



ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 2018/09/10-4-a

Date: October 5, 2018

Subject: Prohibition on the practice of declawing cats

Motioned By: Katie Jarl

Seconded By: Nancy Nemer

Recommendation

Commissioner Katie Jarl moved that the Animal Advisory Commission authorize the chair, David Lundstedt, to send a recommendation asking the City Council to pass the Prohibition of the Declawing of Cats, as based on the language in Attachment A, the draft document entitled "Prohibition of the Declawing of Cats."

Description of Recommendation to Council

The Animal Advisory Commission recommends that council prohibit the cruel practice of declawing cats within the City of Austin. The language included in attachment "A" has been used in California, New York and Denver and has proven to protect cats from unnecessary elective amputations while also preserving a veterinarian's discretion in addressing the physical medical condition of the cat for a therapeutic purpose. Only those surgeries done for aesthetic reasons or those done for convenience of the cat owner would be prohibited.

Rationale:

- *Declawing is defined as the removal of a cats' toe bones*
- *Declawing is one of the most painful procedures performed by veterinarians*
- *Declawing provides absolutely no benefit for the cat*
- *Declawed cats are more likely to bite and exhibit other behavioral issues*
- *The CDC does not recommend the declawing of cats for immune compromised owners due to the fact that biting poses a much greater risk.*
- *The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) strongly opposes declawing (onychectomy) as an elective procedure.*
- *Declawing of cats is not consistent with Austin's No-Kill, animal friendly reputation and attitude.*

Vote

For: 9

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 3 (one vacancy)

Attest:

Lee Ann Shenefiel, Interim Chief Animal Services Officer

Attachment A

PROHIBITION OF THE DECLAWING OF CATS.

1. NO PERSON SHALL PERFORM OR PROCURE AN ONYCHECTOMY (DECLAWING), PARTIAL OR COMPLETE PHLANGECTOMY OR TENDONECTOMY PROCEDURE BY ANY MEANS ON A CAT WITHIN CITY OF AUSTIN, EXCEPT WHEN NECESSARY FOR A THERAPEUTIC PURPOSE. THERAPEUTIC PURPOSE MEANS THE NECESSITY TO ADDRESS THE PHYSICAL MEDICAL CONDITION OF THE CAT, SUCH AS AN EXISTING OR RECURRING ILLNESS, INFECTION, DISEASE, INJURY OR ABNORMAL CONDITION IN THE CLAW THAT COMPROMISES THE CAT'S HEALTH. THERAPEUTIC PURPOSE DOES NOT INCLUDE COSMETIC OR AESTHETIC REASONS OR REASONS OF CONVENIENCE IN KEEPING OR HANDLING THE CAT.

2. ANY PERSON WHO PERFORMS OR PROCURES AN ONYCHECTOMY, PARTIAL OR COMPLETE PHLANGECTOMY OR TENDONECTOMY PROCEDURE ON ANY CAT WITHIN THE CITY OF AUSTIN SHALL BE GUILTY OF A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION WHICH SHALL BE PUNISHABLE BY A CIVIL PENALTY NOT TO EXCEED _____ DOLLARS.