200.00 or imprisoned not more than 30 days. Upon conviction of a subsequent offense, the person must be fined \$500.00 and imprisoned for 30 days, none of which may be suspended or remitted.
- (b) A person who is the owner of a dangerous animal which attacks and injures a human being is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, for a first offense must be fined not more than \$500.00 or imprisoned not more than 30 days.
- (c) A dangerous animal which attacks a human being or domestic animal may be ordered destroyed when in the court's judgment the dangerous animal represents a continuing threat of serious harm to human beings or domestic animals.
- (d) A person found guilty of violating this article shall pay all expenses, including, but not limited to, shelter, food, veterinary expenses for boarding and veterinary expenses necessitated by the seizure of an animal for the protection of the public, medical expenses incurred by a victim from an attack by a dangerous animal, and other expenses required for the destruction of the animal, for any time period during which the case is prosecuted or an appeal is pursued.
- (e) A person owning an aggressive animal shall maintain liability insurance or surety bond of at least \$50,000.00 insuring or securing the owner for personal injuries inflicted by the aggressive animal.
- (f) Nothing in this chapter is designed to abrogate any civil remedies available under statutory or common law.

Sec. 4-35. Signage for guard dogs or attack dogs.

All owners, keepers, harborers, lessees or custodians of any guard dog or attack dog shall display in a prominent place on their premises, and at each entrance or exit to the area in which such dog is confined, a sign, easily readable by the public, using the words "Beware of Dog" or wording of similar import in letters at least two inches in height. This section shall not apply to any guard dog or attack dog owned or used by law enforcement agencies.

Sec. 4-36. Insurance requirements for guard dogs or attack dogs.

The owner of any guard dog which protects property in the city shall maintain a general liability insurance policy insuring against liability resulting from acts of the dog while performing as guardian of the property upon which the dog is located in an amount not less than \$300,000.00 aggregate combined single limit for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage.

Secs. 4-37- 4-50. Reserved.

ARTICLE 3. LIVESTOCK

Sec. 4-51. Livestock and fowl running at large.

It shall be unlawful for any person who may own or have under his control any horse, mule, ass, jennet, swine, sheep, goat, goose, chicken and other fowl, or cattle of any description to allow or permit the animal or fowl to run at large within the corporate limits of the city.

Sec. 4-52. Keeping hogs.

It shall be unlawful for any person to keep or maintain any hogs or pigs within the corporate limits of the city.

Sec. 4-53. Raising or keeping fowl or rabbits.

The raising or maintaining of live fowl and rabbits is prohibited within the city, except as provided in this article with regard to the keeping of chickens.

Sec. 4-54. Keeping livestock and fowl generally; location of pens and stables.

It shall be unlawful for any person to own livestock and live fowls, other than chickens as provided in this article, or to establish a stable or riding academy or to engage in the business of renting, hiring, selling or trading livestock or live fowls within the city; provided, however, that the provisions of this section shall not apply when the stable or pen for keeping livestock or live fowls is so situated as to maintain a distance of at least 500 feet between the livestock and live fowls and any improvements or structure used for residential, commercial, professional, recreational, church, school or other institutional purposes, and provided further that the livestock or live fowls are kept securely penned in a clean and sanitary manner and in conformance with all county and state regulations and city public service department regulations.

Sec. 4-55. Raising or keeping chickens, generally.

The keeping of chickens shall be in compliance with the following, in addition to any zoning and/or building regulations that may be applicable to the construction of coops and runs:

- (a) No more than four hens shall be kept or maintained on a single premise. No roosters shall be allowed.
- (b) Such hens must be confined in a coop not less than 18 inches in height and with a minimum square feet of floor area of two square feet per hen over four months of age, connected to a run of not less than nine square feet for one bird; 12 square feet for two birds; 16 square feet for three birds; or 20 square feet for four birds over four months of age, which shall be fully enclosed. Coops must be completely enclosed and constructed in a uniform manner of a sturdy material that provides protection from potential predators and the elements and properly ventilated. Runs must be constructed of a fencing material that prevents potential predators from getting in and prevents the hens from escaping.
- (c) The run must be well drained so there is no accumulation of chicken excrement and shall be cleaned regularly with all droppings and excretion disposed of in a manner so as not to cause an odor or attract flies, unless otherwise disposed of in accordance with any federal, state or local health regulations.

(d) Coops must be screened from the side or rear lot line by shrubbery or a privacy fence if it comes within 25 feet of the property line and/or 50 feet of the nearest residence other than that of the owner.

(e) No person shall slaughter any chickens on his premises.

(f) It shall be unlawful to raise chickens for commercial purposes within the corporate limits of the city or to sell eggs laid by chickens kept in the corporate limits of the city.

(g) No person shall keep chickens on his premises within the city without first obtaining:

1. A zoning permit for an accessory structure from the planning and development services department; and

2. A certificate of inspection from the animal services division, issued pursuant to this section, for which an annual inspection fee of \$5.00 per bird shall be paid, and for which an acknowledgment of the receipt of an informational presentation on proper hen raising, coop design and maintenance shall be required.

