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ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, Through the adoption program administered by Chicago Animal Care and Control ("CACC"), more than 1,000 animals are placed in loving homes each year; and

WHEREAS, To ensure pets are easily identified, CACC routinely offers City residents the opportunity to purchase microchips at low-cost clinics, enabling Chicagoans to reduce the risk that their pet will be impounded as a stray of unknown ownership; and

WHEREAS, CACC holds regular community adoption and vaccination events throughout Chicago, and offers online options to facilitate dog licensing, thereby providing residents with a convenient means of not only complying with legal requirements, but also reducing the risk of their pet's impoundment; and

WHEREAS, Despite these programs, CACC is required to provide humane shelter to more than 12,000 stray animals per year; and

WHEREAS, Notwithstanding CACC's diligent efforts to reunite these stray animals with their owners through various methods, including daily lost pet tours and photographs of lost pets posted online, less than seven percent of stray animals are claimed by owners, including less than one percent of stray cats and less than 15 percent of stray dogs; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the majority of the 93 percent of stray animals that go unclaimed are subject to a minimum of five days' "stray hold." Animal welfare experts have found that reducing the time an animal is held in a shelter significantly decreases the likelihood the animal will become ill or stressed, problems that are particularly acute with younger animals; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, CACC's redemption rate for stray cats aged four months or younger was less than one quarter of one percent, and the redemption rate for stray puppies aged four months or younger was approximately one percent; and

WHEREAS, To maximize the placement and adoption of animals in its care, CACC partners with more than 200 animal-welfare agencies and rescue groups that are willing, able, and authorized to receive transferred animals the moment they become available; and

WHEREAS, In the first nine months of 2014, more than 160 agencies and groups welcomed more than 8,300 animals transferred from CACC; and

WHEREAS, Several animal-welfare agencies, rescue groups, and humane societies, including multiple members of the Chicago Area Shelter Alliance, have requested modifications to the City's ordinance regarding stray holds, with an aim toward expediting the availability of animals for placement and adoption; and

WHEREAS, Making animals available for transfer or adoption in a more expeditious manner aligns with CACC's vital mission of promoting pet placement; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

SECTION 1. Section 7.12-060 of the Municipal Code of Chicago is hereby amended by deleting the

language stricken and inserting the language underscored, as follows:

7-12-060 Redemption of impounded animals.

a) Subject to the exceptions provided in subsections 7-12-060(b) and 7-12-060(c), the commission or any agency the commission may designate to take possession of animals for the purposes of impounding, shall hold impounded animals for a minimum of seven days, unless the owner redeems the animal sooner, during which time reasonable means shall be used to facilitate their return to the rightful owners. The owner of any animal impounded in any animal control center may, at any time during visiting hours at the animal control center, and before the sale or other disposal as provided in this ordinance chapter, redeem such animal by paying the required fees or charges and, in the case of an unlicensed animal[^] by complying with the license requirements. The seven-day holding period shall not apply to an animal relinquished by its owner to the commission under owner signature authorizing the commission to make immediate disposition of the animal at its discretion, nor shall any required holding period apply to an animal received for impounding in obviously critical physical condition or for which immediate euthanasia shall be deemed proper for humane reasons by the executive director or the executive director's designee.

b) Any impounded animal of unknown ownership that remains unredeemed after three days shall be the property of the commission. The executive director may allow the adoption or transfer of any animal of unknown ownership after three days of impoundment, or any other disposition of the animal after five days of impoundment. In the event the executive director determines that an animal of unknown ownership suffers from severe behavioral issues, the executive director may allow any disposition of the animal after three days impoundment. wild-Wild animals which are noxious by their very nature[^] such as wild rats_† and undomesticated rodents₁ may be euthanized at once following an examination for zoonotic diseases.

~~Any animal remaining unredeemed after the prescribed holding period shall at once become the property of the commission.~~

c) The executive director may allow the immediate adoption, or immediate transfer to an animal shelter or similar facility, of: (1) any impounded cat of unknown ownership; and (2) any impounded litter of puppies aged four months or younger of unknown ownership, as well as their mother, if she is present. The executive director also may allow the immediate transfer or other disposition of any impounded unweaned neonate animal of unknown ownership.

d) The executive director shall have the authority to adopt rules necessary for the administration of this Section.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and approval.