

Article 60: Town Of Concord Cat Bylaw

To adopt a bylaw discouraging certain roaming behaviors related to pet cats.

Purpose of the Cat Bylaw

The purpose of this bylaw is to encourage cat owners to keep their cats indoors or within the boundaries of their own property, and pertains to domestic, pet cats only.

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- a.** an owner/keeper of a cat(s) will only allow his/her cats to roam outside with direct supervision and respect the boundaries of neighboring properties;
- b.** no person shall allow his/her cat to disturb the peace of neighbors or private property, or endanger the safety of any other person or pet;
- c.** there is no disturbance to peace or property if a community of neighbors agree on and support a free-roaming cat within the boundaries of their related properties.

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a. no owner or keeper of a cat shall allow his/her cat to enter onto the property of a neighbor without agreement from the neighbor;

b. if a cat owner/keeper has been informed by a law enforcement officer or ACO that his/her cat was disturbing a neighbor or property of another, this constitutes a 1st Offense. Offenses and fines follow:

1st Offense = No fine; 2nd Offense = \$25 fine;
xx3rd Offense = \$50 fine; 4th Offense = remedial actions as directed by ACO and all parties involved.

What are other towns doing? Source MSPCA 2012

Quincy: An animal is allowed off their owner's property only when they are "under the control of the owner or keeper by leash, cord, chain, rope or other device that allows the owner or keeper to control the movement and/or action of the animal."

Southwick: Cats found running at large will be apprehended by the animal control. Cats may not be a nuisance on any public property, or private property of another.

What are other towns doing? Source MSPCA 2012

Springfield: “Any animal found at large or determined to be a public nuisance by a police officer, wildlife or animal control officer shall be taken by the police, animal control officer or wildlife control officer and impounded and confined in a humane manner.”

Westfield: Owners may not allow their cat to run at large on any street, public place, or private property unless the owner of the property grants permission.

What are other towns doing? Source MSPCA 2012

Acton: No animal is allowed to go at large to the injury or nuisance of others.

Braintree: Animals trespassing on public or private property is a nuisance, and owners must prevent animals from becoming a nuisance.

Lawrence: Owners may not allow their animal to become a public nuisance. The animal control officer will confine all unrestrained dogs and cats, or nuisance animals.

Local Support

MSPCA letter supporting last year's petition and keeping cats indoors



Kindness and Care for Animals®

April 12, 2012

Board of Selectmen
Town House, P.O. Box 535
22 Monument Square
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Board of Selectmen:

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) works to address cat overpopulation, general cat welfare, and the status of cats in society and a daily part of our work is encouraging people to keep their cats indoors.

The great outdoors may sound like fun for a cat — but there are many dangers outside. Most people accept that we cannot let our dogs roam loose — for their safety and that of our neighbors, other companion animals, and wildlife. Many people have different attitudes about cats, however, even though they experience the same hazards and can cause the same problems. Therefore, the MSPCA strongly advises that all cats be kept indoors only or allowed outside only under supervision.

Companion animals allowed to roam can: get hit by vehicles and cause traffic accidents, be poisoned by sweet-tasting un-treated antifreeze or other toxins, fight with other animals risking injury or disease, be victims of animal cruelty, and interact with wildlife risking disease transmission, such as rabies, and acting as predator and/or prey. The MSPCA's Angell Animal Medical Center treats cats who are victims of wildlife attacks and wildlife attacked by cats — many animals do not survive such interactions.

Outdoor cats can also contract various internal and external parasites, such as worms and fleas, which would not be problematic if they were kept indoors. Furthermore, cats who roam the neighborhood may urinate and defecate in neighbors' gardens or their children's' sandboxes, posing health threats for people.

The MSPCA Adoption Centers, and other Massachusetts animal shelters, are often overwhelmed with homeless cats. Outdoor cats can contribute to the cat overpopulation problem.

Many people believe that cats need to go outdoors, but this is not true. Cats will live longer, healthier lives when kept indoors only. The average life span for a cat who goes outside is 16 months; for a cat who stays inside it is 16 years. We advise people to make the "great indoors" fun and entertaining for their cats — grow cat greens, have lots of fun toys, and find a sturdy, good quality scratching post. Cats can be safely allowed outside on a cat harness and leash or in a securely screened porch or enclosed fence; they will use cat doors to move from inside a building to the enclosed area outdoors.

Even indoor cats should always wear a breakaway collar, identification tag, and rabies tag because accidents happen and they can get outdoors. Microchipping cats is a good idea, too, since collars can be lost or removed.

Sincerely,

Kara Holmquist
Director of Advocacy

Objections...

Common objections & arguments:

- It's natural for cats to roam; let nature take its course.
- We need cats to roam and kill rodents.
- This is just a way for cat haters to get control over cats.
- You can stop cats from killing wildlife in your yard with collar bells, water squirters, dogs, etc...

Support...

Supporting organizations & studies:

American Association of Feline Practitioners

Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute

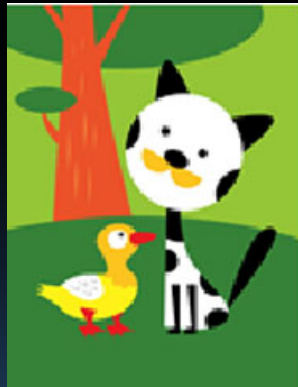
Audubon Society

American Veterinary Medical Association

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

American Bird Conservancy...

Concord, MA
Public Hearing March 4, 2013



Thank you!