# ANIMAL CONTROL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on January 6, 1996 the Council voted to adopt the Harris County Animal Control Ordinance then in force with no changes; and

WHEREAS, by Intergovernmental Agreement approved by the Town on August 12, 1996 Harris County agreed that its Animal Control Officer would administer and enforce the terms of such Ordinance within and for the Town; and

WHEREAS, Harris County has heretofore amended the Animal Control Ordinance adopted by this Council on January 6, 1996; and

WHEREAS, it is deemed advisable that the Council take such action as is necessary to update the understanding under the Intergovernmental Agreement so as to continue the said administration and enforcement of animal control in the Town by the Harris County Animal Control Officer:

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that this Council hereby amends the motion adopted on January 6, 1996 so as to hereafter provide that the Harris County Animal Control Ordinance currently in force, together with such changes to such Ordinance as may from time to time made by Harris County be, and it hereby is adopted for use by the Town until further action by this Council.

Approved this 9th day of November, 2015.

James V Mayor

Attest:

Betsy Sivell Town Clerk ARTICLE III. - ANIMAL CONTROL

**DIVISION 1. - GENERALLY** 



Sec. 5-41. - Authority, designation of funds, jurisdiction.

- (a) Authority. The general authority for this article is O.C.G.A. § 31-19-3, which authorizes and requires governing authorities of each county and municipality to require regulation and licensing of certain animals in the interest of rabies control. The board of commissioners shall monitor the operation of animal control and enforcement and render such guidance and assistance as is deemed appropriate in order to encourage responsible pet ownership. Proposals and recommendations shall normally be presented during the regularly scheduled commission meetings. Matters that need immediate attention should be referred to the animal control officer, county health department, or law enforcement department.
- (b) Designation of funds. Funds derived from penalties, impoundment fees and other sources related to enforcement of provisions of this article shall be remitted to the board of commissioners.
- (c) Jurisdiction. The county's jurisdiction for the enforcement of this article shall be the unincorporated area of the county, and a municipality's jurisdiction for such enforcement shall be the territory within the corporate limits of the municipality. Any municipality or any combination of such local governments may contract or enter into agreements with the county for joint animal control services or for the provision of animal control services required by this article and for the separate or joint use of personnel, facilities, and equipment used in the provision of such services.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Sec. 5-42. - Animal control officer training, equipment, records.

- (a) Training. The animal control officer shall undergo a period of training in which he shall familiarize himself with the provisions of this article and the fundamental requirements of such constitutional protections as probable cause in order to ensure that the rights of private citizens shall be guaranteed during the enforcement of this article.
- (b) Equipment. The animal control officer is authorized to employ any equipment deemed necessary to enforce the provisions of this article. Any trap used must be of a humane nature, including wire box traps; and the animal control officer may loan such traps or other equipment to private persons for the purpose of preventing nuisances resulting from animals at large.
- (c) *Records*. It shall be the duty of the animal control officer to keep, or cause to be kept, accurate and detailed records of the impoundment and disposition of all animals coming into custody.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

#### Sec. 5-43. - Definitions.

- (a) Except as specifically defined in this section, all words in this article have their customary dictionary definitions. For the purpose of this article, certain terms and words used herein are defined as follows:
  - (1) Words used in the present tense include future tense.
  - (2) Words used in the singular tense include the plural, and words used in the plural include the singular.
  - (3) The words "shall," "will," and "require" always mean mandatory.
  - (4) The word "person" includes a firm, association, organization, trust, company, or corporation as well as an individual.

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(b) Definitions.

Animal means any description of vertebrate, excluding Homo sapiens.

Animal control officer means an individual selected by the board of commissioners by and through the county manager to aid in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this article.

Animal shelter means any facility operated by or under contract for any government entity, for the purpose of impounding or harboring seized, stray, homeless, abandoned, or unwanted dogs, cats, or other animals; any veterinary hospital that operates for such purpose in addition to its customary purposes; and any facility operated, owned, or maintained by a duly incorporated humane society, animal welfare society, or other nonprofit organization for the purpose of providing for and promoting the welfare, protection, and humane treatment of animals.

At large means any animal when off the premises of the owner and not under the control of a responsible person.

Bird means any animal belonging to a class of warm-blooded vertebrates with wings and feathers, flying or non-flying.

Cat means any member of the species Felis catus, four months of age or older and includes both male and female.

*Cruelty* means every act, omission or neglect whereby unjustifiable pain, suffering, maiming or death may be caused or permitted to any animal as defined in this section.

Dog means all animals of the species Canis familiaris, four months of age or older and includes both male and female.

*Fence* shall mean a fenced enclosure constructed with sufficient height, strength, and secure closing devices to adequately secure the animal(s) contained therein.

Fowl means the same as bird.

Humane manner means the care of an animal to include, but not limited to, safety, adequate heat, ventilation, sanitary shelter, fresh food, and access to fresh, clean, wholesome water at all times, consistent with the normal requirements and feeding habits of the animal's size, species, and breed.

Impoundment means the capture and retention of an animal in or at the Harris County Animal Shelter.

Kennel means a retail or wholesale activity, maintained for the purpose of offering any service whatsoever, including but not limited to boarding, grooming, breeding, keeping for sale, selling, trading, training, or renting or leasing for guard purposes any dogs or other animals. Veterinary hospitals or clinics are excluded.

Livestock means any domestic animal raised for home use or for profit.

Nuisance means any animal that (1) causes damage or unsanitary conditions on private property (other than the property of the owner of the animal), or public property and recreational areas; (2) molests, attacks or interferes with persons on public or private property, unless the animal is a guard dog actively performing its duties while confined to the property of the owner or responsible person; (3) chases vehicles; (4) howls, yelps, whines, or barks in such manner as to unreasonably disturb any person or neighborhood; (5) attacks other animals or fowl on the property of another or on public sidewalks, streets, alleys, parks and recreation areas; (6) female dogs or cats, when in breeding season, allowed to roam and run free beyond the limits of the owner's property; (7) enters any place where food is stored, prepared, served, or sold to the public, except dogs trained specifically to assist a person with a disability when such dog is actually being used by a disabled person as an aid for that disability; and/or (8) running at large in subdivisions as defined herein.

