

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

TO: Village Council  
Planning Board Members  
Zoning Board of Adjustment Members  
Dawn Cetrulo, Supervisor of the Health Department  
Timothy Cronin, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Chief Jacqueline Luthcke, Ridgewood Police Department  
Jiffy Vermylen, Chair, Ridgewood Environmental Advisory  
Committee

FROM:  Heather Mailander, Village Manager/Village Clerk

DATE: September 8, 2017

SUBJECT: Companion Animal Pledge and Plan

Introduction

The Ridgewood Green Team Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Ridgewood Environmental Advisory Committee, which was established by Ordinance by the Village Council, is charged with promoting environmentally friendly practices in the Village and documenting completed actions to Sustainable Jersey for the purpose of obtaining certification by that organization. Since these committees were established by the Village in order to encourage and support sustainable practices, it is therefore expected that all Village employees and representatives should strive to follow such practices, particularly those specifically adopted or supported by the Village Council or the environmental committees.

Companion Animal Management Pledge and Plan

Among the "Actions" included in the Sustainable Jersey municipal certification program are "Companion Animal Management Pledge" and "Companion Animal Management Plan".

On April 12, 2017 the Village Council adopted Resolution No. 17-113 "Municipal Support for Responsible Pet Ownership Programs in the Community" (copy attached) following the guidelines of Sustainable Jersey's Companion Animal Management Pledge. Following the adoption of that resolution, the Village Health Department drafted its Companion Animal Management Plan (copy attached) incorporating the goals of the Resolution and many existing practices of the Village Health Department. The purpose of this memorandum is to make you aware of these two documents and to ask that you and your departments incorporate the goals

and practices they describe, in your day to day activities and decisions on behalf of the Village.

**Resolution No. 17-113**

**Municipal Support for Responsible Pet Ownership Programs in the Community**

WHEREAS cats and dogs are an integral and valuable part of the Village of Ridgewood, and contribute to the well-being of humans, whether as companions, service animals, or therapy pets; and

WHEREAS understanding that the Village of Ridgewood has an important role in ensuring the well-being of animals while balancing the needs of pet owners and non-pet owners; and

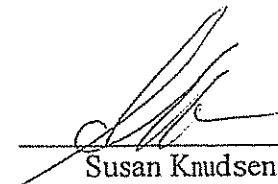
WHEREAS Village of Ridgewood officials report that the number of calls from citizens about animal related issues rival any other issue(s); and


WHEREAS there are approximately 2.2 million owned dogs and 2.5 million owned cats in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS New Jersey was the first state in the nation to develop an innovative state-wide spay/neuter program and all proceeds from the sale of Animal Friendly License Plates are used to reimburse participating veterinarians for spaying and neutering surgeries; and

I hereby certify that this resolution, consisting of 4 page(s), was adopted at a meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Ridgewood, held this 12th day of April, 2017

	Moved	Second	Ayes	Nays	Absent	Abstain
Hache		X	X			
Sedon			X			
Voigt	X		X			
Walsh			X			
Knudsen			X			

  
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 Susan Knudsen  
 Mayor

  
 Heather A. Mailander  
 Village Manager/Village Clerk

WHEREAS State responsibility for promoting responsible pet care and ensuring that pets do not suffer due to abuse, neglect, or lack of proper care in kennels, pet shops, shelters, and pounds (animal facilities) is vested in the Office of Animal Welfare within the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services; and

WHEREAS The New Jersey Society to Prevent Cruelty to Animals (NJSPCA) and Village of Ridgewood Animal Cruelty Investigators (ACIs) are responsible for investigating and acting as officers for the detection, apprehension, and arrest of offenders against the animal cruelty laws; and

WHEREAS New Jersey mandates training requirements for animal control officers and Animal Cruelty Investigators; and

WHEREAS New Jersey impounds over 100,000 animals per year in animal shelters and impoundment facilities; and

WHEREAS approximately 37% of the animals that enter New Jersey's impoundment facilities are euthanized, at a rate of around 3000 every month; and

WHEREAS free-roaming unvaccinated cats and dogs present a potential health threat to humans through the spread of such zoonotic diseases as rabies, leptospirosis, toxoplasmosis, roundworms, animal bites, and environmental contamination from animal feces; and

WHEREAS stray and unwanted pets place an enormous financial burden on the Village of Ridgewood and non-profit humane agencies organized to care for these animals; the Village of Ridgewood's annual animal control expenses most recently exceeded \$30,000; and

WHEREAS it is more humane and cost-effective to reduce the number of unwanted animals than it is to impound and euthanize unwanted or unclaimed dogs and cats; and

WHEREAS all dogs are required to be licensed in the Village of Ridgewood where they are housed and the Village of Ridgewood also requires licensure of cats. (Current vaccination against rabies is a pre-requisite to licensure); and

WHEREAS the Village of Ridgewood is required to canvass our residents to locate unlicensed dogs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Ridgewood, resolves to take the following steps with regard to our Village responsibilities with the intent of making the Village of Ridgewood a truly sustainable community:

It is our intent to do our utmost, within the bounds of our jurisdiction, to ensure that companion animals are treated humanely, respectfully, and responsibly through public education and through exercise of powers vested within New Jersey municipalities as follows:

**Authority of the Village of Ridgewood:**

Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes, the Village of Ridgewood must appoint a certified animal control officer who shall be responsible for animal control within the jurisdiction of the Village, including providing emergency veterinary care for injured stray animals and coverage outside of normal working hours.

The Village of Ridgewood in which an animal facility is located is responsible for issuing the license for that facility to operate.

The NJ Vicious Dog Law establishes a state-wide standard for the Village of Ridgewood to effectively address situations of vicious or potentially dangerous dogs, regardless of breed.

The Animal Population Control Program provides for low-cost spaying and neutering for pet owners adopting dogs and cats from New Jersey shelters, pounds, and animal adoption referral agencies and pet owners participating in one of several Public Assistance Programs.

The Village of Ridgewood pledges to:

- Enforce all animal and rabies control statutes and regulations, including the requirement to pick up and impound all stray dogs and cats.
- Work to improve the enforcement of animal cruelty statutes.
- Educate our community, including school children, about their responsibilities towards the pet animals they chose to keep.
- Institute, as appropriate, cat licensing ordinances and increase the percentage of licensed dogs and cats through ease of licensing and licensing enforcement measures.
- Identify and work to implement best practices to prevent unwanted breeding through effective animal control, availability of low-cost pet spaying and neutering services, public education, and pet-friendly rental and senior housing.

- Identify alternatives to euthanasia of adoptable companion animals, including utilizing foster homes, adoption networks and providing remedial behavior training services to existing and future owners.
- Assist in identifying resources to improve the conditions and increase the capacity of animal shelters and impoundment facilities and animal control services.