



Berkeley City Council

CONSENT CALENDAR

September 29, 2009

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Jesse Arreguín and Susan Wengraf

Subject: Amnesty for Late Renewal Penalties for Dog Licenses

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution approving the waiving of late renewal penalties for Berkeley dog licenses during the month of October 2009 as part of Animal Shelter Awareness Month.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Berkeley's Animal Care Services (BACS) provides a wide range of services to the cities' residents and their pets, including the administration of the Berkeley Animal Shelter on Second Street, which houses domestic animals from the cities of Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville, and Piedmont. The animal shelter provides stray, injured and dead animal pick up, and advice on and enforcement of all local and state animal codes. Dog licenses can also be obtained from the animal shelter as well as from the City Service Center. The shelter provides a safe haven for homeless pets, and also adoption services, advice on animal-related topics, lost and found pet reports, and free or low-cost spay/neuter vouchers for Berkeley residents' dogs and cats.

The number of dogs licensed in Berkeley is currently just over 3,000, estimated to be around 25% of dogs required to be licensed. The license fee for an altered dog or a permanently infertile dog is \$7.50 for one year and a 3 year license costs \$18.00 (a current rabies vaccine must be in effect for the duration of the license period). Fees for unaltered dogs are \$ 30.00 per year. Licenses are free for seniors, low-income residents and owners with service dogs. Berkeley residents who adopt a dog from Berkeley Animal Care Services receive a one year license for free and a 3 year license for \$12 if purchased at the time of adoption.

Some dog owners do not renew their licenses. These late renewals accrue penalties but penalties have not proven to be an incentive to renewal.

The intent of this amnesty is to offer an opportunity to encourage those who have not renewed their dog licenses to do so at the annual rate with no penalty, and provides the city the opportunity to promote the dog license program and the benefits of licensing and to encourage the majority of dog owners who do not currently license their dogs to do so.

The Citizens Humane Commission unanimously approved this recommendation at their June 17, 2009 meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are 84 individual dog accounts with penalties on them and of those 40 just recently became overdue. Just 18 are delinquent. The total amount is \$792.00.

The potential income from encouraging renewals and promoting new license purchases would probably offset the losses, as these delinquent accounts are less likely to renew with increasing penalties.

CONTACT PERSONS:

Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember, District 4	981-7140
Susan Wengraf, Councilmember, District 6	981-7160

Attachments:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO.

WAIVING LATE RENEWAL PENALTIES FOR BERKELEY DOG LICENSES
DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2009

WHEREAS, Berkeley Municipal Code Section 10.04.030 requires that every dog over the age of six months must be licensed; and

WHEREAS, in order for a dog to be licensed an owner must vaccinate their pet for rabies. Licenses are not issued beyond the period of the rabies vaccination; and

WHEREAS, owners must also pay a license fee which varies based on whether the dog registered is altered or unaltered as an incentive to owners to have their pets spayed or neutered; and

WHEREAS, licenses are free for seniors, low-income residents and owners with service dogs and Berkeley residents who adopt a dog from Berkeley Animal Care Services receive a one year license for free and a 3 year license for \$12 if purchased at the time of adoption; and

WHEREAS, owners are required to renew their dog licenses before they expire, otherwise they will be assessed a late license renewal penalty. The penalty is on top of the annual license fee that must be paid; and

WHEREAS, despite city regulations, the number of dogs licensed in Berkeley is currently just over 3,000 estimated to be around 25% of dogs required to be licensed; and

WHEREAS, some dog owners do not renew their licenses. These late renewals accrue penalties, but penalties have not proven to be an incentive to renew; and

WHEREAS, waiving late penalties for dog licenses can encourage those owners who have not renewed their licenses to do so at the annual rate with no penalty, and provides the city the opportunity to promote the dog license program and the benefits of licensing; and

WHEREAS, waiving late penalties also encourages the majority of dog owners who do not currently license their dogs to do so; and

WHEREAS, waiving dog license late penalties may result in more revenue to the City since it provides an incentive for owners to renew their licenses and will help promote new license renewals.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that late renewal penalties for Berkeley dog licenses are hereby waived during the month of October 2009 as part of Animal Shelter Awareness Month.