Owner/ownership means any natural person or legal entity including, but not limited to, a corporation, partnership, firm, or trust owning or having an interest in, harboring or keeping, feeding, sheltering or allowing animals to remain in or about the premises for three consecutive days or more. Kennel keepers, veterinarians, professional groomers, pet shop owners, or similar

entrepreneurs who keep animals as inventory or professionally render services thereto are not considered owners within the scope of this article if acting in such a capacity.

Rabies vaccination tag means a serially numbered tag, approved by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, which is issued by a veterinarian to the owner of a dog or cat at the time of vaccination, along with a certificate of rabies vaccination.

Responsible person means any accountable human being.

Subdivision means any location within the unincorporated areas of the county used primarily for residential purposes, consisting of lots with an average of two acres or less and with a minimum of ten residential units in the neighborhood or subdivided area.

Unattended means an animal on the owner's property and not confined thereto by fence, chain, or other suitable and effective means, and when no responsible person is available to control such animal if said animal has been observed on public property or private property other than property of the owner.

Vaccinate means the injection of anti-rabies vaccine by a licensed veterinarian at such intervals as required by state law.

Veterinary clinic means a clinic or hospital operated by a licensed veterinarian.

Vicious means any animal of any species that (1) attacks a human being or other domestic animals without provocation, provided that the animal shall not be deemed vicious if the threat, injury or damage was sustained by a person who, at the time, was committing a willful trespass or other tort upon the premises occupied by the owner or keeper of the dog, or was teasing, tormenting, abusing or assaulting the animal, or has in the past, abused or assaulted the animal or was committing or attempting to commit a crime, as long as the owner was not aware of the current or past provocation and failed to take actions to stop the provocations, or; (2) according to the records of animal control, health department, or law enforcement agency, has inflicted injury on a human being without provocation, or; (c) according to the records of animal control or law enforcement agency, has killed a domestic animal without provocation while off the owner's property.

Wild carnivore means any normally undomesticated member of the order carnivora. This includes but is not limited to foxes, skunks, raccoons, coyotes and bobcats (lynx).

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95; Ord. No. 10-10, § 1A, 11-2-2010)

Cross reference— Definitions and rules of construction; § 1-2.

#### Sec. 5-44. - Rabies vaccinations.

- (a) Health regulations incorporated. All rules and regulations of the county board of health and the state department of human resources presently existing or as adopted in the future pertaining to rabies control and vaccination are incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth herein.
- (b) Responsibility. The owner or person having control of any dog or cat shall be responsible for complying with the laws of the state as they apply to rabies vaccination and control.
- (c) Requirement to display rabies vaccination tag.
  - (1) Dogs. The rabies vaccination tag issued for a dog shall be attached to a collar or harness and worn by the dog at all times, except under the special circumstances authorized below. The owner shall be required to produce evidence of the rabies vaccination upon the request of an officer/agent of animal control, the county health department or law enforcement department.
    - a. A dog, while confined within the owner's house or apartment, is exempt from wearing the rabies tag.
    - b. Hunting or stock dogs and show dogs while being worked, conditioned, groomed and/or shown under the direct supervision and control of their owner, agents or employees of the owner, are exempt from

- wearing the rabies tag.
- c. A dog, which for medical or physical reasons is unable to wear a collar or harness, is exempt from wearing the rabies tag. Documentation from a licensed veterinarian must be presented as proof for this exemption.
- (2) Cats. The wearing of rabies tags by cats shall be left to the discretion of the owners. If tags are not worn, evidence of vaccination must be produced upon the request of an officer/agent of animal control, the county health department, and/or law enforcement department.

# Sec. 5-45. - Cruelty to animals.

- (a) Neglect, pain, suffering or injury. It shall be unlawful for any person, by neglect or otherwise, to cause or allow any animal to endure pain, suffering or injury, or to fail or neglect to aid or attempt alleviation of any pain, suffering or injury caused to any animal. Acts violating this section shall include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Failure to provide adequate shelter from all types of weather;
  - (2) Failure to provide animals food for a period of more than 24 hours and/or water or care for more than 18 hours;
  - (3) Abandoning any animal on private or public property;
  - (4) Leaving or exposing any poison substance, food, or drink for man, animal, or fowl or to aid or abet any person in so doing, except insect or rodent poison when used for control of insects, mice or rodents.
- (b) Bait, attack, provoke or harass. It shall be unlawful for any person to bait, attack with violence, provoke or harass an animal, domestic or wild, with one or more animals or humans, for the purpose of training such an animal for, or to cause or to sponsor or to promote such an animal to engage in fights, wrestling or similar contests with or among other animals or between animals and humans. Nothing in this section, however, shall prevent (1) the lawful training of guard dogs or other animals, provided the same in no way conflicts with other provisions of this Code or O.C.G.A.; or (2) any equine activity as defined in O.C.G.A. § 4-12-2.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Sec. 5-46. - Removal of collars or identifying items or marks on animals.

It shall be unlawful for any person without the express permission of the owner or lessee of an animal to remove a collar, tag, tattoo, or any identification mark artificially attached to or imprinted on an animal for the purposes of identification which causes or is likely to cause the loss of the animal to the owner thereof. Any person who violates this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. (O.C.G.A. § 16-9-71)

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Sec. 5-47. - Control of dogs and cats; nuisance animals.

