



ORDINANCE O-03-24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 6 OF THE CODE OF WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA REGARDING ANIMALS; TO PROVIDE FOR SPAY/NEUTER AND MICROCHIPPING REQUIREMENTS FOR CATS AND DOGS; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY AND OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is the governing authority for Walker County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Walker County desires to address the growing number of unwanted animals in our community; and

WHEREAS, Walker County desires to amend its Animals Code to provide for spay/neuter and microchipping requirements for cats and dogs;

THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Walker County that Chapter 6 of the Code of Walker County, Georgia is amended as follows:

1.

ARTICLE II. DIVISION 1. Section 6-21 – Definitions is amended to include the following:

Altered animal: Any animal that has had its reproductive organs surgically removed in order to render the animal unable to reproduce. This includes any surgery, procedure or event rendering the animal physically incapable of reproducing offspring. This includes the removal of ovaries or castration. This is commonly referred to as spay or neuter.

Microchip: An electronic device inserted under an animal's skin. The device, when scanned, reveals a unique identifier containing enough owner information to be contacted.

2.

ARTICLE II. DIVISION 1. Sections 6-26 – 6-53 are amended to include the following:

Section 6-26. - Spay/neuter requirements:

- (a) No person may own, keep, or be in possession of a dog that is six months of age or older which has not been spayed or neutered, unless exempt from this requirement under subsections (e), (f), or (g) hereunder.
- (b) No person may own, keep, or be in possession of a cat that is four months of age or older which has not been spayed or neutered, unless exempt from this requirement under subsections (e), (f), or (g) hereunder.
- (c) Whether a dog or cat shall have obtained the age set forth under subsections (a) or (b) above shall be determined by any authorized County animal control officer, or by any licensed veterinarian, or by reliable veterinarian medical records.
- (d) Prior to the court date listed on the citation, any citation issued for a violation of this section may be dismissed if the owner provides proof to the Walker County Magistrate Court that he or she has since had the animal altered so as to be in compliance.



- (e) Any dog or cat is exempt from the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) above if the person holds an active registered commercial breeder's license or a pet dealer's license issued by the Georgia Department of Agriculture.
- (f) Any dog or cat is exempt from the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) above if a licensed veterinarian has signed a document expressing a medical opinion that the dog or cat should not be spayed or neutered for health reasons for the duration of the relevant health condition.
- (g) Any dog or cat is exempt from the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) above if the dog or cat is deemed to be a working animal as hereinafter defined. A working animal is defined as a dog or cat trained and employed for farming, herding, hunting, or show, with written proof such as training, law enforcement, or other actual activity as a working animal. A dog or cat is not a working animal if the dog or cat does only has the common traits of a working animal but does not frequently perform the activities of a working animal set forth above in this subsection.

Section 6-27. – Microchipping of pets

- (a) No person may own, keep, or be in possession of a dog that is six months of age or older which does not have a microchip for identification unless otherwise exempt from this requirement hereunder.
- (b) No person may own, keep, or be in possession of a cat that is four months of age or older which does not have a microchip for identification unless otherwise exempt from this requirement hereunder.
- (c) Whether a dog or cat shall have obtained the age set forth under subsections (a) or (b) above shall be determined by any authorized County animal control officer, or by any licensed veterinarian, or by reliable veterinarian medical records.
- (d) The current microchip status of an animal will be verified by using a microchip scanner, by reviewing medical records, or by the use of other reliable information available to a County animal control officer.
- (e) Microchipping of an animal is not required if:
 - (1) The owner provides documentation signed by a licensed veterinarian that an animal is currently unable to be microchipped due to health concerns. Such provision shall require the documentation to include an estimated timeframe in which the animal should be medically sound for microchipping, if said licensed veterinarian is reasonably able to make such a determination.
- (f) Prior to the court date listed on the citation, any citation issued for a violation of this section may be dismissed if the owner provides proof to the Walker County Magistrate Court that he or she has since had the animal microchipped so as to be in compliance.

Secs. 6-28—6-53. - Reserved.

3.

This ordinance is effective immediately upon its adoption.

4.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.



5.

If any section, clause, sentence, or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

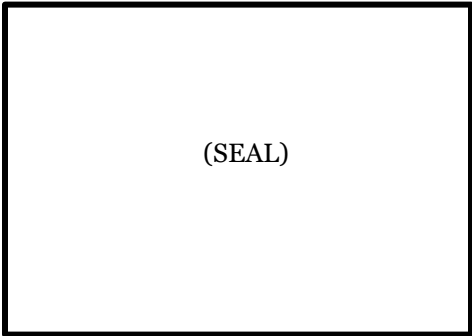
PASSED AND ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

WALKER COUNTY, GEORGIA

Jessica Staton, Deputy Clerk

SHANNON K. WHITFIELD, Chairman



The foregoing Ordinance received a motion for _____ from Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____, and upon the question the vote is _____ ayes, _____ nays to adopt the Resolution.