



City Council Meeting Staff Report

Meeting Date:

May 27, 2025

Subject: Introduce and Waive the First Reading of the Ordinance Amending Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code Relating to Animals and Animal Shelters.

Prepared By: Bill Zenoni, City Manager

Recommendation

Staff recommends that City Council conduct a public hearing on the proposed project, and upon closing the public hearing, introduce and waive the first reading of an ordinance amending Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code relating to animals and animal shelters. A notice of this public hearing has been published in the local newspaper and has been posted on the City website.

Background

Section 18.60.060 of the Wheatland Municipal Code addresses the keeping of domestic animals as accessory to any residential use allowed in zones other than an agriculture-exclusive zone. Section 18.60.060(D) defines small domestic animals as rabbits, poultry, and like animals, regardless of size or age.

Section 18.60.060(E) currently provides that “one small domestic animal, (as defined in subsection D, but excluding roosters, geese and peacocks) may be kept on any parcel of not less than six thousand square feet. Staff has received several requests to increase the permitted number of small domestic animals (specifically chickens) on parcels that are a minimum of six thousand square feet in size. The proposed amendment to Section 18.60.060(E) of the Wheatland Municipal Code would increase the permitted number of small domestic animals on parcels between six and ten thousand square feet in size from one to five and would require that these animals be kept a minimum of 15 feet from the property line to avoid issues with neighbors on these smaller lots.

Discussion

A redline version showing the proposed change is provided below.

18.60.060 Animals and animal shelters.

Domestic animals may be kept as accessory to any residential use allowed in zones other than an agriculture-exclusive zone (Chapter 18.15) according to the following regulations:

- A. One large domestic animal, plus the animal's non-adult offspring, may be kept on any parcel of not less than one acre. One additional animal may be kept for each one-half acre by which

the parcel exceeds one acre. Domestic animals that fall under the large size category are as follows: bovine, equine, llama, or like animals, regardless of size or age.

- B. Up to four medium-sized domestic animals, plus their non-adult offspring, may be kept on any parcel of not less than one acre. One additional animal may be kept for each ten thousand square feet of area by which the parcel exceeds one acre. Domestic animals that fall under the medium-size category are as follows: sheep, goats, swine, and like animals.
- C. Up to four dogs or domestic cats, or a combination of dogs and cats not exceeding four animals in total, may be kept on any parcel that is less than one acre in size. One additional animal may be kept for each ten thousand square feet of area by which the parcel exceeds one acre. Litters of puppies and kittens exceeding the four animal limit may be kept with the mother for a period not to exceed four months. This subsection (C) shall not apply to accessory uses in a residential estates district (Chapter [18.18](#)), two-family residential district (Chapter [18.24](#)) and multifamily residential-limited district (Chapter [18.27](#)).
- D. Up to ten small domestic animals, plus their non-adult offspring, may be kept on any parcel of not less than ten thousand square feet. One additional animal may be kept for each five hundred square feet of area by which the parcel exceeds ten thousand square feet. Domestic animals that fall under the small-size category are as follows: rabbits, poultry, and like animals, regardless of size or age.
- E. Up to five ~~One~~ small domestic animals (as defined in subsection [D](#), but excluding roosters, geese and peacocks) may be kept on any parcel of not less than six thousand square feet. All small domestic animals must be kept at a minimum of 15 feet from property lines.
- F. Domestic animals shall not be kept on a parcel in such a manner as to constitute a nuisance to neighboring properties.

CEQA Review

The Ordinance amending Section 18.60.060 – Animals and animal shelters – of the Wheatland Municipal Code is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Common-Sense exemption and Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations.

Planning Commission Hearing

On April 29, 2025, the Wheatland Planning Commission held a public hearing and voted unanimously to recommend City Council adoption of the proposed ordinance.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommended action.

Attachment

- 1) Proposed Ordinance