

Questions-and-Answers on the Animal-Related Bylaw Warrant Items

What people will these changes effect?

People who do not license their dogs as required
People who do not get rabies shots for dogs or cats as required
People who allow their dog to be a nuisance or a danger to others
People who neglect or are cruel to dogs or other animals
Owners of dog kennels

What is not changing?

Individual dog license fees are not changing.
Roles for Animal Control will not change, but their ability to fix things will be strengthened.
People need to care for their companion animals through rabies shots; dog licenses; feeding, shelter, and other good care; and prevent them from being nuisances or a danger to others.

Town bylaws are being updated to reflect new state laws. Why?

State law takes precedent. Therefore, bylaws should agree with what is currently required.
Keeping out-of-date bylaws can confuse people about what the law is.

What are some new requirements that people need to know about?

There are new, detailed requirements for caring for dogs, concerning shelter, tethering, food and water, and other specific conditions.
There are new protections for animals closed in cars.
For problem dogs and problem owners, clear legal processes protect citizens, owners, and animals.

How do new state laws and the updated bylaws help protect the town?

Licensing dogs is a major tool for safety and enforcement.
Licensed dogs that stray are easy to return to owners.
Rabies shots are a major protection for health; wild animals carry rabies, which is always fatal.
The Animal Control Program needs these tools to enforce the laws and ensure safety.

What are kennels and why are they different from individually owned dogs?

A kennel is a collection of dogs larger than four.
Any person or organization/business having more than 4 adult dogs must have a kennel license.
The law recognizes six kinds of kennel—the Personal Kennel and five kinds of commercial kennels.
Kennels are approved for a maximum number of dogs and inspected every year.
A single annual fee covers all the dogs in the kennel.
Dogs in kennels are subject to the *same* dangerous- or nuisance-dog laws as all other dogs.

What are the license fees used for?

These moneys contribute to the costs that the town bears for the license program.
Expenses include tags, records, mailings, and—for kennels—annual inspections by the ACO.