

City to Repeal Mandatory Spay/Neuter Law

Petland Inc., had sued because of controversial ordinance.

The Athens, Ohio, City Council voted this week to repeal a spay/neuter ordinance that requires any dog or cat more than 6-months-old to have the surgery before being sold or given away, partially because of fears about pending litigation.

The ordinance also required owners of younger animals to show proof that they have purchased spay or neuter service from a vet. After the City Council passed the law in March 2005, Ohio-based Petland, Inc. sued the city.

Petland, which does not spay or neuter all of the animals it sells but offers coupons for the new owners to have their animals fixed, has argued in court that the law is unenforceable and discriminatory.

The council has said that although the current ordinance is being repealed, it will draft and vote on a less restrictive version of it.

Kate McGuckin of the Athens Coalition of Companion Animals has said she supports the councils move to repeal the ordinance and draft a new one because numerous other cities have spay/neuter laws.

Petland has shown support for the ordinance repeal, and company officials are waiting to see the new ordinance before they decide further actions, according to company spokeswoman Julie Washburn.

Posted: August 04, 2006, 5 a.m. EST