

ORDINANCE # _____

AN ORDINANCE OF _____ TOWNSHIP¹, PA
TO PERMIT THE MANAGED CARE OF COMMUNITY (FERAL OR STRAY) CATS

Section 1. Purpose.

To permit implementation of a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program in _____ Township (the “Township”) for the purpose of managing the population of community (feral or stray) cats, protecting public health, benefitting the quality of life for residents, and ensuring the humane treatment of community (feral or stray) cats. This ordinance is intended to promote the strong policy of the Township in favor of TNR as the optimal and most humane way to manage community cats, sometimes known as feral or stray cats.

Section 2. Definitions.

For the purpose of this Ordinance, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth in this Section. When not inconsistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future and the past, words in the plural number include the singular, and words in the singular number include the plural.

Animal Control Agency means any agency or person, including the Animal Warden and the Police Department, authorized by law to implement animal control laws and provide animal care and control on behalf of the Township.

Caretaker means any person who regularly provides food and water to a community cat or a community cat colony. A caretaker shall not be considered an owner.

Eartip means a mark identifying a community cat as having been sterilized, specifically the removal of a quarter inch off the tip of the cat’s left ear in a straight line cut while the cat is anesthetized.

Feral cat means a cat that is not socialized to humans and is not an owned cat.

Community Cat means either a feral cat or a stray cat.

Community cat colony and **colony** mean a group of feral or stray cats that congregate, more or less together as a unit and share a common food source.

¹ Suitable for any municipality within the Commonwealth.

Nuisance means conduct by a community cat that disturbs the peace, including (a) habitually or continually howling or making loud noises and (b) habitually and significantly destroying property.

Owned cat means a cat that is a companion to a person, is regularly fed and sheltered in that same person's habitation and often carries visible indicia of ownership, including a collar, tag or microchip.

Sterilize means to spray or neuter.

Stray cat means a cat that is socialized to humans and is not an owned cat.

TNR means the method of managing community cats known as Trap-Neuter-Return.

TNR Program means a program pursuant to which one or more community cats are trapped, sterilized, vaccinated against rabies, eartipped, and returned to the location where they were captured.

Section 3. Management of Community Cat Colonies.

- 3.1 A TNR Program shall be permitted and Caretakers shall be entitled to maintain one or more community cats or community cat colonies in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Ordinance.
- 3.2 **Caretaker Requirements.** It shall be the responsibility of a Caretaker to make reasonable efforts to trap all cats in a colony and have all trapped cats sterilized, vaccinated against rabies and eartipped by a licensed veterinarian.
- 3.3 **Disposition of Colony Cats.** An Animal Control Agency that has trapped or received a community cat from within the Township shall take reasonable steps to notify all Caretakers of the description and sex of the cat and of the location where the cat was captured. The Animal Control Agency should attempt to scan the cat for a microchip, and the Agency should post a conspicuous notice and photo of the cat on the Township website for fourteen (14) consecutive days. Caretakers shall have up to five (5) business days after the end of the aforesaid period of notification to arrange for the cat to be retrieved. If the Caretaker of the colony from which the cat was removed can be located with reasonable efforts, the cat shall be returned to the Caretaker. If not, the cat shall be placed in the adoption program of the Animal Control Agency or, in the absence of such a program, shall be given to the local SPCA.

Section 4. Ordinance Enforcement.

- 4.1 Nothing in this Ordinance shall interfere with the right of the Township or a Humane Society Police Officer to prosecute under the Pennsylvania Animal Cruelty Law, 18 PA. Cons. Stat. Ann § 5511(c) (which makes abandonment of any animal a criminal offense), any person or entity that abandons a cat within the Township, thereby adding to the

number of cats. The return of community cats to the location where they were captured by Caretakers shall not be considered abandonment. Cats may be relocated rather than returned if they occupy ecologically sensitive areas or areas where they are at imminent risk of harm, such as demolition sites or areas where nuisance complaints have escalated and remain unresolved. Appropriate relocation strategies would not be considered abandonment.

- 4.2 Nothing in this Ordinance shall interfere with the right of the Township or an Animal Control Agency to investigate any nuisance complaint allegedly caused by a community cat or community cat colony.
- 4.3 A Caretaker in compliance with this Ordinance shall be exempt from all other ordinances of the Township that impose requirements on persons that own, keep, harbor, or have custody of a community cat.