

October 20, 2016

Honorable Mayor Simmons, Vice Mayor McGovern, and Councilors,

Upon viewing Monday night's Council meeting, we would like to clarify the intent of our previous letter and amendment proposal. We did not intend to convey that there was an agreed-upon compromise already in place. We attempted, via our cover letter, to put forth our perspective coming out of the meeting, and, via our proposal, to address in good faith the concerns that we heard from the Vice Mayor and the MSPCA representatives during our conversation.

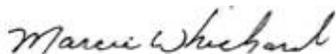
Through our conversations with Vice Mayor McGovern and the MSPCA, it is clear that everyone involved in these discussions shares a commitment to the care and well-being of companion animals and the objective of ending substandard breeding practices. To that end, we – Petco and PetSmart, longstanding members of the Cambridge community whose ability to partner with prospective pet owners hangs in the balance – felt compelled to propose an amendment that positions Cambridge to be a leader in this effort by establishing strict sourcing regulations rather than imposing a blanket sales prohibition.

This latest proposal that we sent to the Council is much more comprehensive than our initial amended proposal. The first iteration that we sent mirrored a bill that the MSPCA has pending before the state legislature, but after hearing the Cambridge-specific concerns at the September 29 meeting, we updated our proposal to address them. It was and remains our hope that this proposal could be part of further discussion with the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilors on this issue.

A number of misconceptions persist about the proposed ordinance. Many of the speakers, all Cambridge residents, who testified at the Ordinance Committee hearing spoke exclusively about dog breeding. Further, the emails that Cambridge residents sent to the Council were all about the protection of dogs and cats, which Petco and PetSmart do not sell. We have heard the suggestion that this ordinance mirrors one passed earlier this year in Boston, which was exclusive to the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits, implicating only a single store that sold a small number of rabbits per year. Even the HSUS has indicated that they do not support a ban on the sale of animals beyond those included in the Boston ordinance. While we strongly agree that all animals deserve protection, we believe that the issue of substandard breeding practices can be addressed effectively in Cambridge through strong breeder requirements.

As we stated in our previous letter, we have been and will continue to be active proponents of adoption and will continue to offer our stores as venues for local shelters and rescues to conduct adoptions for many types of animals. Whether the proposed amendment suggested by Vice Mayor McGovern is passed, our proposed amendment is passed, or no amendment is passed, we will still be active proponents of adoption, and we will continue to serve as resources for pet-loving Cambridge citizens.

Thank you for your consideration as you continue to deliberate on this important issue.



Marcie Whichard
Vice President, Industry and Public Affairs
Petco



Maureen Kats
Senior Counsel and Government Affairs
PetSmart