- (a) Owner responsibility. The owner shall be held responsible for the actions of all domesticated animals under his ownership, custody, supervision, or control.
- (b) Leash required in public parks. Without regard to other provisions of this article or other sections of this Code, it shall be unlawful for owners of dogs or cats to allow, permit or by negligence fail to prevent, such animals from being in public parks and recreation areas, unless restrained by a leash and under the control of a responsible person.
- (c) Leash required in subdivisions. No person shall allow any animal, whether domesticated or undomesticated, to run or be at large within a subdivision as defined under section 5-43 of this article. All animals within a subdivision as

defined herein shall be confined indoors or outdoors and if outdoors shall be in a building, fenced pen or yard, electrified fence, or electronic fence on its owner's property or on the property of another person with the other person's consent, adequate to prevent contact with the general public. Further, all owners or keepers of any dogs within a subdivision shall confine the dogs in such a manner that continuous barking by such animals will not disturb adjacent landowners.

#### (d) Nuisance animals.

- (1) *Impoundment*. Dogs or cats determined to be nuisances may be subject to impoundment based upon the determination of the animal control officer and depending upon the nature of the nuisance.
- (2) Reporting and investigating. Upon receipt of nuisance complaints, the animal control officer shall make investigation to determine the validity of such complaint. After investigation has proven complaints to be accurate, the dog or cat may be classified as a nuisance animal.
- (3) Notification. Upon classification of a nuisance animal, the animal control officer shall make a reasonable effort, which shall include but not be limited to the mailing of a notice by certified mail, to notify the owner of such determination. Said notice shall:
  - a. Include a summary of the animal control officer's findings;
  - b. Be dated and state that the owner, within 14 days after the date of the notice, has a right to request, in writing to the board of commissioners, a hearing of the determination;
  - c. State that the hearing, if requested, shall be before the board of commissioners;
  - d. State that if a hearing is not requested, the determination will become effective, for all purposes, on a date specified in the notice, which shall be the last day on which the owner has a right to request a hearing as specified above.
- (4) Hearing scheduled; notice. Upon receipt of request for a hearing, the hearing shall be scheduled within 30 days after receiving the request. The board of commissioners shall notify the owner in writing by certified mail at least ten days prior to the date, time, and place of the hearing indicated in the notice.
- (5) *Notification of determination*. Within ten days after the hearing, the board of commissioners shall notify the owner in writing by certified mail of its determination on the matter.
- (6) Registration. If a dog or cat has been determined to be a nuisance by the board of commissioners, or by the animal control officer when no hearing was requested, it shall be required of the owner to register said animal with the animal control office within five days of the determination notice.
- (7) Registration fee. Upon registration of a nuisance animal, the owner shall pay an annual fee of \$15.00. Registration shall be renewed annually during the month of initial registration.
- (8) Move out of the county. Upon moving out of the county, the owner shall notify the animal control office of said move. Notice shall indicate whether or not the nuisance animal moved with the owner or was sold, donated, or relocated.
- (9) Change of ownership. Upon the nuisance animal being sold, donated, or relocated, the former owner shall provide the animal control office with the name, address and telephone number of the new owner of the nuisance animal.
- (10) *Penalties*. Upon receipt of continued complaints and verification of said complaints, the owner of an animal which has been determined to be a nuisance will be subject to the penalties contained in <u>section 5-53(d)</u>.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95; Ord. No. 10-10, § 1B, C, 11-2-2010)

Sec. 5-48. - Liability of owner for damages done to livestock or poultry by dog. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-4)

(a) Liability of owner. The owner or custodian exercising care and control over any dog which goes upon the land of another and causes injury, death, or damage directly or indirectly to any livestock or poultry shall be civilly liable to

- the owner of the livestock or poultry for damages, death, or injury caused by the dog. The liability of the owner or custodian of the dog shall include consequential damages.
- (b) Cumulative of other remedies. This section is to be considered cumulative of other remedies provided by law. There is no intent to do away with or limit other causes of action which might inure to the owner of any livestock or poultry.

Sec. 5-49. - Animal bites; quarantine of animals.

- (a) *Definition*. "Animal bites" are defined as (1) the breaking of the skin of a human being by an animal, and (2) for rabies control, a bite is also considered the exposure of animal saliva to scratches, abrasions, open wounds, or mucous membranes of humans.
- (b) Reporting procedure. All bite cases must be reported to the county health department. During nonbusiness hours, the report shall be made to the sheriff's department. The bite report should be made as soon as possible, and in no case more than 16 hours after the bite. The responsibility rests with the owners and the person bitten to ensure that a complete report is made. Copies of bite reports shall be forwarded by the health department to the animal control officer and/or the office of the board of commissioners.
- (c) Quarantine required.
  - (1) Any dog or cat which has broken the skin of a human or is suspected of being rabid shall be quarantined for at least ten days. No such animal shall be released to the owner or humanely euthanized until the animal has been examined by a veterinarian or the officer/agent of animal control or health department at the expiration of the ten-day period and released from quarantine.
  - (2) The animal may be quarantined in a manner approved by the county health department.
  - (3) The animal control officer, in conjunction with the county health department, is authorized to require that the animal be quarantined at the county animal shelter, or in a veterinary clinic. In this instance, the owner is responsible for all board and veterinary medical costs incurred pursuant to the quarantine.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

#### Sec. 5-50. - Impoundment.

- (a) Animals subject to impoundment. Any animal within any of the following classes may be captured and impounded in the county:
  - (1) Stray animals whose ownership is unknown;
  - (2) Dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs (as allowed in division 2 of this article);
  - (3) Vicious animals of all kinds;
  - (4) Female dogs in breeding season not confined to the premises of owners in such manner as to avoid nuisances and prevent access to other animals;
  - (5) Animals that have been bitten by an animal suspected of having rabies;
  - (6) Dogs not wearing valid rabies tags;
  - (7) Animals that are causing nuisances in violation of other sections of this article;
  - (8) Animals suspected of not being treated in a humane manner.
  - (9) Animals running at large in subdivisions, as defined herein.
- (b) No exemption. No dog or cat shall be exempted from provisions of this article on impoundment by virtue of having a vaccination tag.
- (c) Notice of impoundment. Immediately upon impounding of animals, the officer/agent of animal control, the county