Sec. 4-56. - Impoundment.

a) Duty to impound. It shall be the duty of the animal control officer or any police officer to seize any and all animals and/or fowl, other than common household pets, that may be found in violation of the provisions of this article within the city.

b) Advertisement. Upon the impoundment of any animal or fowl under the provisions of this section, the city shall immediately advertise the animal at the police headquarters, giving a correct description thereof.

c) Redemption. Should the owner of any animal or fowl impounded under the provisions of this section appear within four days thereafter and prove his right to the possession of the animal or fowl, then the city shall deliver the animal or fowl to him on the payment of all fees due as a result of such impoundment.

d) Fees. A fee of \$20.00 shall be charged for each animal or fowl impounded under the provisions of this section. In addition thereto, there shall also be charged against such animal and fowl all expenses actually incurred by each animal or fowl so impounded for feeding, care and keeping of the animal or fowl.

e) Sale; disposition of proceeds. Should no owner appear within the time described in subsection (c) of this section or, appearing, should the owner fail or refuse to pay the fees or fine imposed, then it shall be the duty of the city to expose to public sale such animal or fowl impounded for the satisfaction of such fine.

Sec. 4-57. - Temporary use of goats for prescribed grazing.

(a) Definitions. Prescribed grazing means the temporary use of goats as a landscape management technique to control the growth of undesirable vegetation and a prescribed grazing permit means a permit issued by the city's planning and development department that allows prescribed grazing of only female and neutered goats within the city limits, the purpose of which is to establish conditions under which the temporary and periodic use of a limited number of goats for prescribed grazing for vegetative landscaping.

(b) Permit required. Notwithstanding the restrictions on livestock as may be found in this article, a prescribed grazing permit to be issued by the city's planning and development

department, must be obtained prior to the use of any goats within the city limits for the limited purpose of prescribed grazing. A one-time fee of \$25.00 shall be charged to offset the cost of administering this permit and such permit shall be nontransferable.

(c) Standards. The use of goats for prescribed grazing shall be compliant with the current standards and procedures promulgated by the animal services division as prescribed grazing permit conditions. In addition to other, more specific standards as may be set forth in the prescribed grazing permit conditions, the following shall apply to all permits:

(1) An application for a prescribed grazing permit must include at a minimum: a detailed site plan, a description of the fencing to be used, the dates the project will begin and end, a signature of the premises owner, the company name and contact information of the goat supplier, as well as a certificate of insurance maintaining coverage in an amount of \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence, and \$2,000,000.00 in the aggregate from the goat supplier; and

(2) No more than five goats per $\frac{1}{4}$ acre and no more than 15 goats per project will be allowed and no front yard grazing shall be allowed on lots with a residence; and

(3) The use of one joule or less electrified low voltage fencing may be allowed for the duration of the permit subject to approval and provided a copy of the permit is displayed on the premises; and

(4) All fencing must have a warning sign clearly visible and posted every 25 feet with a minimum of one sign per side of fencing with said fencing to be placed not closer than one foot from adjacent occupied property and for front-yard grazing on vacant lots an additional orange-colored fence shall be required four feet in front of any electrified fencing and at least two feet back from front property line; and

(5) All premises on which goats are kept shall be clean and used in a manner so as not to constitute a nuisance either by odor, noise, attraction of vermin, impairment of water quality, or violation of any other regulation found elsewhere in Columbia's Code of Ordinances.

(d) Duration. No person shall keep any goats under a prescribed grazing permit for longer than seven consecutive days or 14 total days in any six-month period. The permit shall issue only when in the discretion of the department the keeping of such an animal in a yard or building under the circumstances as set forth in the application for the permit will not injuriously affect the public health.

(e) Inspections and enforcement. The premises for which a permit issues shall at all times be open to inspection by a city official during the grazing period. If a violation of the permit terms is found, the property owner or goat owner will be notified and the violation remedied within 24 hours or the permit may be revoked by the issuing department.

Secs. 4-58—4-70. Reserved.

Requested by:

Clint Shealy, Assistant City Manager

Approved by:


City Manager

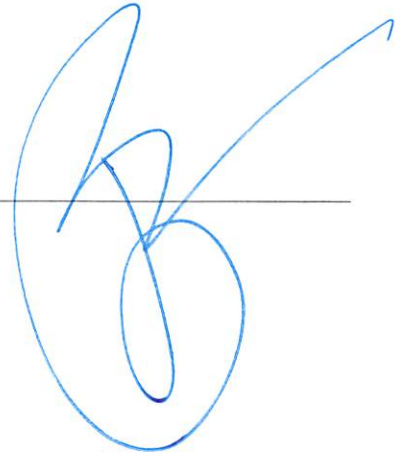
Approved as to form:


City Attorney

Introduced: 07/21/2026

Final Reading: 08/04/2026

Mayor



ATTEST:


City Clerk