

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendation to establish a policy limiting the acceptance of anonymous complaints for Code Enforcement and Domestic Animal Services code violations

OBJECTIVE: For the Board of County Commissioners to establish a policy limiting the acceptance of anonymous complaints and specifying when anonymous complaints may be accepted.

CONSIDERATIONS: At the Board of County Commissioners meeting held on January 22, 2013, the Board directed that a policy be brought back for consideration that implements limitations on when an anonymous complaint may be accepted in the Code Enforcement Department and the Domestic Animal Services Department.

The practice of accepting anonymous complaints increases the likelihood of frivolous complaints and complaints filed with ill-will or malice. Anonymous complaints can make it difficult to assess the credibility of the facts and evidence on which the complaint is based. In addition, the credibility of the complaint is often difficult to ascertain and/or challenge by the individual against whom the complaint is filed.

Based on the Board's direction at the January 22nd meeting, the following policy is proposed for the handling of anonymous Code Enforcement and Domestic Animal Services complaints:

1. There shall be no investigation of anonymous complaints relating to code enforcement or domestic animal services ordinance violations, except as provided below.
2. Staff investigation of anonymous complaints is limited to emergency situations that immediately threaten public health and safety, situations that could cause catastrophic consequences to citizens, animals, or the environment, and allegations of animal neglect and abuse wherein the complainant can provide credible details to substantiate the claim. Staff shall review the anonymous complaint to determine if such an emergency situation exists and seek approval of the Supervisor prior to proceeding.
3. A Resident may file an anonymous complaint with a County Commissioner. The alleged violation will be routed to the Commissioner of the district where alleged

violation takes place. The District Commissioner may file the anonymous complaint on behalf of a constituent.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact associated with this executive summary.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPACT: There is no Growth Management impact associated with this Executive Summary.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS: This item is legally sufficient, and requires a majority vote for Board action. -JW

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board of County Commissioners approves the policy described above for limiting the acceptance of anonymous complaints and specifying when anonymous complaints may be accepted.

PREPARED BY: Commissioner Tom Henning