- health department, or law enforcement department shall make a reasonable effort, which shall include but not be limited to the mailing of a notice by certified mail, to notify the owner of such animals so impounded, and inform such owner of the conditions whereby custody of such animals may be regained.
- (d) *Duration of impoundment*. Any animal impounded shall be held in the county animal shelter in a humane manner for a period of not less than three days. If after three days, an animal so impounded has not been reclaimed by its owner in accordance with the provisions of this article, such animal shall become the absolute property of the Harris County Board of Commissioners, which may allow the animal to be adopted or humanely destroyed.
- (e) Refuse to release. Notwithstanding any provision of this article to the contrary, the animal control officer may refuse to release any animal impounded in the animal shelter for rabies or contagious disease quarantine or for use as evidence in a criminal prosecution, for such time period as the agent/officer of animal control or the county health department may determine.
- (f) Reclaiming impounded animals.
  - (1) The owner of an animal impounded in the animal shelter may reclaim the animal upon presenting evidence satisfactory to the animal control officer of compliance with all provisions of this article, and upon payment of fees and charges as hereinafter provided, and which fees and charges shall not be in lieu of any fine or penalty otherwise provided by law. All applicable fees including those for impoundment, board, and any other fees for services rendered that may be charged by the animal control officer shall be paid to the board of commissioners for all animals released to owners.
  - (2) All dogs or cats shall be inoculated against rabies within three working days of release.
    - Evidence of inoculation shall be provided to the animal control officer verifying inoculation in said time frame, unless evidence is provided at time of release showing the dog or cat has current rabies vaccination.
    - b. Failure to comply with this subsection will result in citation.
- (g) Impoundment, boarding, and quarantine fees.
  - (1) Impoundment fee. In addition to other fees required by this article, there shall be an impoundment charge assessed per animal against owners who recover their animals which were impounded under the provisions of this article. The fees for reclaiming impounded animals shall be as follows:

First offense ..... \$15.00

Second offense ..... 50.00

Subsequent offenses ..... 75.00

Note: Impoundments are levied against the animal owner and not necessarily for the same animal.

- (2) Boarding fee. In addition to other fees required by this article, there will be a boarding fee of \$5.00 per day per animal.
- (3) *Quarantine fee.* The fee for animals impounded for rabies quarantine or for use as evidence in a criminal prosecution shall be at the rate of \$6.00 per day per animal.
- (4) Fee changes. All fees shall be set by the board of commissioners and may be changed by the board of commissioners at any meeting.
- (5) Owner. The owner of an animal impounded in the animal shelter shall be liable for the foregoing fees and charges.
- (h) Escape, injury or pilfering. The animal control officer shall exercise care to prevent the injury, escape or pilfering of any animals with which he deals in carrying out the provisions of this article, but he shall not be responsible for any such occurrence.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95; Ord. No. 10-10, § 1D—F, 11-2-2010)

# Sec. 5-51. - Authority to shoot/kill animals.

- (a) Danger to officer/agent attempting capture. In the event any animal subject to being impounded pursuant to the provisions of this article cannot be captured without actual danger to the officer/agent attempting capture or the public, any officer/agent of animal control, the county health department, and/or law enforcement department is authorized to shoot such an animal when shooting can be done without endangering persons or property. In such cases that may necessitate shooting an animal suspected of having rabies, the person shooting the animal shall avoid damage to the head of the animal so as not to interfere with laboratory examination of the brain to determine rabies infection.
- (b) Animal suspected of being rabid. No person shall kill or cause to be killed any animal suspected of being rabid or any animal that has bitten a human, except as herein provided in subsection (a), nor shall any person remove such animals from the county without the sole permission of the county health department or authorized agent.
- (c) In defense of person or property as authorized in O.C.G.A. § 4-8-5:
  - (1) No person shall harm, maim, or kill any animal, or attempt to do so, except that a person may:
    - a. Defend his person or property, or the person or property of another, from injury or damage being caused by an animal; or
    - b. Kill any animal causing injury or damage to any livestock or poultry.
- (d) *Method of killing.* The method used for killing the animal shall be as humane as possible under the circumstances. A person who humanely kills an animal under the circumstances indicated in this article shall incur no liability for such death under this article.
- (e) Not to limit authority of agent. This section shall not be construed to limit in any way the authority or duty of any officer/agent of animal control, the county health department, the law enforcement department, humane society, or veterinarian.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

# Sec. 5-52. - Disposition of animals.

- (a) Not under observation for rabies. Any impounded animal, not under observation for rabies, that is not claimed within seven days of the date of impoundment, shall be disposed of in a humane manner.
  - (1) An owned or adoptable animal, as determined by the animal control officer, may be held for a longer period of time.
  - (2) Animals which pose a threat to the safety of the personnel responsible for the care of the animals and which are not under suspicion of rabies or quarantine, may be disposed of in a humane manner.
- (b) *Under observation for rabies*. Any animal suspected of having rabies shall remain in quarantine until its natural death, humanely destroyed for testing, or until freedom from suspicion of rabies has been established to the satisfaction of the animal control officer and the health department.
- (c) Sick or injured animals. Any sick or injured animal may be euthanized at the discretion of the animal control officer.
- (d) Dead animals. No person shall intentionally abandon a dead animal on any private property belonging to another unless the person so doing shall have first obtained permission from the owner of the property on which the animal is being left, and the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 4-5-3 are fully complied with.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Sec. 5-53. - Enforcement; burden of proof; penalties; interference; complaints against procedures or personnel.

