



HOME | CONTACT | SUBSCRIBE | PLACE AN AD

Search TheMercury.com

Welcome Guest (Sign in)



SECTIONS

News & Features

- News
- Archive
- Obituaries
- The Daily Record
- Weather
- I Wonder
- Off the Beat
- Photo Galleries
- Feature Stories
- Opinion
- Letters to the Editor

Classifieds

K-State Sports

Local Sports

Nightlife

Community Info

Interactive

Calendar

Help

Shop

Poll Question

What's your favorite nickname for Manhattan?

- The Little Apple
- Manhappiness
- Manhappenin

General Reader Forums

[Voting Machines](#)

0 Replies
Posted By: Ben Fenwick

[Breed Ban.](#)

5 Replies - Last Reply On 3/21/2007 2:37:13 PM
Posted By: Kathleen Boehner

[MHK Water Plant Expansion](#)

0 Replies
Posted By: Zac Cook

[City commission](#)

7 Replies - Last Reply On 3/21/2007 5:53:50 PM
Posted By: jarod hyde

[Smoke Free Debate](#)

19 Replies - Last Reply On 3/21/2007 4:22:03 PM
Posted By: Ben Fenwick

NEWS & FEATURES ARTICLE

Thursday, March 22, 2007

The price of being 'dangerous'

City steers away from breed-specific dog ban, but holds owners to additional standards
Jeff Wright Staff Writer

Owners of dangerous dogs in Manhattan would be subject to new requirements such as purchasing liability insurance and special licenses under an amended dog ordinance approved on first reading Tuesday by the City Commission.

A second reading is required, but is essentially a formality.

The ownership requirements would apply if a dog is deemed dangerous by a municipal judge. One determination of "dangerous" is whether the animal attacks a person or domestic animal without provocation. The judges would use other criteria as well, such as whether it's primarily used as a guard dog.

ADVERTISEMENT



The altered ordinance also would require owners of dangerous dogs to have their animals spayed or neutered and microchipped for identification. Current law requires the keepers of such dogs to post "Beware of Dog" signs, and to have their animals muzzled and leashed when not confined.

Katharine Jackson, assistant city attorney, said the amendments are "procedural and legal," and that the heart of the city's dangerous dog ordinance remains intact, with no ban on specific dog breeds. Nor does the city consider a dog dangerous based on its breed, though it does hold owners of certain kinds dogs to a "higher standard" as far as knowledge of their propensity for violence.

A dangerous dog task force, comprised of a cross-section of the community and city staffers, is tackling several dog/dog owner issues and plans to make recommendations to the commission at an April 24 work session. How to handle "bully breeds" such as the American pit bull terrier is being discussed, as are changes to the city's leash law and how to educate owners about responsible dog ownership. Since that time frame follows the April 3 city election, any recommendations will be taken up by the new Commission.

Task force member Brian Williams, a city management intern, said there was "great disparity" and "head-butting" in the beginning, "but we're making good progress."

Another change to the existing ordinance is the addition of an "at-large" provision, which Jackson called "a proactive change" aimed at identifying menacing dogs before they attack a person or a pet.

The owner of an at-large dog capable of inflicting life threatening injuries — the city has a list that includes Dobermans, Rottweilers and pit bulls — would have to pay a \$100 fine. That dog would be considered "dangerous" upon a first conviction. The owner of an at-large dog not capable of inflicting life-threatening injuries or not one of the "bully breeds," would have to pay a \$50 fine for a first offense. A second offense means, "that dog is a dangerous dog," Jackson said.

She added that an animal control officer wouldn't have to spot the at-large dog, but could rely on testimony from citizens.

BUY. SELL. MOVE.

Christian & Associates Real Estate Ready to Serve Your Real Estate needs!
[Contact Us Here!](#)

Dr. Jack Peterson

Specializing in Plastic Surgery
(785) 234-9000
www.drjackpeterson.com

Dow	12,447.52	+1.30%
NASDAQ	2,455.92	+1.98%
S&P	1,435.04	+1.71%

53° Cloudy

[\(View All Reader Forums\)](#)

KSU Sports Forums

[Thanks Huggins!](#)

1 Reply - Last Reply On 3/21/2007
2:21:27 PM

Posted By: Sean Weston

[Mary Kathryn Thompson's
Letter to The Editor](#)

2 Replies - Last Reply On
3/21/2007 8:28:08 PM

Posted By: Sue Engert

[Chickens in Bramlage](#)

25 Replies - Last Reply On
3/16/2007 10:58:43 PM

Posted By:

[\(View All Reader Forums\)](#)

The amended ordinance also would put in place an administrative hearing process to speed up dangerous dog determinations by a court. A municipal court hearing would be held within five to 20 days after a dog owner is served notice. If a judge determines the dog is dangerous, its owner would have 20 days in which to pay animal shelter impoundment fees, obtain the dangerous dog license and comply with other ownership requirements such as microchipping.

If the requirements are not met, the city takes ownership of the dog and can dispose of it, or relinquish it to an animal rescue operation, Jackson said.

Dog owners who appeal either a dangerous dog or aggressive dog-at-large violation conviction would be required to post a bond equal to the cost of 30 days impoundment at the animal shelter, which is just under \$10 per day, Jackson said.

Williams said dog owners who attempt to purchase liability insurance for a dangerous dog might find it "more costly ... perhaps difficult, but not impossible."

Commissioner Mark Hatesohl thought the commission was "headed in the right direction" by penalizing "irresponsible dog owners and bad dogs," and not "inconveniencing responsible dog owners and good dogs one bit."

Commissioner Jayme Morris-Hardeman wanted the animal shelter staff and animal control officers to evaluate the ordinance changes over a period of three to six months.

"I want to know this moves toward reduction of risk," added Mayor Bruce Snead. He said the commission wanted to "move quickly on things we all agree on," such as the ownership requirements and expedited hearings, and wait for further recommendations from the task force.

Snead said the dangerous dog debate could linger past the upcoming April 24 work session, though, "our goal is to try to resolve the issue," he said.

Tuesday marked the commission's fourth meeting on the dangerous dog topic.

You can reach Jeff Wright by phone at 776-2300, ext. 248, or by e-mail at jwright@themercury.com

[You can download or read a copy of the Dangerous dog ordinance by clicking here. \(pdf file\).](#)

Current Responses

[Major Concerns with part of the above](#)
[Good Job](#)

Your Response

Share your thoughts on this story! Join the conversation [now!](#)