



**JOINT MEETING OF  
LAKEWOOD CITY COUNCIL'S  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE &  
LAKEWOOD ANIMAL SAFETY &  
WELFARE ADVISORY BOARD**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public Safety Committee and Lakewood Animal Safety & Welfare Advisory Board will meet Monday June 23, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of Lakewood City Hall at 12650 Detroit Avenue. The meeting is open to the public.

The meeting will be livestreamed on the City's website at the following link:

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[www.lakewoodoh.gov/councilvideos](http://www.lakewoodoh.gov/councilvideos)

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**PUBLIC COMMENT PROTOCOL (Updated 4/2025)**

The public is invited to comment on agenda items by submitting a written comment in advance of the meeting using the eComment platform available [HERE](#). New users must create an eComment account. Committee Chairs may also accommodate in person public comment.

***The agenda is as follows:***

**ORDINANCE 20-2025** - AN ORDINANCE to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least five members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, updating various sections of Chapter 505 Animals and Fowl of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances and creating regulations for trap, neuter/spay and release of community cats within the City of Lakewood. (*1<sup>st</sup> read & referred to LASWAB & Public Safety 5/19/25*)

Cindy Strebig, Chair

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Emily Christescu, Secretary

**LAKEWOOD ANIMAL SAFETY & WELFARE ADVISORY BOARD**

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*Individuals with disabilities who require accommodations for participation in meetings must request accommodations at least 3 business days ahead of the scheduled meeting. Contact Michelle Nochta at (216) 529-5906 [michelle.nochta@lakewoodoh.net](mailto:michelle.nochta@lakewoodoh.net).*

AN ORDINANCE to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least five members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, updating various sections of Chapter 505 Animals and Fowl of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances and creating regulations for trap, neuter/spay and release of community cats within the City of Lakewood.

WHEREAS, Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs are endorsed by many respected animal welfare organizations as a humane and effective method of managing cat populations; and,

WHEREAS, the existing language in our Code regarding TNR programs lacks necessary specificity, guidance, and protections for those volunteers pursuing TNR as a way to manage community cat populations; and,

WHEREAS, under the supervision of the Animal Shelter Supervisor and the authority of the Director of Public Safety, the Lakewood Animal Safety and Welfare Advisory Board and its partners have successfully executed a small-scale pilot TNR program; and,

WHEREAS, lessons learned from that program, as well as other updates to the management of animals, specifically cats, are incorporated in this ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, as set forth in Section 2.12 of the Third Amended Charter of the City of Lakewood, this Council by a vote of at least two thirds of its members determines that this Ordinance is an emergency measure and that it shall take effect immediately, and that it is necessary to provide for the usual daily operation of the City; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD:

Section 1. That Section 505.02 Dogs and Other Animals Running at Large of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, currently reading as follows:

**505.02 DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS RUNNING AT LARGE.**

(a) No owner, keeper or harbinger of any animals or fowl of any kind in the City shall allow or permit such animals or fowl to run at large upon any public place, or upon any unenclosed lands, or upon the premises of another.

(b) No owner, keeper or harbinger of any dog or cat, whether wearing a registration tag or not, shall permit such dog or cat to run at large within the City. Unauthorized entry by such dog or cat, upon the premises of another or upon any public street or ground shall constitute "running at large" within the meaning of this section.

(c) No owner, keeper or harbinger of any dog shall permit such dog to go or remain upon any public street or ground within the City except when accompanied by a responsible person, and upon a non-retractable leash of not more than six feet in length so as to prevent such dog from entering private property and from chasing or attacking any person, animal or vehicle; or shall fail to keep the dog under the reasonable control of some person. Any dog not properly on a leash will be considered "at large" and in violation of this section.

(d) The owner, keeper or harbinger of a dog or other animal or fowl who permits it to run at large in violation of this section shall, in addition to the penalty provided in subsection (h) hereof, be liable for all damages caused by such dog or other animal or fowl upon the premises of another.

(e) Every owner, keeper or harbinger of a female dog shall, during all times when such female dog is in heat, either confine such dog indoors or treat her in such manner as not to attract other dogs.