- (a) Enforcement. It shall be the primary responsibility of the animal control officer, with assistance as required from the control department and/or members of the law enforcement department, to see that provisions of this article are enfo
- (b) Summons and evidence. The agents/officers of animal control, the county health department and/or law enforcement department are hereby authorized to issue a citation to any person for violation of any provision of this article with the exception of incidents pertaining to dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs (see division 2 of this article). The investigating officer shall secure all evidence to provide the court with all essential and available facts upon trial of offenses under this article.
- (c) Burden of proof. The burden of proof generally lies with the person filing the complaint(s) to the extent that proof of such fact is essential.
- (d) *Penalties for violations*. Any person violating any provision of this article, with the exception of incidents pertaining to dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs (division 2 of this article), shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$25.00, nor more than \$1,000.00 dollars, or public service work not to exceed 100 hours, or both. If such violation is continued, each day's violation shall be a separate offense.
- (e) Interference. No person shall resist, interfere with, hinder or molest any officer/agent of animal control, the county health department, and/or law enforcement department in the performance of duties imposed upon them in this article, nor shall any person seek to release or remove any animal captured or impounded pursuant to provisions of this article from custody except as herein provided.
- (f) Probable cause. Prior to going onto private property, an officer/agent of animal control, the county health department, or law enforcement department charged with enforcement of any provision of this article must have knowledge of facts or circumstances that would make a prudent or reasonable person believe that a violation of this article has occurred or is occurring. The authority vested in the officer/agent of animal control, the county health department and/or law enforcement department shall (1) not be construed to provide said officer/agent with the authority to enter a private building or house for any reason, unless permission is given by said owner of said property; and (2) under no circumstances include the right of said officer/agent to infringe on the rights and liberties of any citizen.
- (g) *Bribery.* It shall be unlawful to attempt to bribe, coerce, or otherwise influence an officer/agent of animal control, the county health department, and/or law enforcement department investigating an alleged violation of the provisions of this article.
- (h) Complaints against animal control procedures or personnel. Any complaints about animal control procedures or personnel should be brought to the attention of the county manager.

Secs. 5-54—5-60. - Reserved.

**DIVISION 2. - DANGEROUS AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DOGS** 

Sec. 5-61. - Definitions; procedures for classifying dangerous dogs and potentially dangerous dogs; notice; hearing.

(a) Definitions. [As used in this division, the following words and terms shall have the meaning ascribed thereto:]

Dangerous dog means any dog that, according to the records of the county, (1) has, without provocation, inflicted severe injury on a human being or other domestic animal on public or private property; or (2) aggressively bites, attacks or endangers the safety of humans or other domestic animals without provocation.

Potentially dangerous dog means any dog with a known propensity, tendency, or disposition to attack unprovoked, to cause injury, or to otherwise threaten persons or other domestic animals without provocation; or any dog that, when unprovoked (1) inflicts bites on a human being or other domestic animal upon public or private property; or (2) chases or approaches a human being upon the street, sidewalk or any public grounds in a vicious or terrorizing manner in an apparent attitude of attack.

Proper enclosure means an enclosure for keeping a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog, while on the owner's property, securely confined indoors or in a securely enclosed and locked pen, fence, or structure suitable to prevent the entry of young children and designed to prevent the dog from escaping. Any such pen or structure shall have secure sides and a secure top, and, if the dog is enclosed within a fence, all sides of the fence shall be of sufficient height and the bottom of the fence shall be constructed or secured in such a manner as to prevent the dog's escape either from over or from under the fence. Any such enclosure shall also provide protection from the elements for the dog and shall, at all times, be kept and maintained in a proper, clean, and sanitary condition, consistent with the needs of the dog involved.

Severe injury means any physical injury that results in broken bones or disfiguring lacerations requiring multiple sutures or cosmetic surgery, or a physical injury that results in death.

Under control means any animal that is under voice control or confined by fence, pen, cage, electronic device, chain, leash or secure enclosure to the premises of its owner, of sufficient strength to prevent it from escaping from the premises of its owner, or is restrained by leash, chain, or lead, or confined in an automobile when away from the premises of the owner.

- (b) Exceptions to definitions.
  - (1) The terms "dangerous dog" and "potentially dangerous dog", shall not include the following:
    - a. A dog that inflicts an injury upon a person when the dog is being used by a law enforcement officer to carry out the law enforcement officer's official duties.
    - b. A dog that inflicts an injury within the meaning of this division if the injury was sustained by a person who, at the time, was committing a willful trespass or other tort, or was tormenting, abusing or assaulting the dog, or had in the past been observed or reported to have tormented, abused or assaulted the dog, or was committing or attempting to commit a crime.
    - c. A dog which has bitten or acted aggressively in defense, protection or in assistance to its master or other persons, unless such person was using the dog in conjunction with a criminal activity.
    - d. Dogs that are part of a governmental or law enforcement operation, or a trained guard dog in performance of its duties while confined to the property of the owner or other responsible person.
- (c) Reporting and investigating. The animal control officer, upon receiving a report of a dangerous dog or potentially dangerous dog within the county from an officer/agent of animal control, the county health department, or law enforcement department, shall make such investigations and inquiries with regard to such report as may be necessary to determine the validity of such report and whether the dog should be classified as dangerous or potentially dangerous or reclassified as dangerous if previously classified as a potentially dangerous dog.
- (d) Classifying. Should the animal control officer determine that a dog is dangerous or potentially dangerous, the officer shall classify such animal accordingly. The animal control officer shall then notify the owner of such classification.
- (e) *Notification requirements.* Upon classification of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog, the animal control officer shall attempt to notify the owner of such classification. The notice shall:
  - (1) Be in writing and mailed by certified mail to the owner's last-known address;
  - (2) Include a summary of the animal control officer's findings that formed the basis for the classification as a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog;
  - (3) Be dated, and shall state that the owner, within 15 days after the date shown on the notice, has a right to request a hearing on the animal control officer's determination that the dog is dangerous or potentially

dangerous;

