

Township of West Milford

Passaic County, New Jersey

~ Resolution 2014 - 318 ~

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, STATE OF NEW JERSEY PLEDGING MUNICIPAL SUPPORT FOR COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, recognizing that cats and dogs are an integral and valuable part of all communities, and contribute to the well-being of humans, whether as companions, service animals, or therapy pets, and

WHEREAS, understanding that municipalities have an important role in ensuring the well-being of animals while balancing the needs of pet owners and non-pet owners:

WHEREAS legislators and municipal officials report that the number of calls from citizens about animal related issues rival any other issue(s); 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 3,000 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 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 municipality where they are housed and the majority of municipalities also require licensure of cats. (Current vaccination against rabies is a pre-requisite to licensure); and

WHEREAS all municipalities are required to canvass their residents to locate unlicensed dogs;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of West Milford resolves to take the following steps with regard to municipal responsibilities so we can continue to strive to be a truly sustainable community. Our intent is 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:

Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes, the Township of West Milford has an appointed Certified Animal Control Officer who is responsible for animal control within the jurisdiction of the municipality, including providing emergency veterinary care for injured stray animals and coverage outside of normal working hours;

1. The Township of West Milford has instituted dog and cat licensing ordinances;

2. The Township of West Milford through the NJ Vicious Dog Law following the state statues, through code, for the municipality to effectively assess situations of vicious or potentially dangerous dogs, regardless of breed;
3. The Township of West Milford, by law, licenses the West Milford Animal Shelter, a state of the art, all volunteer shelter and any other shelter, pound, rescue organization, pet shop, located within the Township;
4. The Township of West Milford, by ordinance, established a feral cat Trap-Neuter-Return Program;
5. The Township of West Milford Animal Shelter participates in the Animal Population Control Program, which provides for low-cost spaying and neutering for pet owners adopting dogs and cats from West Milford's Animal Shelter and for pet owners participating in one of several Public Assistance Programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipality pledges to:

1. Enforce animal and rabies control statutes and regulations, including the requirement to pick up and impound stray dogs and cats, excepting stray and feral cats in managed TNR programs.
2. Work to improve the enforcement of animal cruelty statutes.
3. Educate our community, including school children, about their responsibilities toward the pet animals they choose to keep.
4. Increase the percentage of dogs and cats that are licensed by making the licensing process easier.
5. Identify and work to implement best practices to prevent unwanted breeding through effective animal control, availability of low-cost pet spaying and neutering services and public education.

Adopted: October 1, 2014

Adopted this 1st day of October 2014
and certified as a true copy of an original.

Antoinette Battaglia, Township Clerk