

Changes Likely for Wichita Dog Breeding Ordinance

Critics say the ordinance doesn't effectively fix the problem of dog overpopulation.

Posted: April 18, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

Dog breeders in Wichita, Kan., must buy a \$50 annual license under a city ordinance made official in December 2007. The ordinance, however, has met mixed reviews. The problem, critics say, is that the new rules punish reputable dog breeders and don't fix the problem of dog overpopulation.

Jim Halsig, who owns Bed and Biscuit Pet Center and has bred dogs in the past as an individual, said the ordinance is a misplaced effort by city officials to control a problem that ultimately will not be solved this way. A better option, he said, is to offer expanded low-cost spay and neuter services and public education.

"It's a penalty for [responsible breeders]," Halsig said of the ordinance. "They're not breaking the law, first of all."

Dennis Graves, the city's animal services supervisor, said he recognizes that changes need to be made to the ordinance in order to make it less onerous. A revised version of the measure is set to go before the city council in six to eight weeks, he said.

Part of the reason for enacting such a regulation, Graves said, is to end the common practice of selling puppies at swap meet and supermarket parking lots. Some people have been ticketed, he said. The exact number of citations was unavailable.

"In our opinion, that's not a responsible way to practice animal commerce," he said. "It is a functional ordinance, some aspects need to be refined and we will enforce what they lay before us once we have a final version."

Still, Halsig said the vast majority of the area's unwanted dogs are not bred in Wichita, but taken from outside the city. "They are from puppy mills coming from out of the county," he said.