



City of Leavenworth
100 N. 5th Street
Leavenworth, Kansas 66048

CITY COMMISSION STUDY SESSION
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021 7:00 P.M.

Welcome to your City Commission Study Session – Please turn off or silence all cell phones during the meeting
Meetings are televised everyday on Channel 2 at 7 p.m. and midnight and available for viewing on YouTube and Facebook Live

In accordance with Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), the meeting can be viewed on Channel 2 and via Facebook Live. The public is encouraged to view the meeting using one of those options. The Leavenworth City Commission meeting is open to the public with limited seating capacity. To attend the meeting in person, email cwilliamson@firstcity.org no later than 4:00 pm on the day of the meeting to reserve a seat. Seats are available on a first come first serve basis. Face coverings are optional when attending the meeting. If you are not attending the meeting but would like to submit comments on an agenda item to be read during discussion on that topic, email your comments to cwilliamson@firstcity.org no later than 6:00 pm on the day of the meeting.

Study Session:

1. Semi-Annual Report from University of Saint Mary (pg. 2)
2. Review Feral Cats (pg. 3)

Policy Report
Presentation by University of Saint Mary
May 18, 2021

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Kramer', written over a horizontal line.

Paul Kramer
City Manager

Issue:

Sister Diane Steele, University of Saint Mary President, will provide an update to the City Commission.

Policy Report No. 4-2021
2021 Feral Cats
May 18, 2021

Prepared by:



Patrick R. Kitchens, Police Chief

Approved by:



Paul Kramer, City Manager

ISSUE:

Review and discuss the issue of Feral Cats.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval.

BACKGROUND:

Power Point presentation.

BUDGET IMPACT:

There may be significant budget impact depending on the direction of the City Commission.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Review and discuss Feral Cats.

Chief Patrick Kitchens
Leavenworth Police Department

Feral Cats

Feral Cats

- **What is a Feral Cat?**

- According to Margaret R. Slater, DVM, PhD, senior director of epidemiology, animal health services with the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), a feral cat is “any cat who is too poorly socialized to be handled ... and who cannot be placed into a typical pet home.”
- A **feral cat** or a **stray cat** is an un-owned domestic cat (*Felis catus*) that lives outdoors and avoids human contact: it does not allow itself to be handled or touched, and usually remains hidden from humans. Feral cats may breed over dozens of generations and become an aggressive local apex predator in urban, savannah and bushland environments. Some feral cats may become more comfortable with people who regularly feed them, but even with long-term attempts at socialization, they usually remain aloof and are most active after dusk.

Feral Cats

- A survey of rescue and veterinary facilities in the [United States](#) revealed that no widely accepted definition of a feral cat exists. Many facilities used waiting periods to evaluate whether a cat was feral by observing whether the cat became less afraid and evasive over time. Other indicators included the cat's response to touch with an inanimate object, and observation of the cat's social behavior in varying environments such as response to human contact, with a human nearby, or when moved to a quieter environment. The [American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#) defines community cats as either cats that were born and raised in the wild, or domestic cats that have been abandoned or lost and turned feral in order to survive.

Feral Cats

- A group of Feral Cats is referred to as a colony.
- According to the National Feline Research Council, “there are no rigorous estimates for the number of feral cats living in the United States. For years, various numbers have been quoted, but there’s been little to no empirical evidence to back them up. The best available estimate suggests that the population is probably about 32 million, roughly 76% of whom live in urban areas.”
- Our best “guess” is there are between 1,000 and 1,500 here in our community.

Feral Cats - Public Health

- According to the National Feline Research Council, Rabies in domestic animals was once relatively common; however, data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that nearly 93% of rabies cases in the U.S. now occur in wildlife. Between 1975 and 2018 (the most recent data available), the CDC has documented 115 cases of human rabies in the U.S., most of which were attributed to contact with wildlife. Of the 26 cases attributed to domestic animals, 25 (96%) were attributed to dogs (nearly all exposures occurred outside the U.S.). Just one human case since 1975 was attributed to contact with a cat.

