


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 10, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY'S DOG AND CAT LICENSE REGULATIONS AND FEES

ISSUE: Ordinance to amend the City's dog and cat license regulations and fees.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council pass the ordinance on first reading and set it for public hearing, second reading and final passage on Saturday, December 18.

DISCUSSION: Each calendar year the City, through the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria staff at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, issues about 4,500 dog and cat licenses. Last June Council received a recommendation from staff and the director of the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter that the City's dog and cat licensing system be amended to provide for the option of issuing one year or three year licenses for dogs and cats instead of the one year licenses provided for in the City Code.

The proposed ordinance implements this change in licensing and also changes the timing for license renewal to tie it to the date on the pet's rabies vaccination certificate. This will enable the animal shelter staff to ensure that the rabies vaccination is current when the license is in effect.

The following is a comparison of the current dog and cat license fees and the proposed fees:

<u>Current System</u>	<u>Proposed System</u>
1 year license that expires on December 31	1 or 3 year license that expires when the rabies vaccination expires
1 year cat license-altered pets \$2/others \$10	no change
no three year license	3 yr cat license-altered pets \$5/others \$25
1 yr dog license-altered pets \$10/others \$30	no change
no three year license	3 yr dog license-altered pets \$25/others \$75

Current System

Senior citizen discount: not offered

Proposed System

\$5 discount for 1 yr license and \$15 discount for 3 yr license for persons Age 65 and older

Not addressed

Must obtain license within 30 days of moving to the City or within 10 days of expiration of current license.

FISCAL IMPACT: The ordinance is expected to be revenue neutral since there is no change in the fees charged. Staff reviewed fees in other area jurisdictions that have multiple year pet licensing and found the fees to be similar to those in Alexandria. (Arlington County-dogs only 1 year:\$10/3 years:\$25; Fairfax County-dogs only with a one year license; spayed or neutered \$5; others \$10). Many jurisdictions do not license cats, but we believe it is an important tool in obtaining compliance with rabies inoculations.

ATTACHMENTS: Proposed Ordinance

STAFF:

Michele Evans, Assistant City Manager

Tara Blot, Director, Vola Lawson Animal Shelter.

Introduction and first reading: 12/14/04
Public hearing: 12/18/04
Second reading and enactment: 12/18/04

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE

Title

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Sections 5-7-47 (LICENSE – REQUIRED; DISPOSITION OF REVENUE), 5-7-48 (SAME – TAX IMPOSED; TAX RATES; WHEN TAX PAYABLE) and 5-7-49 (SAME – APPLICATION; ISSUANCE; RECORDS TO BE KEPT) of Article C (DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS), Chapter 7 (ANIMALS AND FOWL), Title 5 (TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES), of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

Summary

The proposed ordinance replaces the current system of issuing annual dog and cat licenses which expire and must be renewed at the end of each calendar year, with a system of one or three year licenses, at the option of the animal’s owner, which will expire when the animal’s rabies vaccination expires. The proposed license fees for dogs are \$30 for a one year license (\$10 if spayed or neutered) and \$75 for a three year license (\$25 if spayed or neutered). For cats, the proposed fees are \$10 for a one year license (\$2 if spayed or neutered) and \$25 for a three year license (\$5 if spayed or neutered). Senior citizens will receive a \$5 discount on one year dog licenses, and a \$15 discount on three year dog licenses, and no fee is charged for seeing eye and other service dogs. In the transition period, the fee will be prorated in accordance with the number of remaining months of the animal’s rabies vaccination.

Sponsor

Staff

Michele Evans, Assistant City Manager
Tara Blot, Executive Director, Animal Shelter
Ignacio Pessoa, City Attorney

Authority

§§ 2.01, 2.04(p), Alexandria City Charter

Estimated Costs of Implementation

See docket memorandum from City Manager

Attachments in Addition to Proposed Ordinance and Its Attachments (if any)

None

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Sections 5-7-47 (LICENSE – REQUIRED; DISPOSITION OF REVENUE), 5-7-48 (SAME – TAX IMPOSED; TAX RATES; WHEN TAX PAYABLE) and 5-7-49 (SAME – APPLICATION; ISSUANCE; RECORDS TO BE KEPT) of Article C (DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS), Chapter 7 (ANIMALS AND FOWL), Title 5 (TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES), of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That Section 5-7-47 of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same hereby is, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-7-47 License--required; disposition of revenue.

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to ~~be the owner of~~ a dog or cat four months old or older within the city unless such dog or cat is licensed, as required by the provisions of this article.
- (b) All dog and cat license taxes collected pursuant to this article shall be paid into the general fund from which sufficient funds for the operation and maintenance of the animal shelter may be provided, as authorized by council.
- (c) The owner of a dog or cat required to be licensed by this article shall obtain the license and pay the license tax within 30 days of moving into the city, acquiring the animal, or attainment of the required age by the animal, which ever is later.
- (d) The owner of a dog or cat with an existing license required by this article shall renew the animal's license and pay the license tax within 10 days after expiration of such animal's license.

Section 2. That Section 5-7-48 of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same hereby is, amended and reordained to read as follows:

Sec. 5-7-48 Same--tax imposed; tax rates; when tax payable expiration.