(f) Any land which is enclosed with invisible fencing must have its boundary no less than six feet from public property and shall be clearly marked with flags.

(g) This section shall not apply to persons operating under the guidelines of a program approved by the Director of Safety for providing for the trapping, spaying, or neutering, and releasing of cats and dogs with the purpose of reducing the unwanted stray-animal population in the City.

(h) (1) Whoever violates any provision of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree for a first offense.

(2) Whoever violates any provision of this section in a second or subsequent offense shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the third degree.

(3) In addition to any penalty provided under law for a violation of this section, the court shall order the offender to neuter or spay the dog within 14 calendar days of the date of conviction unless a licensed veterinarian provides evidence to the court's satisfaction that neutering or spaying of the dog is medically contraindicated.

(4) Notwithstanding the foregoing penalties, if a domestic animal or human is aggressively bitten by the dog without provocation as a result of a violation of this section, then whoever violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree. Additionally, the court shall order the offender to complete dog obedience training within a specified period of time and provide written proof thereof to the chief.

is hereby repealed.

Section 2. That new Section 505.02 Dogs and Other Animals Running at Large of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances is hereby enacted to read as follows:

**505.02 DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS RUNNING AT LARGE.**

(a) No owner, keeper or harbinger of any animals or fowl of any kind in the City shall allow or permit such animals or fowl to run at large upon any public place, or upon any unenclosed lands, or upon the premises of another. Unauthorized entry by such animal upon the premises of another or upon any public street or ground shall constitute "running at large" within the meaning of this section.

~~(b) No owner, keeper or harbinger of any dog or cat, whether wearing a registration tag or not, shall permit such dog or cat to run at large within the City. Unauthorized entry by such dog or cat, upon the premises of another or upon any public street or ground shall constitute "running at large" within the meaning of this section.~~

(eb) No owner, keeper or harbinger of any dog shall permit such dog to go or remain upon any public street or ground within the City except when accompanied by a responsible person, and upon a non-retractable leash of not more than six feet in length so as to prevent such dog from entering private property and from chasing or attacking any person, animal or vehicle; or shall fail to keep the dog under the reasonable control of some person. Any dog not properly on a leash will be considered "at large" and in violation of this section.

(~~ec~~) The owner, keeper or harbinger of a dog or other animal or fowl who permits it to run at large in violation of this section shall, in addition to the penalty provided in subsection (h) hereof, be liable for all damages caused by such dog or other animal or fowl upon the premises of another.

(ed) Every owner, keeper or harbinger of a female dog or cat shall, during all times when such female dog or cat is in heat, either confine such dog or cat indoors or treat her in such manner as not to attract other dogs or cats.

(fc) Any land which is enclosed with invisible fencing must have its boundary no less than six feet from public property and shall be clearly marked with flags.

(gf) This section shall not apply to persons operating under the guidelines of a program approved by the Director of Safety for providing for the trapping, spaying, or neutering, and releasing of cats ~~and dogs~~ with the purpose of reducing the unwanted stray-animal population in the City.

(gh) (1) Whoever violates any provision of this section is guilty of a minor misdemeanor ~~of the fourth degree~~ for a first offense.

(2) Whoever violates any provision of this section in a second or subsequent offense shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the ~~third~~fourth degree.

(3) In addition to any penalty provided under law for a violation of this section, the court shall order the offender to neuter or spay the dog within 14 calendar days of the date of conviction unless a licensed veterinarian provides evidence to the court's satisfaction that neutering or spaying of the dog is medically contraindicated.

(4) Notwithstanding the foregoing penalties, if a domestic animal or human is aggressively bitten by the dog without provocation as a result of a violation of this section, then whoever violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree. Additionally, the court shall order the offender to complete dog obedience training within a specified period of time and provide written proof thereof to the chief.

Section 3. That Section 505.03 Impounding and Disposition; Records of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, currently reading as follows:

**505.03 IMPOUNDING AND DISPOSITION; RECORDS.**

A police officer or the Animal Control Officer shall impound every dog and the Animal Control Officer shall impound every cat found in violation of Section 505.02, or shall impound such animals otherwise in accordance with this section.