Feral Cat Behavior

- The Animal Control Facility gets calls weekly about feral cats being a nuisance in the neighborhood. Some examples of behavior:
 - 1) Getting in the trash
 - 2) Digging in the yard
 - 3) Urine/Feces issues
 - 4) Climbing on cars scratching hoods/trunks

Feral Cats – AC Response

- There are no ordinances in the City of Leavenworth that deal with cats other than limiting the number.

Sec. 8-4. - Maximum number of dogs and cats permitted per residence.

“It is unlawful for any person in charge of a residence in the city to keep more than four dogs or cats over 120 days of age, or any combination of such animals exceeding six in number.”

Trap Program

- Animal Control has a Trap Program we make available to citizens to assist with feral cats.
 - Citizen gets a trap and captures the animal.
 - Brings it to AC and we take it from there.

Animal Control does not pick up Feral Cats while on routine patrol.

Options Moving Forward

- Trap, Neuter, and Release (TNR)
 - A lot of people advocate for a Trap, Neuter, and Release Program. Staff would trap the cat, arrange for it be spayed/neutered, and return it to where you captured it.
- Most complicated and problematic of the options.
 - Expense - \$75 at Hope Clinic (100 cats would be \$7,500)
 - Marketplace - \$200 - \$400 per animal (100 cats would be \$20,000)
 - Another AC Officer (?) \$40,000 (starting plus benefits)
 - More Traps (?)
 - More Food/Water
- Does Not solve the problem immediately
- Not universally accepted that it will work long term

Options Moving Forward – Cont.

- Is TNR Legal?
- K.S.A 21 6412 – Cruelty to Animals
 - (2) Knowingly abandoning any animal in any place without making provisions for its proper care.

Feral Cats

- The crux of the problem is the kindness and generosity of people. “little old ladies feeding stray cats.”

Feral Cats – Ordinance Options

- Registration and Vaccinations – We could treat cats the same as dogs and require registration and vaccinations.

Registration Fees for dogs:

- \$10 altered
- \$20 non-altered
- Must require proof of rabies vaccinations
- Total of 1,648 dogs registered this year in Leavenworth.

Ordinance Options – Cont.

- Leash Laws
- The City of Lansing does have a leash law for cats and the fine for off leash with court cost is \$140.00. They also require cats to be licensed \$7.50 for altered \$15.00 for unaltered.

Ordinance Options – Cont.

- **Sec. 8-276. - Feeding wildlife prohibited.**
- It is unlawful for any person to feed a wild animal unless licensed to do so, with the exception of small seed eating birds, squirrels, and chipmunks. It is unlawful to place out mineral blocks or salt licks unless they are intended for authorized domestic livestock. Any person, firm or corporation violating any of the provisions of this title shall upon conviction thereof be fined a sum not to exceed \$1,000.00.

(Code 1994, § 18-22; Ord. No. 7593, §§ 1, 2, 3-2-2004; Ord. No. 7901, § 1, 8-28-2012)

- Identify Feral Cats as a wild animal

Ordinance Options – Cont.

Section 205.310 Feeding of Feral Cats or Feral Cat Colonies — Permit Required. ^[1]

[Ord. No. 1712 §1, 10-26-2011; Ord. No. 1718 §1, 12-14-2011]

A.

Definition. As used in this Section, the term "feral cat" means any cat of any breed that is or becomes undomesticated, untamed and wild or is not a pet.

B.

Feeding Of Feral Cats Or Feral Cat Colony Without A Permit. No person or organization or entity shall provide food, water or forms of substance to a feral cat colony or individual feral cat without a feral cat colony caretaker permit issued by the City.

C.

Obtaining Feral Cat Colony Caretaker Permit. Any individual who is a legal resident of the City of Platte City over the age of eighteen (18) may submit an application with the City Clerk for a feral cat colony caretaker permit. Only nine (9) permits will be issued at one (1) period of time. The Board of Aldermen may when necessary issue additional permits. On an annual basis, the City Board of Aldermen will set the application and permit fee for a feral cat colony caretaker permit. The application shall be on a written form provided by the City Clerk and shall provide the following information:



