



4800 Ashford Dunwoody Road
Dunwoody, Georgia 30338
dunwoodyga.gov | 678.382.6700

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Paul Leonhardt, Deputy Community Development Director

Date: May 12, 2025

Subject: Text Amendment to Promote Adoption of Rescue Animals

ITEM DESCRIPTION

This item is an ordinance to amend Chapter 6 of the City of Dunwoody Code of Ordinances, Animals by enacting restrictions on the sale of animals.

DISCUSSION

Upon request by Councilmember Seconder, the staff has prepared an ordinance prohibiting the sale of dogs and cats in pet shops. For the purposes of this ordinance, pet shops are defined as all retail establishments selling dogs and cats to the general public. Adoptions facilitated through animal care facilities or animal rescue organizations are not impacted; neither are sales through individual breeders of dogs and cats. Violations can be punished with up to \$500 per dog or cat for sale.

Dog and cat sales in pet stores are associated with several undesirable characteristics. Pet stores often source their puppies and kittens from puppy mill-type breeding operations. These breeders often provide inhumane conditions without adequate veterinary care, food, water, and socialization, that are linked to health and behavioral issues as well as congenital and hereditary illness and disease. In past years, disease outbreaks amongst pet store customers and employees have been linked to puppies in pet stores.

Animal shelters across Georgia are overflowing with abandoned cats and dogs, leading to these shelters euthanizing over 19,000 dogs and cats in Georgia in 2023. DeKalb County Animal Services has recently approved an overflow facility at the DeKalb County Animal Shelter at public expense. This policy encourages residents to adopt animals from animal shelters or animal rescue organizations.

Most reputable breeders will not sell animals to pet stores. Pledges to that effect are included in many species-specific dog breeding organizations as well as the American Kennel Club, the United States' main registry of purebred dog pedigrees. This policy does not impact the ability of residents to purchase dogs or cats from breeders directly.

ATTACHMENTS

Lynn Deutsch Mayor
Eric Linton ICMA-CM City Manager
Sharon Lowery CMC City Clerk

Catherine Lautenbacher City Council Post 1
Rob Price City Council Post 2
Tom Lambert City Council Post 3

Stacey Harris City Council Post 4
Joe Seconder City Council Post 5
John Heneghan City Council Post 6

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- Proposed Ordinance

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**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 6 OF THE CITY OF DUNWOODY CODE
OF ORDINANCES; TO PROMOTE ADOPTION OF RESCUE ANIMALS.**

- WHEREAS** the City of Dunwoody is charged with preserving the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the city; and
- WHEREAS** the City of Dunwoody wishes for dog and cat sales and adoptions within its boundaries to be conducted in a safe and healthy manner; and
- WHEREAS** puppy and kitten mills are mass-breeding facilities that produce puppies and kittens with an emphasis on profit over welfare of the animal. These mills generally house these animals in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions without adequate veterinary care, food, water, and socialization; and
- WHEREAS** the inhumane conditions in puppy and kitten mill facilities can lead to health and behavioral issues as well as congenital and hereditary illness and disease. Puppies from puppy mills are linked to disease outbreaks that impact buyers and pet store employees; and
- WHEREAS** the large number of dogs and cats bred places a burden on DeKalb County Animal Services, with facilities regularly overcrowded and the County Commission recently approving an overflow facility at the DeKalb County Animal Shelter; and
- WHEREAS** according to the Best Friends Animal Society, a non-profit animal welfare organization, more than 19,000 dogs and cats were euthanized in Georgia shelters in 2023; the fifth-highest number in the nation; and
- WHEREAS** most reputable dog breeders will not provide puppies for sale by pet stores as outlined in the code of ethics of the American Kennel Club and of many single-breed clubs; and
- WHEREAS** the City of Dunwoody wishes to amend the Code of Ordinances to promote responsible pet ownership, help prevent inhumane breeding conditions, promote community of animal welfare and foster a more humane environment within the local community; and
- WHEREAS** this ordinance will not affect a consumer's ability to obtain a dog or cat of his or her choice directly from a breed-specific rescue organization or shelter, or from a breeder where consumers can see directly the conditions in which the dogs or cats are bred, or

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can directly confer with the breeder concerning those conditions;
and

WHEREAS based on these facts, it is in the best interests of the City of Dunwoody to adopt reasonable regulations to reduce costs to the DeKalb County government, control pet overpopulation, protect its City residents who may purchase dogs or cats from a pet shop, and help prevent inhumane breeding conditions; and

WHEREAS the proposed text amendment allows City staff to issue citations for any unauthorized pet sales.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Dunwoody HEREBY ORDAIN that Chapter 6 – Animals is amended to add the following:

Sec. 6-34 – Pet Shops.

(a) *Definitions.* The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this subsection, except which the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

“Animal care facility” means an animal control center or animal shelter, maintained by or under contract with any state, county or municipality, whose mission and practice is the rescue and placement of animals in permanent homes or rescue organizations.

“Animal rescue organization” means any not for profit organization which has tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, whose mission and practice is, in whole or in significant part, the rescue and placement of animals in permanent homes.

“Cat” means a member of the species of domestic cat, Felis catus.

“Dog” means a member of the species of domestic dog, Canis familiaris.

“Pet Shop” means a retail establishment where dogs and cats are sold, exchanged, bartered or offered for sale as pet animals to the general public at retail. Such definition shall not include an animal care facility or animal rescue organization, as defined.

(b) *Restrictions on the Sale of Animals.*

(1) A pet shop may not sell, deliver, offer for sale, barter, auction, or otherwise dispose of dogs or cats, but may offer for adoption only those dogs and cats that the pet shop has obtained from or displays in cooperation with:

(a) An animal care facility; or

(b) An animal rescue organization.

(2) A pet shop shall not offer for adoption a dog or cat that is younger than eight weeks old.

(c) *Recordkeeping and Disclosures.*

(1) A pet shop shall maintain records sufficient to document the source of each dog or cat the pet shop acquires, for at least one year following the date of acquisition. Such records shall be made available immediately upon request by the City Manager, the Chief of Police, the Community Development Director, or any authorized designee of these City officials.

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(2) A pet shop that offers space for the adoption of dogs or cats shall post, in a conspicuous location on the cage or enclosure of each such animal, a sign listing the name of the animal care facility or animal rescue organization from which the pet shop acquired each dog or cat.

(c) Penalties.

(1) Each failure to post a sign for an individual dog or cat as required by this section shall constitute a separate offense.

(2) Each dog or cat sold, exchanged, bartered, offered for sale, auctioned, delivered, or transferred in violation of this section shall constitute a separate offense of up to \$500 per violation.

(3) Each day's failure to comply with this section shall constitute a separate offense.

(d) Enforcement.

The City Manager, the Chief of Police, the Community Development Director, or any authorized designee of these City officials shall be primarily responsible for the enforcement by means of court citations and are authorized to delegate enforcement authority to their designated employees.

SO ORDAINED, this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Approved:

Lynn P. Deutsch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Sharon Lowery, City Clerk (Seal)

City Attorney