(a) If the impounded dog is not wearing a valid registration tag, the dog shall forthwith be turned over to an officer charged by law with the custody and disposal of such dogs. If the dog is wearing a valid registration tag or the identity of the owner or harbinger is otherwise established, notice shall be given prior to or on the next working day to such owner or harbinger that the dog has been impounded. Notice may be by telephone or by residence service to the last known address of such owner or harbinger. The dog shall not be released except upon the payment of charges established by Council. Any dog not redeemed by the regular business day after notice, as herein provided, is given to the owner or harbinger, or the next regular business day following the date it is seized or impounded if the owner or harbinger cannot be found, may be sold or otherwise disposed of as provided in Ohio R.C. 955.16.

(b) If the impounded cat is wearing an identification tag or the identity of the owner or harbinger is otherwise established, notice shall be given on the next regular business day to such owner or harbinger that the cat has been impounded. Notice may be by telephone or by residence service to the last known address of such owner or harbinger. The cat shall not be released except upon the payment of charges established by Council. Any cat not redeemed by the next regular business day after notice is given to the owner or harbinger as provided herein, or the next regular business day following the date such cat is seized or impounded, if the owner or harbinger cannot be found, may be sold or otherwise disposed of in a humane manner as shall be determined by the Animal Control Officer or Animal Shelter Coordinator.

(c) In the event an animal is removed from a residence by the City because its owner is incarcerated, evicted, deceased, not found or otherwise unable to care for the animal on a daily basis, the animal may be impounded by an officer charged by law with the custody and disposal of such

animals for a period of at least 72 hours, in which period the owner may claim the animal. The animal shall not be released except upon the payment of charges established by Council. The City shall leave notice at the residence of the impounding of the animal and may make other reasonable attempts to provide such notice. If the owner or the owner's designee fails to claim the animal within the 72-hour period, the animal will be considered abandoned and the City may sell or otherwise dispose of the animal in a humane manner as determined by an officer charged by law with the custody and disposal of such animal.

(d) A record of all dogs and cats impounded, the disposition of the same, the owner's name and address, if known, and a statement of any costs or receipts involving such dog or cat shall be kept.

is hereby repealed.

Section 4. That new Section 505.03 Impounding and Disposition; Records of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances is hereby enacted to read as follows:

#### **505.03 IMPOUNDING AND DISPOSITION; RECORDS.**

A police officer or the Animal Control Officer shall impound every dog and the Animal Control Officer shall impound every cat found in violation of Section 505.02, or shall impound such animals otherwise in accordance with this section.

(a) If the impounded dog is not microchipped or wearing a valid registration tag, the dog shall forthwith be turned over to an officer charged by law with the custody and disposal of such dogs. If the dog is microchipped or wearing a valid registration tag or the identity of the owner or harborer is otherwise established, notice shall be given prior to or on the next working day to such owner or harborer that the dog has been impounded. Notice may be by telephone or by residence service to the last known address of such owner or harborer. The dog shall not be released except upon the payment of charges established by Council. Any dog not redeemed by the regular business day after notice, as herein provided, is given to the owner or harborer, or the next regular business day following the date it is seized or impounded if the owner or harborer cannot be found, may be ~~sold~~ adopted to a person, transferred to an animal rescue or shelter or otherwise disposed of as provided in Ohio R.C. 955.16.

(b) If the impounded cat is microchipped, ear tipped or wearing an identification tag or the identity of the owner or harborer is otherwise established, notice shall be given on the next regular business day to such owner or harborer that the cat has been impounded. Notice may be by telephone or by residence service to the last known address of such owner or harborer. The cat shall not be released except upon the payment of charges established by Council. Any cat not redeemed by the next regular business day after notice is given to the owner or harborer as provided herein, or the next regular business day following the date such cat is seized or impounded, if the owner or harborer cannot be found, may be ~~sold~~ adopted to a person, transferred to an animal rescue or shelter or otherwise disposed of in a humane manner as shall be determined by the Animal Control Officer or Animal Shelter ~~Coordinator~~ Supervisor.