Platte City, MO

Feral Cats

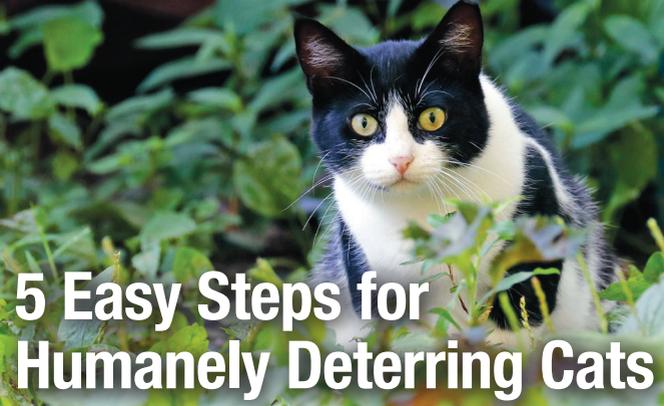
- Trap and Euthanasia Program – we could be much more aggressive in this area.
- Advocates will talk about “The Vacuum Effect”
 - “The Vacuum Effect has been documented worldwide in many species, including community cats. Animal Control’s typical response has been to catch and kill community cats. While this may temporarily reduce the number of community cats in a given area, it is ultimately counterproductive, as the population of cats rebounds. Other cats move into the newly available territory and continue to breed – this phenomenon is called the vacuum effect. It’s why catch and kill doesn’t work. TNR is the only effective and humane approach to address community cat populations.”

References

- <http://www.feralcatproject.org/myths-controversies>
- <https://www.havahart.com/articles/benefits-tnr-programs-euthanasia>
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/cat-wars-book-feral-cats-euthanized>
- <https://www.aspca.org/animal-homelessness/shelter-intake-and-surrender/closer-look-community-cats>
- <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2020/07/15/jeffers-on-iowa-considers-feral-cat-policy-allowing-trap-and-kill-alley-cat-allies/5442083002/>

Feral Cats – Educational Component

- See Handout



5 Easy Steps for Humanely Deterring Cats

1. Talk to your neighbors. Determine whether the cats are pets, stray, or feral, and if they have been spayed or neutered. If not, make an appointment with a community cat friendly veterinarian and find tips for TNR at alleycat.org/TNR.
2. Apply humane deterrents around your yard.
3. Put a tight lid on your trash can.
4. Block gaps in the foundation of sheds and porches.
5. Use a cover to keep paw prints off your car.

Local Organization Contact:



How to Live With Cats in Your Neighborhood



Who are community cats?

Community cats, also called feral cats, are unowned cats who live outdoors. Like indoor cats, they belong to the domestic cat species (*Felis catus*). However, community cats are generally not socialized, or friendly, to people, and are therefore unadoptable. They live full, healthy lives with their feline families, called colonies, in their outdoor homes.

Cats living outdoors is nothing new. It wasn't until kitty litter was invented in the late 1940s that some cats began living strictly indoors. But community cats truly thrive in their outdoor homes. The tips in this brochure will help you coexist with community cats.

Why do I see community cats in my neighborhood?

Community cats live outdoors. Like all animals, community cats settle where food and shelter are available, and they are naturally skilled at finding these on their own.

Because they are unsocialized, community cats can't live indoors with people, and are therefore unadoptable. Community cats should not be brought to animal shelters. Many shelters in the United States still kill the majority of community cats they take in. Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the humane, effective, and mainstream approach to addressing community cat populations.

What is Trap-Neuter-Return?

In a TNR program, community cats are humanely trapped, brought to a veterinarian to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, eartipped (the universal sign that a cat is part of a TNR program), and then returned to their outdoor homes. Kittens less than 8 weeks old can be socialized and then adopted. Adult cats who are socialized can be adopted, but they can also be returned outdoors, where they will continue to thrive.

TNR improves cats' lives and provides an effective, humane, and collaborative way for communities to coexist with cats. To learn more, including how to conduct TNR, visit alleycat.org/TNR.

What does the Vacuum Effect have to do with TNR?

The Vacuum Effect has been documented worldwide in many species, including community cats. Animal control's typical approach has been to catch and kill community cats. While this may temporarily reduce the number of community cats in a given area, it is ultimately counterproductive, as the population of cats rebounds. Other cats move into the newly available territory and continue to breed—this phenomenon is called the Vacuum Effect. It's why catch and kill doesn't work. TNR is the only effective and humane approach to address community cat populations. Learn more at alleycat.org/VacuumEffect.



