

County still working on tethering ban

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Forsyth County is getting closer to a possible ban on tethering unattended dogs.

County commissioners discussed the issue during their Thursday, Sept. 15 briefing. The county has been working on an ordinance for months at the urging of local animal activists. Commissioners sent a draft proposal to the Forsyth County Animal Control Advisory Board who made changes that activists and county attorneys said would make the ban hard to enforce.

Janice Freeman, a member of the advisory board, told commissioners that making the changes was the only way to get it past certain members of the board.

"There was several of us that didn't want to go with that language," Freeman said about the changes.

The additions to the ordinance included saying unattended tethering was not allowed as the "primary, permanent means of confinement," which can be hard to define or prove.

Another part added tethering a dog "for isolation and recovery due to injury" as an exception to the ban. This contradicts an earlier part of the ordinance that restricts tethering a sick, diseased or injured dog. It would also allow dog owners to get around the ban by simply claiming their dog is sick or injured.

A section that would prevent tethering of a puppy had the definition of puppy changed to six months old or younger. The original language said

a puppy as one year old or younger, which is the common definition of a puppy when their youth is evident.

Assistant County Attorney Lonnie Albright, who prepared the draft ordinance, said after the meeting the changes make the ordinance into a "D.A.'s nightmare."

"There's no way to prosecute it and it's unenforceable," he said.

Freeman, who also chairs the Animal Adoption & Rescue Foundation board, said that she believes not everyone on the animal control advisory board has the best interest of animals in mind. A variety of interests, not just animal welfare groups, are represented on the board including hunters and others.

The tethering ban, which is similar to the one in Guilford County, would apply only to unattended animals. It would still allow owners to walk their dogs on a leash. Exceptions to the ban would include dogs being used in shepherding livestock, lawful hunting, cultivating agricultural products, training or performance events, or camping where tethering is required.

Among the many supporters of the ban in attendance was Jennifer Tierney with Forsyth Animal Coalition, a group of citizens who advocate on animal issues. She said dogs are social animals, so chaining them can cause psychological damage.

"It's incredibly inhumane," she said.

She said tethering makes dogs more aggressive and much more likely to bite humans, making them dangerous to the pub-

lic. They're also more likely to get pregnant, which can create more animals that county animal control has to deal with.

She said the current tethering ordinance, which was adopted in 2011, is unenforceable. It only addresses the negative impacts of tethering, such as if a dog is being choked by its restraint, but does not ban the practice. She said the original draft of the new ordinance was a good one.

"It needs to be simple and clean cut like Guilford," she said.

The current ordinance took two years to go into effect after being passed. Tierney said the coalition would like to see the ban go into effect within six months of approval.

During the meeting, Commissioner Walter Marshall had concerns about those that tether because they can't afford to build fences for their dogs. Tierney said afterward that two groups, Unchain Forsyth and Unchain Winston, were addressing that by building fences for those who can't afford to.

Commissioner Don Martin had concerns about if there would be enough staff to enforce the ban and if it should be held off until November, when county staff will present a report on service delivery options for animal control. Other commissioners, like Ted Kaplan and Everette Witherspoon, wanted to move forward on an ordinance. Ultimately, Chair Dave Plyler decided to have Kaplan lead the crafting of a final version of the ordinance, which he said the commissioners would vote on soon.

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Mike Wells on 10 Things You Should Know about the Law
1:30 to 2:30 pm

Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5

Advance Directives \ 2 to 4 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

Foot Health: Proper Shoe Screening
4 to 6 pm
Fleet Feet, 278 Harvey St., Winston-Salem

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

Healthy & Fast: Weeknight Meals
1 to 2:30 pm
Brenner FIT in the William G. White Jr. Family YMCA, 775 West End Blvd., Winston-Salem

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10

Healthy Lungs, Healthy You
5:30 to 6:30 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

5K Training Tips \ 5:30 to 6:30 pm
Fleet Feet, 278 Harvey St., Winston-Salem

Community Walks

WEDNESDAYS, OCT. 5, 12, 19, 26

8:30 am and 6 pm

For more information and registration, visit New Balance Winston-Salem or online at nbwinstonsalem.com.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

Resistance Bands \ Noon to 1 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17

Vegetarian Delights \ 1 to 2:30 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27

Burn Prevention \ 11:30 am to 12:30 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28

Ways to Improve Your Steps
5:30 to 6:30 pm
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