



AGENDA ITEM COVERSHEET

PREPARED BY: Kim Ward, Town Clerk

DEPARTMENT: Clerk

MEETING: Town Council 9/23/2025

SUBJECT: Presentation by Crystal Lee Regarding Puppy Mills

BACKGROUND:

Crystal Lee will make a presentation to Council regarding puppy mills and ask Council to consider drafting an Ordinance prohibiting them.

Attached is the language she is proposing.

ACTION:

Staff will need direction from Council if they want to move forward with drafting an Ordinance prohibiting puppy mills.

To adopt Town of Carolina Beach zoning ordinance prohibiting Pet Shops Offer For Sale of Dogs or Cats other than those obtained specifically from the New Hanover County animal shelter, NHC humane society, or NHC animal rescue organization.

WHEREAS, most puppies and kittens sold in pet stores come from large-scale, commercial breeding facilities & inhumane puppy mills where the health and welfare of the animal is disregarded to maximize profits ("puppy mills" and "kitten mills," respectively); and

WHEREAS, according to the Humane Society of the United States, an estimated 10,000 puppy mills produce more than 2 million puppies per year in the United States; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has the second highest euthanasia rate in the United States creating a unnecessary cost & burdens on the community; and

WHEREAS, the documented abuses endemic to puppy and kitten mills includes overbreeding; inbreeding; minimal veterinary care; lack of adequate food, water, and shelter; lack of socialization, exercise, enrichment, sanitation; and

WHEREAS, pet shops often mislead consumers as to where the puppies and kittens in the store came from and make false health and behavioral guarantees; thus, many consumers end up paying hundreds or thousands of dollars in veterinary bills and suffer the heartbreak of having their new pet suffer, and in some cases pass away; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, backyard breeder and pet shop puppies pose a risk to consumers, as over one hundred Americans have contracted an antibiotic-resistant *Campylobacter* infection from contact with these puppies; and

WHEREAS, current federal and state regulations do NOT adequately address animal welfare and consumer protection problems with the sale of puppy and kittens from pet shops; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance will not affect a consumer's ability to obtain a dog or cat of their choice from an animal shelter, nonprofit animal rescue organization, or reputable breeder; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Town of Carolina Beach to adopt reasonable regulations to reduce the cost to New Hanover County and its residents, protecting citizens who may purchase cats or dogs from a pet shop, help prevent inhumane breeding conditions, promote community awareness of animal welfare, and foster a more humane environment in New Hanover County.

WHEREAS, for these reasons the Town of Carolina Beach Council Representatives of New Hanover County, NC adopt this ordinance as necessary to enact more comprehensive regulations and prohibit pet sales from pet shops.

This Ordinance shall become effective upon passage and execution as provided by law.

Definitions:

- "Animal Rescue organization"-means any NHC not-for-profit organization which has tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the United States Revenue Code, whose mission and practice is, in whole or in significant part, the rescue and placement of animals in permanent homes, and which do not obtain animals from a breeder or broker for profit or compensation.
- "Cat"-means a member of the species of domestic cat, Felis Catus.
- "Dog"-means a member of the species of domestic dog. Canis Familiaris.
- "Offer For Sale"- means to sell, offer for sale or adoption, advertise for the sale of, barter, auction, give away or otherwise dispose of a cat or dog.
- "Pet Shop"-means a retail establishment where dogs and cats are sold, exchanged, bartered or offered for sale to the public at retail.