

**Township of Lawrence
County of Mercer**

Ordinance No. 2287-18

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE SALE OF DOGS AND CATS TO PROHIBIT THE SALE OF THOSE OBTAINED FROM COMMERCIAL BREEDING FACILITIES KNOWN AS PUPPY MILLS AND KITTEN MILLS

WHEREAS, a significant number of puppies and kittens sold at pet shops come from large-scale, commercial breeding facilities where the health and welfare of the animals are not adequately provided for (“puppy mills” and “kitten mills,” respectively). According to The Humane Society of the United States, it is estimated that 15,000 puppy mills produce more than 2,400,000 puppies a year in the United States and that most pet shop dogs and cats come from puppy mills and kitten mills.

WHEREAS, the documented abuses endemic to puppy and kitten mills include overbreeding, inbreeding; minimal to non-existent veterinary care; lack of adequate and nutritious food, water and shelter; lack of socialization; lack of adequate space; and lack of adequate exercise.

WHEREAS, the inhumane conditions in puppy and kitten mill facilities lead to health and behavioral issues in the animals bred in those facilities, which many consumers are unaware of when purchasing animals from pet shops due to both a lack of education on the issue and misleading tactics of pet shops in some cases. These health and behavioral issues, which may not present themselves until sometime after the purchase of the animals, can impose exorbitant financial and emotional costs on consumers.

WHEREAS, restricting the retail sale of puppies and kittens to only those that are sourced from shelters or rescue organizations is likely to decrease the demand for puppies and kittens bred in puppy and kitten mills, and is likely to increase demand for animals from animal shelters and rescue organizations.

WHEREAS, due in large part to pet overpopulation, more than 20,000 dogs and cats are euthanized in New Jersey animal shelters annually. Restricting the retail sale of puppies and kittens to only those that are sourced from animal shelters and rescue organizations will likely reduce pet overpopulation and thus the burden on such agencies and financial costs on local taxpayers.

WHEREAS, across the country, thousands of independent pet shops as well as large chains operate profitably with a business model focused on the sale of pet services and supplies and not on the sale of dogs and cats. Many of these shops collaborate with local animal shelters and rescue organizations to offer space and support for showcasing adoptable homeless pets on their premises.

WHEREAS, the Township Council believes it is in the best interests of this Township to adopt reasonable regulations to protect the citizens of the Township who may purchase cats or dogs from a pet shop or other business establishment, help prevent inhumane breeding conditions, and promote community awareness of animal welfare in the Township.

Section 1. Definitions

Animal care facility means an animal control center or animal shelter, maintained by or under contract with any state, county, or municipality, whose mission and practice is, in whole, or significant part, the rescue and placement of animals in permanent homes or rescue organizations.

Animal rescue organization means any not-for-profit organization which has tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, whose mission and practice is, in whole or in significant part, the rescue and placement of animals in permanent homes.

Cat means a member of the species of domestic cat, *Felis catus*.

Dog means a member of the species of domestic dog, *Canis familiaris*.

Offer for sale means to sell, offer for sale or adoption, advertise for the sale of, barter, auction, give away or otherwise dispose of a dog or cat.

Pet shop means a retail establishment where dogs and cats are sold, exchanged, bartered or offered for sale as pet animals to the general public at retail. Such definition shall not include an animal care facility or animal rescue organization, as defined.

Section 2. Restrictions on the Sale of Animals

- (1) A pet shop may offer for sale only those dogs and cats that the pet shop has obtained from or displays in cooperation with:**
 - (a) An animal care facility; or**
 - (b) An animal rescue organization**
- (2) A pet shop shall not offer for sale a dog or cat that is younger than eight weeks old.**

Section 3. Record Keeping and Disclosure

A pet shop shall maintain records stating the name and address of the animal care facility or animal rescue organization that each cat or dog was obtained from for at least two years following the date of acquisition. Such records shall be made available, immediately upon request, to Township Police, Health Officer, Animal Control Officer or their agent, and no later than June 1 of each year, to the Municipal Clerk's Office. Each pet shop shall display on each cage a label stating the name and address of the animal care facility or animal rescue organization of each animal kept in the cage.

Section 4. Severability

If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance shall be declared invalid for any reason whatsoever, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance which shall continue in full force and effect, and to this end the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

Section 5. Effective Date

This ordinance shall become effective 20 days after passage.

Adopted: February 20, 2018

RECORD OF VOTE

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Ms. Lewis	X						X
Dr. Maffei				X			
Mr. Powers	X					X	
Mayor Bobbitt	X						