- (4) State that the hearing, if requested, shall be before the county board of commissioners;
- (5) State that if a hearing is not requested, the animal control officer's determination that the dog is dangerous or potentially dangerous will become effective for all purposes on a date specified in the notice, which shall be after the last day on which the owner has a right to request a hearing as specified in this section;
- (6) Include a form to request a hearing before the board of commissioners, and shall provide specific instructions on mailing or delivering such request to the board.
- (f) Hearing scheduled; notice. When the board of commissioners receives a request for a hearing, a hearing shall be scheduled within 30 days after receiving the request. The board shall notify the owner in writing by certified mail of the date, time and place of the hearing. Such notice shall be mailed to the owner at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing. At the hearing, the owner shall be given the opportunity to testify and present evidence. In addition, the board shall receive at the hearing such other evidence and hear such other testimony as reasonably necessary to make a determination either to sustain, modify or overrule the animal control officer's classification of the animal.
- (g) Notification of determination. Within ten days after the hearing, the board of commissioners shall notify the animal owner in writing by certified mail of its determination on the matter. If such determination is that the dog is dangerous or potentially dangerous, the notice shall specify the date upon which that determination is effective.
- (h) Admissible as evidence. The classification of a dog as dangerous or potentially dangerous will be admissible as evidence in any subsequent civil or criminal proceedings.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95; Ord. No. 10-10, § 2A, 11-2-2010)

# Sec. 5-62. - Requirements for possessing a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog.

- (a) Certificate of registration. No one shall have, own or possess within the county a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog without a certificate of registration. The animal control officer shall issue a citation to purchase a certificate of registration to the owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog if the animal control officer finds sufficient evidence of a proper enclosure to confine the dangerous or potentially dangerous dog.
- (b) Registration fee. The owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall present the citation to purchase a certificate of registration at the office of the animal control office within five days of receipt and pay an annual registration fee of \$30.00 at the time the annual certificate of registration is issued. Registration shall be renewed annually during the month of the initial registration.
- (c) Insurance/surety bond. As authorized in O.C.G.A. § 4-8-25(c), in addition to the requirements of this section, the owner of a dangerous dog shall present evidence of:
  - (1) A policy of insurance in the amount of at least \$15,000.00 issued by an insurer authorized to transact business in this state insuring the owner of the dangerous dog against liability for any personal injury inflicted by the dangerous dog; or
  - (2) A surety bond in the amount of \$15,000.00 or more issued by a surety company authorized to transact business in this state payable to any person or persons injured by the dangerous dog.
- (d) Distinctive collar. A dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall be required to wear a distinctive fluorescent orange collar, which will be issued by the animal control office upon registration, with a numbered identification tag affixed.
- (e) Posting of premises. The owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall be required to post the premises where the animal is located with a clearly visible sign, issued by the animal control office upon registration, containing a symbol designed to warn all citizens, including children, that there is a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog on the property. The number of signs required will be determined by the animal control officer.

- (1) The sign shall conform substantially to the design provided to by the department of natural resources. (O.C.G.A.!
- (2) It shall be unlawful to display the dangerous or potentially dangerous animal sign where no such animal exists or is located.
- (f) Moving out of the county. The owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall notify the animal control office if the owner is moving from the county.
- (g) New state resident. The owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog and who is a new resident of the state shall register such animal as required by this division within 30 days after becoming a resident of the state.

  (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-25(e))
- (h) New county resident. The owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog and who moves to the county from any other county within the state shall register such animal as required by this division within ten days after becoming a resident of the county. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-25(e))
- (i) Animal loose, unconfined, sold, donated, relocated. The owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall notify the animal control office and/or the sheriff's office immediately, but in any case not to exceed 16 hours, if the dog is on the loose, is unconfined, has attacked a human or domestic animal, has died, or has been sold, donated, or relocated. If the dog has been sold, donated or relocated, the former owner shall also provide the animal control office with the name, address and telephone number of the new owner. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-25(d))
- (j) Restrictions on permitting dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs outside of a proper enclosure, as authorized by O.C.G.A. § 4-8-26:
  - (1) It shall be unlawful for an owner of a dangerous dog to permit the animal to be outside a proper enclosure unless the dog is muzzled and restrained by a substantial chain or leash and is under control of a responsible person. The muzzle shall be made in a manner that will not cause injury to the dog or interfere with its vision or respiration but will prevent it from biting any person.
  - (2) It shall be unlawful for the owner of a potentially dangerous dog to permit the dog to be outside a proper enclosure unless the dog is restrained by a substantial chain or leash and is under the restraint of a responsible person.

Sec. 5-63. - Confiscation of dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs.

- (a) Confiscation of dangerous dog. As authorized by O.C.G.A. § 4-8-27(a), a dangerous dog shall be immediately confiscated if:
  - (1) The owner of the dog does not secure the liability insurance or surety bond required by this division;
  - (2) The dog is not validly registered as required this division;
  - (3) The dog is not maintained in a proper enclosure; or
  - (4) The dog is outside a proper enclosure in violation of this division.
- (b) Confiscation of potentially dangerous dog. As authorized by O.C.G.A. § 4-8-27(b), a potentially dangerous dog shall be confiscated in the same manner as a dangerous dog if the animal is:
  - (1) Not validly registered as required by this division;
  - (2) Not maintained in a proper enclosure; or
  - (3) Outside a proper enclosure in violation of this division.
- (c) Compliance. Any dog confiscated under the provisions of this section shall be returned to its owner upon the owner's compliance with the provisions of this division and upon payment of reasonable confiscation costs. In the event the owner has not complied with the provisions of this division within 20 days of the date of confiscation, said dog shall be destroyed in an expeditious and humane manner. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-27(c))

