

Dear Commissioners,

The Georgia Canine Coalition, Inc. (GCC) was asked by our members who live in Forsyth County to express their concern over the proposed ordinance to ban all forms of tethering in Forsyth County except for three hours a day.

The Georgia Canine Coalition, Inc. is the collective voice of dog clubs and dog owners dedicated to advancing and protecting responsible dog ownership in the State of Georgia through education, communication and legislation.

While the GCC does not believe in dogs being tethered without any socialization with humans, proper food, water and shelter, there are ordinances already in place both on a local and state level to address this neglect.

There are times when tethering is necessary and it should be an option for the residents of Forsyth. Dogs that are participating in hunting and field events are often tethered during the event or hunting trip. Residents who cannot afford a fence, use a tether at various times during the day in addition to walking their dogs. Eliminating tethering as an option may result in an increase in the number of animals surrendered to Animal Control.

A number of counties have passed anti-tethering ordinances only to find that a complete ban on tethering does not work. Gwinnett County passed an anti-tethering ordinance two years ago and last Fall started the process of changing that ordinance to allow for some tethering. If you are interested in the reasoning behind this decision, I would recommend calling and talking with Lt. Mary Lou Respass, Director of Gwinnet's Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center.

Those who tell you that someone can put fencing in for a few hundred dollars are misleading you. You might be able to use chicken wire and put in a small fence for that amount, but then you could be in violation of county zoning ordinances on the fence material, and it would be unlikely to reliably restrain anything other than small dogs. A reasonable fence will cost from \$1,000.00 and up. This may not be financially feasible for some of your residents, especially those on a fixed income.

Again, if your concern is the care a tethered animal receives, Forsyth and the State of Georgia already have ordinances and laws to enforce care and conditions of animals. The GCC and our members in Forsyth urge you to not adopt any new ordinances, but instead to use current ordinances and state law to address any problems that are seen concerning tethering a dog.

Sincerely,

Gail LaBerge  
President