- (a) There is hereby imposed ~~an annual~~ license tax on dogs and cats required to be licensed by this article, ~~except that no license tax shall be levied on any hearing dog, seeing-eye dog or service dog for each calendar year at the following rates, and due and payable as follows:~~
 - (1) For any male or female dog or cat ~~which shall be four months old or older on or before January 31 of the year~~, the license tax for that a one year license shall be \$30 for a dog, and \$10 for a cat, and shall be paid by the owner on or before January 31 of said year; the license tax for a three year

1 license shall be \$75 for a dog and \$25 for a cat, except as provided in
2 paragraphs (2), (3) or (4) below.

3
4 ~~(2) If any male or female dog or cat shall become four months of age, or if a~~
5 ~~dog or cat of that age or older shall come into the possession of an owner,~~
6 ~~between January 31 and November 1 of any year, the license tax for that~~
7 ~~year shall be \$30 for a dog, and \$10 for a cat, and shall be paid by the~~
8 ~~owner within 10 days of the dog or cat attaining the age of four months or~~
9 ~~coming into the possession of the owner;~~

10
11 ~~(3) If any male or female dog or cat shall become four months of age, or if a~~
12 ~~dog or cat of that age or older shall come into the possession of an owner,~~
13 ~~after October 31 of any year, the license tax of \$30 for a dog, and \$10 for a~~
14 ~~cat, for the succeeding calendar year shall be paid by the owner within 10~~
15 ~~days of the dog or cat attaining the age of four months or coming into the~~
16 ~~possession of the owner;~~

17
18 ~~(4) For any spayed or neutered dog or cat, the provisions of this section shall~~
19 ~~apply but the annual license tax for a one year license shall be \$10 for a~~
20 ~~dog, and \$2 for a cat, and the license tax for a three year license shall be~~
21 ~~\$25 for a dog and \$5 for a cat. ; and~~

22
23 ~~(5) If any dog or cat coming into the possession of an owner on or before~~
24 ~~October 31 of any year has a current license in another jurisdiction, a full~~
25 ~~credit shall be allowed on the cost of obtaining the first city license.~~

26
27 ~~(3) For any hearing dog, seeing eye dog or service dog, a license shall be~~
28 ~~required but no license tax shall be charged.~~

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30 ~~(4) For any dog owned by a person 65 years of age or older, there shall be a \$5~~
31 ~~discount in the applicable license tax for a one year license, and a \$15~~
32 ~~discount in the license tax for a three year license.~~

33
34 ~~(5) The owner of an animal required to be licensed by this article may elect to~~
35 ~~obtain a one year license or a three year license, and shall pay the~~
36 ~~corresponding license tax at the time the license is obtained.~~

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38 ~~(b) A one year license shall be valid for a maximum period of 12 months from the date~~
39 ~~of issuance; provided, however, that the license shall expire on the last day of the~~
40 ~~month in which the rabies vaccination of the licensed animal expires.~~

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42 ~~(c) A three year license shall be valid for a maximum period of 36 months from the date~~
43 ~~of issuance; provided, however, that the license shall expire on the last day of the~~
44 ~~month in which the rabies vaccination of the licensed animal expires.~~

1 Section 3. That Section 5-7-49 of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as
2 amended, be, and the same hereby is, amended and reordained to read as follows:
3

4 **Sec. 5-7-49 Same--application; issuance; records to be kept.**
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6 Any owner may obtain a dog or cat license by making a signed written application to the
7 city manager or ~~her~~ the manager's designee. The application shall contain the name, sex,
8 age, breed and description of the dog or cat and the name and address of the owner, and
9 shall be accompanied by the amount of the license tax and a certificate of vaccination or
10 other evidence from a licensed veterinarian showing that the dog or cat is inoculated against
11 rabies and the expiration date of the vaccination, ~~or a certification from the owner~~
12 ~~containing the vaccination number showing that the dog or cat is inoculated against rabies.~~
13 Upon receipt of a proper application, accompanied by the amount of the license tax and a
14 proper certificate of vaccination or other evidence, ~~or a proper certification from the owner~~;
15 the city manager or ~~her~~ the manager's designee shall issue a license receipt and an
16 appropriate tag to the owner, and shall record upon the receipt and upon records maintained
17 by the city the name and address of the owner, the date of issuance, the year period of time
18 for which issued and date of expiration of the rabies vaccination, the serial number of the
19 license and the sex, age, breed and description of the dog or cat.
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21 Section 4. That this ordinance shall become effective at the time and on the date of final
22 passage; provided, however, that for one year licenses issued prior to December 18, 2005, the
23 license tax shall be one twelfth of the license tax otherwise established, for each month for
24 which the license shall remain valid, and provided further that for three year licenses issued
25 prior to December 18, 2007, the license tax shall be one thirty sixth of the license tax otherwise
26 established, for each month for which the license shall remain valid.
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29 WILLIAM D. EUILLE
30 Mayor
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32 Introduction: 12/14/04
33 First Reading: 12/14/04
34 Publication:
35 Public Hearing:
36 Second Reading:
37 Final Passage:
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