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City scraps pit bull ordinance in wake of public criticism of breed-specific legislation

BY AMIE JO SCHAENZER
of the Northwestern

Pit bulls will continue to be on the same playing field as other breeds in Oshkosh as the city has decided to pull breed-specific legislation from proposed animal ordinance changes.

After completing more research into the topic and receiving community feedback, most of which was from people opposed to breed-specific legislation, health director Paul Spiegel said he would request the measure be pulled from proposed animal ordinance changes during a meeting Thursday with the work group that has been spearheading the effort.

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The proposed legislation would have required owners of pit bulls, and other related breeds, to either complete an American Kennel Club class or obtain a special license in order for the dogs to stay within the city limits. The move was meant to better protect the community against pit bull bites, which have increased over the years, Spiegel said.

Another major change to the ordinance, which would have required pet owners in the city to spay and neuter their animals, will also be removed from the proposal. The Oshkosh Area Humane Society had been working with the city to include the mandatory spaying and neuter clause as a way to cut back on the unnecessary euthanizing of animals, in particular, cats, said Joni Geiger, OAHS executive director.

Changes to Oshkosh's animal ordinances have been in the works over the past two years for the purpose of updating language to the city's ordinance, a document that had basically been left untouched over the past decade, Spiegel said.

For more read Thursday's Northwestern.
