

# CCHS SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO ORDINANCE PROPOSAL

## I. Amend to add to **Sec. 14-53. - Animal control.**

(i) *Extremes of weather.* Companion animals (dogs and cats) must be brought indoors when the ambient outside temperature is at or below freezing or at or above 90°F, or when an official heat advisory, wind chill warning, or tornado warning has been issued by local, state, or national authority, except when the animal is accompanied by a competent adult who is outside with the animal. Indoors means within a house, garage, barn, or other man-made structure, where the temperature is maintained between 40° and 80 °F.

*EXPLANATORY NOTE: The last sentence, the definition of indoors, would be incorporated into Section 14.51- Definitions. I have included it here instead merely to show that it is intended to address what is covered by the term ‘brought indoors’ in this section of the ordinance, so that it is clear that we do not mean that the dog or cat has to be brought into a person’s living space but also that under a porch or awning does not count as “indoors.”*

### **Rationale:**

I. This amendment would require that dogs and cats be brought into a man-made structure to protect them from extreme weather. As the definition makes clear, the amendment does **not** require people to bring animals into their homes. A barn, garage, basement, or shed will suffice if the temperature in that structure is in a safe range, between 40 and 80 degrees F. Not only does our proposed amendment deal with extremely hot or cold weather, it also addresses the neglected issue of protecting animals during weather emergencies such as tornadoes.

This topic sparked much of the recent interest in amending our animal ordinances, particularly last winter when there was a period of inclement weather, leading to concern about the resulting danger to outdoor animals. There was a front-page story in the Times-Georgian and follow-up stories, numerous public comments at Villa Rica City Council meetings, and a town hall meeting at the Villa Rica library, all related to the issue of protecting owned animals from weather extremes. As a result, the CCHS board made addressing this issue in the ordinances a priority and were surprised when the proposal from Animal Services did not include ANY reference to this important issue, about which there is demonstrable community interest.

Enforcement--- Animal control does not seek out infractions of the ordinances, but rather responds to calls from the public. Under current policy, they would not be out visiting farms to see if the dogs are all inside or driving around looking for animals standing in yards.

II. Amend to add sentence in green to the proposed change on tethering, which is found both in Section 14.51. Definitions and in Section 14.57 Animal Cruelty, subsection 5.

(For clarity's sake, I have reproduced the proposed change from animal control staff of the ordinance definition of tethering and inserted our proposed change highlighted.)

The area where the animal is tethered must be clear of debris and clear of any object that the chain or tether can become entangled. The chain or tether must be of adequate size and strength for the animal. Logging chains or such devices are prohibited. The chain or tethering device must be attached to a ground anchor or such device. **A trolley system or a tether attached to a pulley in a cable run is also allowed provided these listed conditions are met.** Chaining or tethering an animal to a vehicle, dog house, tree or pole will not be permitted due to the animal becoming entangled.. Violation of this section will fall under animal cruelty.

## **RATIONALE:**

II. This amendment is a small tweak of an otherwise strong proposal to end the chaining of animals to stationary objects, such as a tree or a dog house. Ms. Barrett's proposal outlines the weight and size of chain allowed, as well, and says a swiveling ground anchor must be used when an animal is tied out, rather than a stationary object. We simply would add language also allowing a cable pulley or a trolley system of tethering, that is, a runner which would, like the ground anchor, allow dogs more freedom of motion. This more humane alternative to stationary tethering is not addressed in the ordinance and should be encouraged along with tethering to a ground anchor, which does not allow for as much freedom of movement for the animal.

Enforcement--- This proposed change would not increase the enforcement workload beyond what is already proposed by the animal services department resolution. It is simply an additional alternative means of legal tethering.