


SUBJECT: PROHIBITION OF PET RENTAL FRANCHISES

INITIATED BY: MAYOR JEFFREY PRANG
(Jake Stevens, Council Deputy) 

MAYOR PRO TEM ABBE LAND
(Corri Planck, Council Deputy) 

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will consider adopting a resolution in opposition to commercial pet rental franchises and directing the Community Development Director to amend land use regulations to establish prohibitions against the commercial "rental" of any pet within the City of West Hollywood.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 08-____, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD IN OPPOSITION TO COMMERCIAL PET RENTAL FRANCHISES.
2. Direct the Community Development Director and City Planning Manager to amend land use regulations to establish prohibitions against the issuance of permits for pet-rental franchises in the City of West Hollywood and report progress back to the City Council within 90 days.

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS:

FlexPetz.com is a commercial, shared-ownership enterprise that seeks to provide customers who cannot make a commitment to owning a pet "guilt-free, worry free and commitment free" opportunities to rent dogs. FlexPetz.com dogs are temporarily housed in a group facility, selected by FlexPetz.com patrons from online lists and are then delivered for a rental period ranging from several hours to several days. Currently operating franchises in New York, London and possibly expanding to City-adjacent locations, the City Council can work to protect the value of pets in society by prohibiting FlexPetz.com and similar commercial pet-rental franchises from operating in West Hollywood.

The National Federation of Humane Societies has issued a position statement against pet rental franchises in the interest of eliminating practices that devalue the worth and sanctity of animals. Steve Putnam, Executive Director of the National Federation of Humane Societies and the organization's Corporate

Policies Committee oppose the practices of FlexPetz.com and comparable organizations simply because “pets are not commodities” and these commercial ventures “diminish their worth.”

Moreover, the National Federation of Humane Societies states that “Pets seek [human] companionship and provide solace. All animals need a secure, stable routine and renting pets by the hour or day diminishes this need.” The Los Angeles Southeast Area Animal Control Authority has also condemned this abuse of the human-animal bond and is currently researching the larger pet-rental industry.

The City of West Hollywood has been a leader in the animal welfare movement and this initiative will promote responsible pet care and help raise awareness about the detrimental impacts of commercial pet-rental enterprises on companion animal welfare.

ALTERNATIVES:

None.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020:

This item is consistent with West Hollywood’s ongoing strategic goals of community education and encouraging mutually beneficial relationships between businesses and City residents.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

Office of Mayor Jeffrey Prang, Community Development Department.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Text of Proposed Resolution NO. 08-_____ Opposing Commercial Pet Rental Franchises
2. National Federation of Humane Societies position statement of opposition to Pet Rental Franchises

RESOLUTION NO. 08- 3751

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL IN OPPOSITION
TO COMMERCIAL PET RENTAL FRANCHISES

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DOES HEREBY
RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, it is in the common interest to eliminate practices that devalue the worth and sanctity of animals in society; and

WHEREAS, FlexPetz.com and similar commercial pet-rental enterprises seek to provide customers a guilt, worry and commitment-free opportunity to rent animal companions for periods ranging from several hours to several days; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of Humane Societies has found that all animals need a secure, stable routine and renting pets by the hour or day diminishes this need; and

WHEREAS, the City of West Hollywood concurs with the position of the National Federation of Humane Societies that pets are not commodities and these commercial ventures diminish their worth; and

WHEREAS, the City of West Hollywood has been a leader in the animal welfare movement and remains committed to promoting responsible pet care; and

WHEREAS, the City of West Hollywood is prepared to act in the interest of limiting the detrimental impacts of commercial pet-rental enterprises on companion animal welfare by prohibiting pet-rental franchises in the City; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of West Hollywood opposes commercial pet rental franchises, based on the fundamental need to respect the value of companion animals as independent, living beings and not as commercial goods.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 3RD DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2008.

National Federation of Humane Societies

Position Statement on Pet Renting.

10/24/2008

The National Federation of Humane Societies has pledged to support companion animal welfare. We work to eliminate practices devaluing the sanctity of animals. The Federation opposes the renting of companion animals because the practice diminishes their worth. Pets are not commodities; they are family members. Pets seek our companionship and provide solace. All animals and humans need a secure, stable routine. Renting pets by the hour or day undermines this need.

As animal welfare professionals we work tirelessly to promote responsible pet care and the deep bond between human and animal. Providing short-term foster care for a homeless pet from your local animal care organization is an easy way for people to enjoy the companionship of a pet. All involved benefit when an animal is provided reliable foster care or a permanent home.