

City of Milford



City Council Committee Agenda

Monday, September 25, 2017
Immediately Following City Council Meeting

Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers
Milford City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, Delaware

Community Affairs Committee Meeting

Call to Order – Chairperson Lisa Ingram Peel

Feral Cat Programs

Compost Pile Regulations

Adjourn

This agenda shall be subject to change to include additional items including executive sessions or the deletion of items including executive sessions which arise at the time of the public body's meeting.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE CITY CLERK IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK PRIOR TO MEETING; NO PAPER DOCUMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED OR DISTRIBUTED AFTER PACKET HAS BEEN POSTED ON THE CITY OF MILFORD WEBSITE.

091817

TO: Community Affairs Committee

FROM: Rob Pierce, Coordinator of Planning & Economic Development Activities

DATE: September 25, 2017

RE: Feral Cat Programs and Composting Regulations

In August, a resident in Ward 3 approached the Planning Department regarding numerous concerns in the 500 blocks of N. Walnut Street and N. Washington Street. The resident followed up this action by sending a letter to Councilman Morrow dated August 18, 2017 outlining concerns regarding unkept exterior properties, dilapidated accessory structures, weeds and overgrowth, alley lighting, compost piles, and feral/stray cats.

Since the initial complaint, the City has been working to investigate and address the concerns by issuing violation notices and working with property owners and tenants to address violations. The Electric Division of the Public Works Department has trimmed trees around lighting in the alleyway and the code enforcement officer has been in contact with the owners of both accessory structures to either fix or demolish the sheds. The compost pile (mainly dirt, grass clippings, plant trimmings and vegetable waste) was removed by the property owner/tenant and neighbors; however, the compost pile did not appear to violate City ordinances.

The City has adopted the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) under Chapter 174 Property Maintenance to regulate general property maintenance requirements within City limits. Situations where compost piles are creating safety or sanitation concerns may be investigated and addressed through the City's property maintenance code. Section 302.1 of the IPMC states "exterior property and premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition." In addition, Section 308 of the IPMC states "exterior property and premises, and the interior of every structure, shall be free from any accumulation of rubbish or garbage." Staff does not recommend prohibiting composting within City limits or adding additional regulations.

The State of Delaware, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control encourages composting of yard waste material in an effort to divert a portion of the waste stream from disposal in landfills. Effective composting can produce a useful end-product that can be used to condition soil in gardens and flower beds, saving homeowners the expense of purchasing organic material from commercial retailers. Composting, either with a bin or with a pile, can be beneficial if properly handled.

A survey of Delaware municipalities returned no specific regulations on compost piles and bins.

The August 18th letter also raised a concern regarding the feral/stray cat population in the same neighborhood. Currently, the City provides no assistance to residents for the trapping, spaying or

neutering of feral cats. Included in the packet is information from the State of Delaware, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Animal Welfare regarding the difference between free-roaming pet cats, stray cats and feral cats. The State recommends vaccinating, spaying or neutering, and returning feral cats to where they were found. Currently, the cost associated with spaying, neutering and vaccinating is the responsibility of the resident.

A possible response to this concern would be to support implementation of a Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release (TNVR) program. The Town of Harrington provides a TNR program where the resident may purchase a voucher from the Town, the resident would then catch and take the feral cat to a local animal health center and have the feral cat spayed or neutered, and then the resident would release the cat where it was found. The animal health center would in turn bill the Town for services rendered. Under this particular arrangement, the Town pays fifty (50%) percent of the associated costs. The Harrington program had a significant level of volunteer involvement at the beginning, proactive public education and assistance from State officials to secure a \$25,000 grant to initiate the program.

If Council elects to pursue a similar option, the City would need to enter into an agreement with a local animal health center and negotiate a price for these services. Funds would need to be obtained either through a grant or a supplemental appropriation for the one-time purchase of traps, the annual expenses associated with the animal health center expenses, and administration.

Staff is seeking guidance from this Committee regarding possible composting regulations and the development of a TNVR feral cat program.

Found/Stray Cats - Delaware Health and Social Services

The State of Delaware

In Delaware, only dogs are provided for in animal control contracts with the counties. There are no agencies that will pick up free-roaming cats. If you find a cat, it may be someone's pet that they allow outdoors, it may be a lost or abandoned pet, or it may be feral. Figuring out what type of cat is the best way to determine how you can help.