What You Should Do If...

Cats are getting into your trash.

REASON: Cats are looking for food.

QUICK TIPS:

- **Secure your trash can with a tight lid or bungee cords.** This will protect your trash from wildlife as well.
- **Find out if neighbors are feeding the cats.** If they are, make sure they are following best practices. Learn more at alleycat.org/BestPractices.
- **Consider feeding the cats yourself if you find no regular caregiver.** Feeding cats using best practices will help ensure they don't get hungry enough to get into trash.



Feeding stations provide cats with a designated area to eat. Find tips for building or buying feeding stations at alleycat.org/FeedingStations.

Cats are digging in your garden.

REASON: It is a cat's natural instinct to dig in soft or loose soil, moss, mulch, or sand.

QUICK TIPS:

- **Put out fragrances that keep cats away.** Scatter fresh orange or lemon peels. Wet coffee grounds—which you may be able to get for free from coffee houses and fast food chains—and metal pans filled with vinegar also deter cats.
- **Make an outdoor litter box away from your garden** by tilling the soil or placing sand in an out-of-the-way spot in your yard. Clean the area frequently. Learn more at alleycat.org/OutdoorLitterBox
- **Use plastic carpet runners**, spike-side up, covered lightly in soil. They can be found at hardware or office supply stores. You can also set chicken wire firmly into the dirt (roll sharp edges under), arrange branches or sticks in a lattice pattern, or put wooden or plastic fencing over soil.
- **Place a “scat mat”**, a nonchemical cat deterrent consisting of plastic mats that are cut into smaller pieces and pressed into the soil (seen below). Each mat has flexible plastic spikes that are harmless to cats and other animals but discourage digging.



The “scat mat” is a safe deterrent to use in your garden.

- **Get motion-activated sprinklers.**
- **Cover exposed ground in flower beds** with large river rocks to prevent cats from digging. Rocks have the added benefit of deterring weeds.

Cats are lounging in your yard or porch, or on your car.

REASON: Cats tend to remain close to their food source.

QUICK TIPS:

- **Shift the cats' food source to a less central location**, where you won't mind if they hang out.
- **Apply fragrances that deter cats** around the edges of your yard, the tops of fences, and on any favorite digging areas or plants. See “Cats are digging in your garden” for a list of cat-detering fragrances.
- **Install an ultrasonic deterrent** or a motion-activated sprinkler. You can find humane deterrent products at garden supply stores.
- **Use a car cover** or place carpet runners on top of your car to avoid paw prints.



Cats who are missing the tip of one ear have been eartipped—the universal sign that a cat is part of a TNR program.

Cats are sleeping under your porch or in your shed.

REASON: The cats are looking for a dry, warm shelter away from the elements.

QUICK TIPS:

- **Provide covered shelter.** Or, if the cats have a caregiver, ask the caregiver to provide covered shelter. Shelters should be placed in quiet areas away from traffic. Find tips to build or buy shelters at alleycat.org/ShelterGallery.
- **Block or seal the area where the cats enter** with chicken wire or lattice, but only once you are absolutely certain no cats or kittens are inside.

Feeding cats attracts insects and wildlife.

REASON: Leaving food out for too long can attract other animals.

QUICK TIPS:

- **Feed the cats at the same time and location each day.** They should be given only enough food to finish in one sitting. If another person is caring for the cats, ask them to follow these guidelines. For more colony care guidelines, visit alleycat.org/ColonyCare.
- **Keep the feeding area neat** and free of leftover food and trash.

Cats are yowling, fighting, spraying, roaming, and having kittens.

REASON: These are mating behaviors. Once the cats are spayed or neutered, these behaviors will stop.

QUICK TIPS:

- **Conduct TNR for the cats.** TNR stops mating behaviors and ensures no new kittens are born.
- **Find more information about TNR at alleycat.org/TNR.** Get help from local community cat experts by requesting a list of Alley Cat Allies' Feral Friends Network members in your area at alleycat.org/FindFeralFriends.

Please remember: **Do not** take community cats to animals shelters. Because community cats are generally not socialized to people and are therefore unadoptable, they will be killed in many shelter environments. Instead, community cats should be neutered, vaccinated, and returned to their outdoor homes.