(c) Cats found running at large that are not microchipped, eartipped or wearing an identification tag are presumed to be unowned or unharbored and may immediately be subject to a trapping, spaying or neutering and return program, adopted to a person, transferred to an animal rescue or shelter, or otherwise disposed of in a humane manner as determined by the Animal Shelter Supervisor.

(ed) In the event an animal is removed from a residence by the City because its owner is incarcerated, evicted, deceased, not found or otherwise unable to care for the animal on a daily basis, the animal may be impounded by an officer charged by law with the custody and disposal of such animals for a period of at least 72 hours, in which period the owner may claim the animal. The animal shall not be released except upon the payment of charges established by Council. The City

shall leave notice at the residence of the impounding of the animal and may make other reasonable attempts to provide such notice. If the owner or the owner's designee fails to claim the animal within the 72-hour period, the animal will be considered abandoned and the animal may ~~sell or otherwise dispose of the animal in a humane manner as determined by an officer charged by law with the custody and disposal of such animal~~ adopted to a person, transferred to an animal rescue or shelter, or otherwise dispose of as provided in Ohio R.C. 955.1..

(~~de~~) A record of all dogs and cats impounded, the disposition of the same, the owner's name and address, if known, and a statement of any costs or receipts involving such dog or cat shall be kept.

(f) Any person who has found or trapped a dog or cat that is not wearing an identification tag or is not an eartipped cat, shall have the animal scanned for a microchip. If the person cannot promptly identify the owner or keeper of the animal, they shall report such animal to Animal Control for impoundment.

Section 5. That Section 505.06 Abandoning Animals of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, currently reading as follows:

**505.06 ABANDONING ANIMALS.**

- (a) No owner or keeper of a dog, cat or other domestic animal shall abandon such animal.
- (b) Whoever violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree on a first offense and a misdemeanor of the first degree on each subsequent offense.

is hereby repealed.

Section 6. That new Section 505.06 Abandoning Animals of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances is hereby enacted to read as follows:

**505.06 ABANDONING ANIMALS.**

- (a) No owner or keeper of a dog, cat or other domestic animal shall abandon such animal.
- (b) Whoever violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the ~~second-first~~ degree, ~~on a first offense and a misdemeanor of the first degree on each subsequent offense.~~

Section 7. That Section 505.12 Specific Animal Nuisance Conditions Prohibited of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, currently reading as follows:

**505.12 SPECIFIC ANIMAL NUISANCE CONDITIONS PROHIBITED.**

- (a) No person shall keep or harbor any animal in the City so as to permit the commission or evidence of a nuisance as hereinafter defined.
- (b) Any animal which scratches or digs in or urinates or defecates upon any lawn, tree, shrub, plant, building or any other property, private or public, other than the property of the owner or person in charge or control of such animal is hereby declared to be a nuisance.
- (c) In addition to the penalty provided in Sections 505.11 and this section, the court may upon proper evidence, limit the number of animals in any single-family dwelling, or any separate suite in a two-family dwelling, multi-family dwelling or apartment within the City should the court deem that an excessive number of animals harbored within such an area constitutes a nuisance. The terms "dwelling" and "suite", as used in this section, include the lot or parcel of land on which the house or building containing the suite is located and also all out-buildings located on such lot or parcel.

No owner or keeper of such dogs or other animals shall fail to abate such nuisance by the permanent removal of such animals beyond City limits within ten days after service of such notice.

(d) On complaint of any person, police officer or the Animal Control Officer that an animal, harbored or kept in the City, damages property in the manner as specified above, notice therefor shall be given to the person harboring or keeping such animal. Failure to abate the nuisance complained of shall subject the person to penalty for violation of this section.

(e) Whoever violates this section is guilty of a minor misdemeanor.

is hereby repealed.

Section 8. That new Section 505.12 Specific Animal Nuisance Conditions Prohibited of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

**505.12 SPECIFIC ANIMAL NUISANCE CONDITIONS PROHIBITED.**

(a) No person shall keep or harbor any animal in the City so as to permit the commission or evidence of a nuisance as hereinafter defined.