[Follow this link for detailed information and helpful tips.](#)

Free-Roaming Pet Cats

Friendly cats who appear well fed and groomed are probably pets whose caretakers allow them outdoors. If they look healthy and they're not bothering you, the best thing to do for these cats is nothing.



Stray Cats

Stray cats are pets that have been abandoned or lost. They are used to contact with people and may approach you to seek attention. Others may appear feral at first, but once you befriend them, you'll find that they enjoy human touch.

If you find a stray cat that you do not believe is being cared for, the best thing to do is catch her and attempt to find her original family. Take her to a local veterinarian or animal shelter so she can be scanned for a microchip. Check for lost ads in your local paper and animal shelter. File a found report with your local shelters in case her owners are looking for her. [Follow this link for more tips.](#)

If no one claims the cat and you'd rather not keep her yourself, you can re-home her or give her to a rescue group or shelter so she can be adopted. [Re-homing her yourself](#) is ideal as most shelters are already overwhelmed with homeless animals. [More info helping stray cats.](#)

Feral Cats

Feral cats are not socialized to people and live on their own outside. They are usually too fearful to be handled or adopted. Feral cats often live in a group of related cats, called a colony, but if food is scarce they may roam alone.

A colony typically occupies and defends a specific territory where food and shelter are available, such as dumpsters or restaurants, beneath porches, or in abandoned buildings. Because a female cat can become pregnant as early as five months of age, the number of feral cats in a community can rapidly increase if cats aren't spayed or neutered.

How Can You Help Feral Cats?



The best thing you can do for the feral cats in your neighborhood is to vaccinate them, have them spayed or neutered, and return them to where you found them. TNVR (Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return) is a humane and effective program that ends the birth of unwanted litters, stabilizes the cat populations, improves the quality of life for the cats themselves, and prevents the spread of disease.

If the cat has a notched ear, it is a sign that it has already been spayed or neutered and vaccinated. See picture of ear tipped cat on the right.

After TNVR of a cat or colony of cats, it is ideal if a dedicated caretaker provides food, water and shelter; monitors the cats for sickness or injury; and TNVRs new feral cats who arrive. Ideally, kittens young enough to be socialized and new tame cats who arrive are removed from the colony for possible adoption.

Resources:

- Detailed Information on Stray & Feral Cats:
- [ASPCA](#)
- [HSUS](#)
- [Alley Cat Allies](#)
- [Delaware TNR Rescue Groups](#)
- [Spay/Neuter Assistance Link](#)
- [Deterring Cats in Your Yard](#)
- [Keeping Cats and Wildlife Safe](#)

[Return to Office of Animal Welfare home page.](#)

Community Cats Program - City of Harrington



Harrington is partnering with the Delaware SPCA, The Humane Society of the United States, Alley Cat Allies, and volunteers from the community to implement a feral cat management program. Based on the recommendation of animal experts, Harrington has adopted a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program to handle the feral cat problem. This page contains information about the program and what you can do to help.

Feral cat management is needed. There are problems associated with colonies of free-roaming cats for both the animals and the community. These issues are magnified as the population of the colony continues to quickly grow:

- frequent and loud noise from fighting and mating behavior
- strong, foul odors from unneutered male cats spraying to mark their territory
- flea infestations and property damage
- visible suffering from dying kittens and injured adults
- high mortality rate resulting from malnourishment, parasitic infection, and unadoptable trapped cats being euthanized
- males that roam and fight may be injured and transmit diseases to one another through bite wounds
- higher animal control costs associated with trapping, caring for, and euthanizing feral cats
- [Feral Cats – FAQs](#)



Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) Program:

The program being used to manage feral cats is a Trap, Neuter, Return program. TNR is a non-lethal strategy to reduce the number of feral cats and improve the quality of life for the cats, other wildlife, and people. Colonies of cats are trapped; transported to a facility to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies, and ear-tipped*; and returned to the site where they were captured where a caretaker will supervise the colony. There is an immediate reduction in cats because trapped feral cats that are sick or injured are euthanized and kittens are evaluated for adoption. Ending reproduction means that cat population will reduce over time. People and pets are protected from the possibility of rabies infection. Caretakers provide food, water, and shelter for feral cats, seek care for injured or sick cats, and trap new cats for neutering and vaccination or adoption. Feral cats' nuisance behaviors diminish once neutered, and their quality of life and health improves because they no longer have kittens or fight over mates.*Ear-tipping involves the surgical removal of the top of the cat's ear, which does not hurt the cat and is a visual indicator that the cat has been neutered and vaccinated.