## Sec. 5-64. - Violations; penalties.

- (a) Dangerous dog violation; misdemeanor. The owner of a dangerous dog who violates the applicable provisions of this division or whose dangerous dog is subject to confiscation under this division shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of high and aggravated nature. In addition to any confinement that might be imposed for a conviction under this division, for the second conviction a fine or not less than \$500.00 shall be imposed; and for a third or subsequent conviction a fine of not less than \$750.00 shall be imposed. (O.C.G.A. § 4-2-28)
- (b) Dangerous dog attacks or bites a human being following previous violation; felony. If an owner who has a previous conviction for a violation of this article knowingly and willfully fails to comply with the provisions of this division, such owner shall be guilty of a felony if the owner's dangerous dog attacks or bites a human being under circumstances constituting another violation of this division. The owner of a dangerous dog who is convicted for a violation of this subsection shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$1,000.00 nor more than \$5,000.00 or by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years or by both such fine and imprisonment. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-28(c))
- (c) Dangerous dog attacks causing severe injury or death of a human being; felony. The owner of a dangerous dog who knowingly and willfully fails to comply with the provisions of this division shall be guilty of a felony if the owner's dangerous dog aggressively attacks and causes severe injury or death of a human being under circumstances constituting a violation of this division. The owner of a dangerous dog who is convicted of a violation of this subsection shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$5,000.00 nor more than \$10,000.00 or by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than ten years or by both such fine and imprisonment. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-28(d))
- (d) Confiscation. In addition to the penalties for violations under subsection (c), the dangerous dog involved shall be immediately confiscated by an officer/agent of animal control, the county health department or law enforcement department and placed in quarantine for the proper length of time as determined by the county health department; and thereafter, the dangerous dog shall be destroyed in an expeditious and humane manner. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-28(e))
- (e) Potentially dangerous dog. The owner of a potentially dangerous dog who violates the applicable provisions under this division or whose potentially dangerous dog is subject to confiscation under this division shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition to any confinement that might be imposed for a conviction under this division, for a second conviction a fine of not less than \$150.00 shall be imposed; and for a third and subsequent conviction a fine of not less than \$300.00 shall be imposed. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-28(b))

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

## Sec. 5-65. - Liability for damages.

- (a) Owner. The owner of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall be solely liable for any injury to or death of a person caused by such dog with the exception that no owner of said dog shall be held criminally liable under this division for injuries inflicted by the owner's dog in coming to the aid or defense of its owner; to any human being while on the owner's property and who, at the time, was committing a willful trespass or other tort, or was tormenting, abusing or assaulting the dog or had in the past been observed or reported to have tormented, abused or assaulted the dog and was committing or attempting to commit a crime.
- (b) County or employee. Under no circumstances shall the county or any employee or official of the county which enforces or fails to enforce the provisions of this Code be held liable for any damages to any person who suffers an injury inflicted by a dog that has been identified as being dangerous or potentially dangerous or by a dog that has been reported to the proper authorities as being dangerous or potentially dangerous or by a dog that the animal

control officer has failed to identify as dangerous or potentially dangerous but has not been kept or restrained in a manner described in this division or by a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog whose owner has not maintained insurance coverage or a surety bond as required in this division. (O.C.G.A. § 4-8-30)

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Sec. 5-66. - Impoundment and boarding fees.

(a) Impoundment fee. In addition to other fees required by this article, there shall be an impoundment charge assessed per dangerous or potentially dangerous dog against owners of such dogs which were impounded or confiscated under the provisions of this article. The fees for reclaiming such impounded animals shall be as follows:

First offense ..... \$ 100.00

Second offense ..... 500.00

Subsequent offense ..... 1,000.00

Note: Impoundments are levied against the animal owner and not necessarily for the same animal.

(b) Boarding fee. In addition to other fees required by this article, there shall be a boarding fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) per day per animal.

(Ord. No. 10-10, § 2B, 11-2-2010)

Secs. 5-67-5-70. - Reserved.

**DIVISION 3. - ADOPTION OF ANIMALS** 

Sec. 5-71. - Convey ownership; neutering.

- (a) *Convey ownership.* The animal control officer may convey ownership (permit adoption of) any animal which has become the property of the board of commissioners to a responsible person subject to:
  - (1) Adoption fee. Any applicable adoption fee must be paid at time of adoption.
  - (2) Rabies vaccination. Evidence satisfactory to the animal control officer, must be provided, within three working days, that the dog or cat has been examined by a veterinarian and vaccinated against rabies and other diseases.
- (b) Neutering. Proof of compliance with the laws of the state, which require that any adult dog or cat adopted from an animal shelter must be sterilized within 30 days after adoption, or for an immature dog or cat, within 30 days of the sexual maturity (reached the age of 180 days or six months or more).
- (c) Compliance. Failure to comply within the time frame of this division will result in a citation and/or the confiscation of the dog or cat.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Secs. 5-72-5-75. - Reserved.

**DIVISION 4. - KENNELS** 

Sec. 5-76. - Approval; license; rabies vaocination; compliance.

- (a) Approval required. No commercial kennel shall be established, operated or maintained in the county without first obta approval from the board of commissioners as required by the county zoning ordinance.
- (b) Permit required.
  - (1) Pre-existing and new establishments; permit fee; annual renewal, display. No kennel shall be established, operated or maintained in the county without obtaining a kennel permit. Establishments pre-existing this article shall have 90 days from the effective date of this article to file an application for permit. Application for permit for new establishments shall be made within 60 days of the start of business or maintenance of the kennel. Permits will be issued by the animal control officer, and will be valid for one calendar year, from January 1 through December 31 of the year in which issued. Permits shall be renewed each year between January 1 and February 28. Applications received after February 28 shall be considered delinquent. There will be a \$5.00 inspection and permit fee for each kennel permit. Permits obtained in accordance with this division of the article shall be displayed in a prominent location on the premises of the establishment.
  - (2) Application procedure. Each establishment shall annually file an application for permit with the animal control department within the time period provided by this article. The permit application shall be made on a form provided by and available from the animal control department. Upon receipt of a completed application, the animal control officer shall make an inspection of the facility to ensure that all animals are provided for in a humane manner and that the establishment is in compliance with all provisions of this article. The animal control officer shall be permitted to make the inspection at any reasonable time during normal business hours. The animal control officer shall either issue or decline to issue a permit to the applicant. If a permit is not granted, the animal control officer shall notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for denial.
- (c) Occupational tax certificate. It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a kennel without having an occupational tax certificate which specifically authorizes kennel activities.
- (d) Rabies vaccination. The owner, manager or person in charge of a kennel shall be responsible for complying with the laws of the state as they relate to rabies vaccination for animals.
- (e) *Compliance*. Kennels shall comply with all county ordinances, all laws of the state, and with regulations of the state department of agriculture relating to the operation of kennels.