(b) Any animal which scratches or digs in ~~or urinates~~ or defecates upon any lawn, tree, shrub, plant, building or any other property, private or public, other than the property of the owner or person in charge or control of such animal is hereby declared to be a nuisance. This section shall not apply to a person who has reasonable control of an animal that defecates on public property when such defecation is immediately removed by the person in control of the animal.

(c) In addition to the penalty provided in Sections 505.11 and this section, the court may upon proper evidence, limit the number of animals in any single-family dwelling, or any separate suite in a two-family dwelling, multi-family dwelling or apartment within the City should the court deem that an excessive number of animals harbored within such an area constitutes a nuisance. The terms "dwelling" and "suite", as used in this section, include the lot or parcel of land on which the house or building containing the suite is located and also all out-buildings located on such lot or parcel.

No owner or keeper of such dogs or other animals shall fail to abate such nuisance by the permanent removal of such animals beyond City limits within ten days after service of such notice.

(d) On complaint of any person, police officer or the Animal Control Officer that an animal, harbored or kept in the City, damages property in the manner as specified above, notice therefor shall be given to the person harboring or keeping such animal. Failure to abate the nuisance complained of shall subject the person to penalty for violation of this section.

(e) Whoever violates this section is guilty of a minor misdemeanor.

Section 9. That new Section 505.25 Trap, Neuter and Return of Community Cats of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

**505.025 Trap Neuter and Return of Community Cats**

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this Chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) "Community Cat" is a member of the domestic species Felis Catus and shall mean a free-roaming cat who may be cared for by one or more residents of the immediate area who is/are known or unknown; a community cat may or may not be feral. Community Cats are not wildlife.

(2) "Community Cat Caregiver" is a person who, in accordance with and pursuant to a Trap Neuter Return program as described herein, provides care, including food and shelter or medical care to a Community Cat.

(3) "Eartipping" is the removal of the distal one-quarter of a Community Cat's left ear, which is approximately 3/8 inch in an adult and proportionally smaller in a kitten under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Eartips are designed to identify a Community Cat as having been sterilized and vaccinated for rabies.

(4) "Trap Neuter Return" is the process of humanely trapping, sterilizing, vaccinating for rabies, eartipping and returning a Community Cat to their original location, including trapping to provide medical care.

(b) Permitted Acts. Trap Neuter Return of Community Cats is permitted only by Community Cat Caregivers who have registered with the Animal Control Supervisor and have provided proof of Trap Neuter Return training.

All Trap Neuter Return by Community Cat Caregivers shall comply with the following:

(1) Trap Neuter Return shall be conducted only between April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> unless written authorization to the contrary is obtained from the Animal Control Supervisor;

(2) Traps shall be humane traps that will not intentionally cause injury to any trapped animal;

(3) Traps shall be continually monitored while set to reduce stress and to prevent any extended caged time;

(4) All traps containing a trapped animal shall be covered to reduce the stress of the animal;

(5) Appointments for sterilization, Eartipping and rabies vaccination shall be made ahead of the trapping and shall be completed within 24 hours of trapping;

(6) Community Cats shall be returned to their environment as soon as medically cleared by a veterinarian;

(7) Community Cat Caregivers shall have a plan for Community Cats that need extended recovery time;

(8) All Community Cats shall be returned to the same place they were trapped;

(9) Any Eartipped cat shall be immediately released;

(10) Nursing Community Cats shall be sterilized on an expedited schedule so that they can return to their litter;

(11) Sick or injured animals shall be taken to a veterinarian for evaluation and appropriate treatment; and

(12) Community Cat Caregivers shall report annually to the Animal Control the number of animals trapped; and the number of Community Cats that were sterilized along with their sex, and the number and species of animals that were released and any unintended trapped animals.

(b) Whoever violates any provision of this section is guilty of a minor misdemeanor for a first offense.

(c) Whoever violates any provision of this section in a second or subsequent offense shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.

Section 10. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to this Ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Section 11. That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure for the reasons set forth in the preamble to this Ordinance, and provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of its members, this Ordinance shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption by the Council and approval by the Mayor otherwise; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah Kepple, President of Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Maureen M. Bach, Clerk of Council

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Meghan F. George, Mayor