How to help:

This program relies on the support of volunteers and donations. Any and all help is appreciated. Thank you!

- **Donate** Both funds and supplies are needed for the success of the TNR program.
- **Monetary donations** assist with the purchase of traps, transportation to and from the clinic, veterinary services, and resources for colony caregivers.
- **Supplies** are also needed to help care for community cats and ensure their quality of life.

- gently used bath or beach towels
- newspaper
- cans of tuna, sardines, or cat food with a strong odor

- **Donations can be mailed to or dropped-off at Harrington City Hall:**

City of Harrington – Community Cat Program

106 Dorman Street

Harrington, DE 19952

Please make checks payable to the City of Harrington.

- [Community Cats Donation Form](#)

- **Volunteer.** People are needed to assist with trapping feral cats for transportation to a veterinary clinic and to take care of colonies of cats. Being a caretaker involves providing food, water, and shelter for feral cats; monitoring the cats for problems; and trapping new cats to be TNRed. The caretaker is a vital person to the long-term strategy of the TNR program to reduce the number of feral cats and improve quality of life. If you would like to donate your time to trapping or colony care-taking, please contact the Code Enforcement Officer at (302) 398-4428.

- **Report free-roaming cats.** Please call the Code Enforcement Officer at (302) 398-4428 to report feral cats so that they can become part of the TNR program.

Information for cat owners:

As part of the feral cat management strategy, volunteers will be trapping cats to be spayed or neutered and vaccinated for rabies. If you own a cat in Harrington, the following is recommended:

- **Keep your cat indoors.** This will ensure that your cat is not misidentified as a free-roaming cat.
- **Collar your cat if it is outdoors.** Trappers can easily identify your cat as a pet if it is wearing a collar.
- **Spay or neuter and vaccinate your cat.** To prevent overpopulation and behavior problems and to ensure the health of your cat, please spay or neuter and vaccinate your pet. Services to transport, spay/neuter, and vaccinate for rabies are available through the Delaware SPCA for \$25. For more information, please contact Lauren at the Delaware SPCA Georgetown at (302) 856-6361. Those on public assistance can also take advantage of the [Delaware Spay/Neuter Fund](#).

Community Cats Program Partners:

- [Alley Cat Allies](#)
- [Delaware SPCA](#)
- [The Humane Society of the United States](#)
- [Best Ace Hardware](#)
- [Remington Vernick & Beach Engineers](#)
- Downtown Junction

Thank you to our sponsors:

- Lee & Margaret Dean
- Myrna Graham

[Announcing a new public website to connect Delawareans to pet services](#)

Spay & Neuter - Brandywine Valley SPCA

The BVSPCA Animal Health Center offers low-cost spay/neuter services for your pet.

Spaying/Neutering your pet helps fight pet overpopulation, reducing the number of homeless animals and decreasing euthanasia numbers. Our accomplished veterinarians and medical staff operate in a professional, caring manner and will handle your pet kindly.

Spay / Neuter Fees	MALE	FEMALE
UNDER 40 LBS.	\$100	\$120
40-79 LBS.	\$130	\$150
OVER 80 LBS.	\$160	\$180

Fees	MALE	FEMALE
SPAY / NEUTER	\$50	\$60
COMMUNITY CAT PACKAGE Includes spay/neuter, ear tip, FVRCP, rabies vaccines, Revolution flea control and dewormer.	\$30	\$30

For community cats, contact our Animal Health Center for the latest pricing, which varies based on available grant funding. Package includes spay/neuter, ear tip, rabies vaccine, FVRCP. (FeLV/FIV +\$20.)

Please note that there may be additional charges for the following:

- In heat \$30
- Pregnant \$35
- Obese Animals \$25
- Abdominal Cryptorchid \$60
- Inguinal Cryptorchid \$30
- Umbilical Hernia repair \$50
- SQ Fluids \$20

Additional Services Available on the Day of Your Pet's Surgery

- Additional pain relief medications to go home \$10
- E-collars \$10
- \$100 for dental if done at same time as spay/neuter

Prices are subject to change without notification. Additional charges may apply.