

Kitty control

Council to consider law to rein roaming cats

By Casey Hana
staff writer

Annewood Street resident Joyce Weary is tired of the roaming felines which frequent her vegetable and flower gardens.

After hearing her concerns, Farmington City Council members have agreed to study what other communities do and consider implementing local cat controls here.

"I think it's time we do that. We haven't looked at it in a long time," said councilman Ralph Yoder.

Mayor Shirley Richardson agreed the concerns should be studied. "When people own pets, they certainly should be responsible for them," she said.

Weary recently wrote to the city, complaining about what she considers "irresponsible" pet ownership and asking what the city can do to promote responsibility among residents who are pet owners.

City Manager Robert Deadman said the issue has been visited by the council twice, but no action was taken either time.

"Each time... they (council members) have determined the behavior of cats is quite different than that of dogs, and we seldom have a problem with roaming cats biting people," Deadman said in a short report on the issue.

CURRENTLY, no misdemeanor or civil complaint can be signed against a person for a cat complaint.

It can only be handled under nuisance laws. The city must document the matter, then file suit through the circuit court system.

"I don't think we deal with stray cats, period," Deadman added. "There's no such thing as writing a nuisance violation. There's no such law."

The council has supported proposed state legislation which would give local cities power to ticket for such problems.

Farmington public safety director Frank Lauboff is gathering information about other cities, including Oak Park, which has had a cat ordinance on the books for five years.

"It's difficult to enforce a cat which doesn't want to be caught,"

admits Oak Park public safety director Robert Selfert.

He said the city's code enforcement officers do the bulk of the enforcement there, where cats must be leashed, allowing complaining residents to sign a misdemeanor ticket against cat owners who allow their pets to roam.

Cats must also be licensed under the local law, which can be helpful if there is a cat bite incident or if a pet is lost, Selfert said.

In 1980, there were 1,200 dogs registered and 182 cats registered in Oak Park.

City administration in Farmington is expected to compile information from neighboring cities and present it to city council at a future meeting.

Residents plop down ideas to observe 125th anniversary

A plop plan, otherwise known as Bovine Bingo, tops the list of ideas to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Farmington's incorporation as a village in 1867.

The plan calls for entrants to buy plots in a field. A cow or sheep then is put out to pasture. The winner is determined by seeing which plot the cow plops on.

The next meeting of the 125th Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee will be 7 p.m. Thursday, June 20, at Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty. The public is welcome.

The main purpose of this meeting will be to select events that could become part of our celebration," said Mayor Shirley Richardson, committee chair.

Farmington voters approved a village charter May 6, 1867. The first village council meeting was three days later. Cityhood came in 1926.

Other celebration ideas include a strawberry festival, a historic home tour, a kickoff reception at the Gov. Warner Mansion, a costume ball, a melorama, a nickelodeon and a period play at the old junior high.

Also suggested were a country hoedown, pioneer days, block parties, a farmers market, a collectibles auction, school concerts, an old-fashioned barbecue, a commemorative quilt, plate or medalion, an art show, an old photo display, recognizing descendants of pioneering families and local history programs in the schools.

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