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From: Edson Freeman <edson.freeman@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 10:08 AM
To: Town Council; All Agenda Materials; Manager
Subject: Petition to allow miniature pigs as pets
Attachments: Additional considerations and comparisons regarding pigs as pets.docx

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Dear Mayor and Town Council of Chapel Hill,

We would like to petition the Town to consider allowing miniature pigs as pets. I know on the surface many people react negatively to the idea, but we hope you'll keep your minds open to this proposal.

Section 4-10 (c) of the Chapel Hill Code of Ordinances states, "It shall be unlawful for any person to keep or maintain any cow, swine, goat, horse, sheep or cattle within the corporate limits of the town on any lot or parcel of land less than four (4) acres in size, and within one hundred (100) feet of a residence other than that of the custodian." We are petitioning to have this ordinance amended to make an exception that allows domesticated Miniature Pigs to live as pets within Chapel Hill's city limits.

Miniature Potbellied Pigs were first introduced in the US nearly 40 years ago and have been growing in popularity ever since. Miniature Pigs' weights when full-grown vary greatly, and can be anywhere from 40 to 150+ lbs. However, their stature is usually comparable to a medium-sized dog. Miniature Pigs are ideal pets for some individuals and families because they are very intelligent, highly trainable, hypoallergenic, and form strong emotional bonds with their owners. Miniature Pigs can be potty-trained to go outside or in a litter box. They can learn tricks and be leash-trained just like a dog. Despite popular myth, pigs are very clean animals and cannot carry fleas or ticks due having bristles instead of fur. Additionally, for those with pet allergies, having a dog or cat may be out of the question, whereas pigs very rarely cause allergic reactions. A number of studies have shown that pigs are intelligent, emotional, and cognitively complex creatures. Some mini pigs are even used as Therapy Animals and visit schools, hospitals, and nursing homes as volunteers providing therapy and companionship.

The Town of Chapel Hill currently bans all pigs on properties of less than 4 acres, and does not recognize the distinct difference between pigs bred to be pets and the much larger farming pigs bred for consumption. The Town of Chapel Hill even allows citizens to own and keep exotic animals, so long as they don't "by loud and habitual noise or offensive odor causes a public nuisance" [Sec. 4-10 (f)] within city limits, but offer no such consideration for Miniature Pigs.

Many cities in North Carolina and across the US have already voted to amend city ordinances to allow mini pigs as pets within city limits. Raleigh, Concord, Rocky Mount, New Bern, and Atlantic Beach are among the many cities in North Carolina which now have ordinances in place allowing Miniature Pigs to dwell within their city limits, and there are many resources available to alleviate common concerns such as the potential for odor, disease, or property damage. In fact, language in existing ordinances already covers these concerns for other types of pets.

We believe that our citizens have the right to make their own informed decision whether they would like to have a Miniature Pig as a part of their family. Miniature Pigs are, and always have been, beloved domesticated pets and NOT livestock or farm animals. They are not bred for consumption or farm use, but for companionship, stature, and

temperament. I have included some additional information for your reference.

Please consider amending Sec. 4-10 to allow Miniature Pigs to be kept as family pets in the Town of Chapel Hill.

Sincerely,
Edson & Stephanie Freeman



Considerations and comparisons regarding pigs as pets

SIZE

A “farm hog,” or non-domesticated pig, raised for food consumption, typically weighs between 400 and 900 pounds. In comparison, a full-grown potbelly pig will generally weigh at most 200 pounds.

The standard for the breed set by the North American Potbellied Pig Association for pigs is a maximum height of 18 inches at the shoulders and a weight of 95 pounds. An unusually large potbelly at full growth would be around 200 pounds, about 20 inches at the withers, and less than 40 inches long.

Clearly the potbelly is larger than a domestic cat, but smaller than some large dog breeds. For example, the tallest dog breed, the Akita, can average 30-40 inches tall. The heaviest dog breed, the Old English Mastiff, averages 240-340 pounds.

Because of their compact build, it’s a fair comparison to the potbelly is smaller in stature than moderate to large dogs (Retrievers, Setters, Shepherds, and Collies). Though generally heavier, the best overall comparison would be to a full-grown Basset Hound (see photo).



Based on these comparisons, we believe the potbelly is equally suitable to be a house pet based on size.

DISPOSITION

Unlike dogs and cats, who are hunters, pigs are foragers. Both cats and dogs will attack other animals, including their own species, as part of their natural instincts. Pigs are prey animals who live in herds, and by their nature, are not aggressive. They get along very well with cats, dogs, and other animals, as well as adults and children.

FOOD

As carnivores, cat and dog food is typically made from meat and animal byproducts. The feces of both have a strong and pungent odor. Pigs are naturally omnivores, however it is recommended that potbelly pigs be fed commercially available feed that is grain and vegetable-based. The feed is formulated to eliminate the smell of the pig's feces. It is not recommended to feed pet pigs meat.

HOUSING

Potbellied pigs, like dogs and cats, are housed inside. They can be housebroken or litter trained. The "hog farm" smell would not be pertinent because the number of animals would be limited, and they would not be permanently dwelling outside. (See photos.)



INTELLIGENCE

The potbellied pig, and pigs in general, are often ranked as one of the most intelligent species of animals, along with primates, dolphins, and canines. Because of their intelligence and ability to bond with humans, they are often able to be trained faster than a typical dog or cat.

HUMAN HEALTH

- a. **ALLERGIES** – Dogs and cats can be allergenic due to their fur and dander. Potbellied pigs do not have fur or dander in the sense that dogs or cats do. Rather they have hair and

dandruff in the sense that humans do.

- b. MENTAL HEALTH – Due to their good nature, being hypoallergenic, intelligent, and non-aggressive, they make wonderful companions for many people. There are many cases where pigs, like dogs, have saved an owner.
- c. DISEASES – A common question regarding pet pigs is “what about swine flu?” According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are only one or two cases per year. Swine flu is very rare, and if humans were to be infected, it would be in a place with large numbers of hogs, such as a farm or county fair.

There are few, if any cases of rabies in potbellied pigs. Pet pigs do not live in masses, they are hygienic, and receive routine veterinary care and vaccinations. We would recommend including requirements for vaccinations, as well as spaying & neutering.