#### Sec. 5-77. - Standards.

- (a) Kennel standards. All kennels shall, in addition to the other requirements of this article, comply with the minimum standards of this section. Standards for kennels are as follows:
  - (1) Enclosures must be provided which shall allow adequate protection against weather extremes. Living areas or cages are to be of a material and construction that permit proper cleaning and sanitizing.
  - (2) Building temperature shall be maintained at a comfortable level. Adequate ventilation shall be maintained.
  - (3) Each animal shall have sufficient space to stand up, lie down, and turn around without touching the sides or top of living area or cage.
  - (4) Living area or cage floors shall be of an impervious material, unless radiantly heated, and shall have a resting board or a type of bedding.
  - (5) If animals are provided access to a run, the run shall be constructed to a size no smaller than four feet wide by six feet long by five feet high and shall provide an adequate exercise area and protection from the weather.
  - (6) All living areas or cages and runs are to be kept clean, dry, and in sanitary condition.
  - (7) The food shall be free from contamination, and shall be sufficient quantity and nutritive value to meet the normal daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal. Containers are to be cleaned and disinfected each day.

(8) All animals shall have fresh water available at all times.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Sec. 5-78. - Complaints; revocation of permit; refusal to issue or renew permit; appeal.

- (a) *Complaints.* Upon receipt of complaints relating to the operation of a kennel, the animal control officer shall conduct an inspection of the subject facility.
- (b) Revocation or refusal to renew kennel permits.
  - (1) If the kennel is in violation of the requirements of this article, the animal control officer shall issue to the owner/operator notice of such violation. After allowing a reasonable time to correct the violation, if such notice has failed to produce compliance, the animal control officer, in addition to other penalties provided in this article, may recommend revocation of any kennel permit. Such permit may be revoked by the board of commissioners following a hearing before the board held no less than 30 days from date notice is mailed to the permit holder at the address given on the permit. The owner may be present, with or without counsel, to present evidence and be heard thereon.
  - (2) The animal control officer, upon good cause, may refuse to issue or renew any kennel permit.
  - (3) Upon refusal by the animal control officer to issue or renew an application, an appeal may be made and must be in writing and presented to the office of the board of commissioners within 30 days of the date of refusal. A hearing before the board will be held no less than 30 days from the date of the notice of the written appeal. The owner may be present, with or without counsel, to present evidence and be heard thereon. The decision of the board of commissioners will be final.
  - (4) Any person or kennel whose permit is revoked must within ten days remove all animals covered by such permit, and such persons shall be prepared to show proof of the manner of disposal. In the event the permit holder shall fail to remove the animals as directed, the animal control officer may impound the animals pursuant to the provisions of this article. No part of the permit or occupational tax certificate fees shall be refunded.
  - (5) No applicant shall be issued a permit within a period of two years from the date of revocation of a previous permit at the same location. No member of the immediate family of such applicant may be issued a kennel permit at that same location.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Secs. 5-79, 5-80. - Reserved.

**DIVISION 5. - OTHER ANIMALS** 

# Sec. 5-81. - Guard dogs.

- (a) *General.* Control and identification of guard dogs in the interest of protection of law-abiding citizens from attack from such dogs is of paramount importance.
- (b) *Premises posted.* Premises being protected by guard dogs will be posted as such to give warning to the public and any officer/agent of animal control, the county health department and/or law enforcement department.
- (c) *Control.* Guard dogs shall be controlled or confined so that they cannot come into contact with law-abiding citizens who are lawfully using public and private premises.
- (d) Reporting loose guard dogs. In the event a guard dog escapes its place of containment and is running loose in public areas or on property other than the owner's, the person employing such dog and the owner of such dog shall

immediately report all facts and circumstances, including the collar number of the dog, if any, to the animal control office. After normal business hours, the report shall be made to the emergency law enforcement center.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

#### Sec. 5-82. - Livestock.

- (a) Compliance with Code. It shall be unlawful for any person to keep livestock, except in compliance with the provisions of the county zoning ordinance.
- (b) *Transporting through county.* The preceding section is not to apply where such animals are being transported through the county for bona fide sale or for slaughter, and only temporarily kept in the county.
- (c) Running unattended. It shall be unlawful for any person to allow any livestock, which includes but is not limited to, horses, mules, jacks, cattle, hogs, goats or sheep to run unattended.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

#### Sec. 5-83. - Birds and fowl.

- (a) Bird sanctuary in natural landmark.
  - (1) Area. This section shall apply to the entire area embraced within the 709.79 acres of the Cason J. Callaway Memorial Forest, National Natural Landmark, which is hereby designated as a bird sanctuary.
  - (2) Trapping, hunting, shooting. It shall be unlawful for any person to trap, hunt, shoot or attempt to shoot or molest in any manner any bird or wildfowl or to rob bird nests or wildfowl nests. However, if starlings or similar birds are found to be congregating in such numbers in a particular locality that they constitute a nuisance or menace to health or property in the opinion of the proper health authorities of the county, then such health authorities shall meet with representatives of the board of commissioners and the trustees of the Cason J. Callaway Memorial Forest, after having given at least three days' actual notice of the time and place of such meeting to those concerned.
  - (3) Destruction of nuisance species. If as a result of such meeting no satisfactory alternative is found to abate such nuisance, then such birds may be destroyed in such numbers and in such manner as is deemed advisable by such health authorities under the supervision of the county sheriff.
- (b) Keeping of fowl.
  - (1) When permitted. It shall be unlawful for any person to keep fowl, except in compliance with the provisions of the county zoning ordinance.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Sec. 5-84. - Wild carnivores and other wild species.

- (a) *Game-holding permit.* Wild carnivores and other wild game species may not be kept in captivity on private premises without a game-holding permit issued by the Game and Fish Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- (b) Rabies vaccination. Wild carnivores kept in captivity with such a permit shall be vaccinated against rabies as often as required by Georgia Department of Human Resources to maintain immunity.

(Ord. No. 4-95, 3-21-95)

Secs. 5-85-5-90. - Reserved.