

Legalizing Mini Pigs

Having outdated ordinances amended to exclude mini pigs from prohibited pets

What info do you need to start the process?

This detailed guide will walk you through the process of having outdated or nonexistent ordinances amended or put in place to protect your pig.



Did you know that mini pigs aren't new to the United States, but most ordinances were put into place long before they were? Terms like livestock or swine are used frequently to describe production pigs whereas mini pig has become an acceptable word used to describe the pigs frequently seen as pets. Mini is not a breed of pig, simply an adjective to differentiate the difference between the farm pig and their cousin, the mini pig. There are several breeds that fit into this category such as potbellied pig, kune-kune and most importantly, the mixed breeds, which is what we see most nowadays.



Ordinance

Zoning	The department typically in charge of the type of property you have
Law	The rules/regulations that govern the area in which you live
Protecting	Ensuring your pig is safe from being seized
Pet	A companion animal, an animal treated as a member of the family
Livestock	An animal used for a purpose or money, typically bred for food



This guide was created by the Pig Advocates League team as a way to help those who are attempting to have outdated ordinances amended.

Opposition citing reasons why pigs should not be allowed within city limits

Whether they're city council members, state representatives or U.S. Senators, elected officials care (or ought to care) what their constituents think. By sending letters and e-mails supporting pro-animal measures that are already on the legislative agenda, you can help convince these politicians that the voters, who put them in office, want to see animals protected from cruelty and neglect. And if there are no pro-animal items on the agenda, you can help change that. But first, you'll need to do some homework. These officials need to know why it is important to you to have the city recognize your pig or someone's pig as a companion pet and not livestock. This might not concern them in the grand scheme of things, but you need to research first to see what ordinances are already in place.



Potbellied pigs are the most common "pet" pig

Many years ago, when Canadian Keith Connell imported the first potbellied pigs into North America, he had no idea what he had started. Originally, he intended to supply the pigs to zoos, but a private buyer interested in the pigs as pets started the porcine pets on their way to worldwide distribution and fame. In 1986, when the first potbellies were sold into the U.S., their market price ran well into the thousands of dollars. Recently, as the breeder market became satisfied, the price of pets has come down to match that of pedigreed dogs and cats, making them an affordable alternative to canine and feline pets.



This is one of the many pig rescues scattered across the US. There are hundreds of people who have added "just one more" pig to their household to help a pig in need. YOU need to be sure a pig is the right pet for you BEFORE you get one. Visit any of the pig rescues to help you determine if a pig is right for you and your family.

Pig Rescues

As "pet pigs" became the trendy pet to have, backyard breeders started popping up everywhere. Unfortunately, many advertise unrealistic sizes of mature "mini pigs" which left thousands needing new homes for various reasons. The number 1 reason is that the pig grew much larger than anticipated. The term "mini" can be confusing, but it's used to distinguish the difference between a farm pig and a smaller version. Pig rescues have been cleaning up the messes of others since potbellied pigs were introduced to the US. Several have over 100 pigs that they care for everyday, new rescues are being established while others are struggling to stay afloat. Research, research, research before you get a pig.

Lay the groundwork

Before approaching an elected official (which your city council is) to advocate for specific legislation/ordinance amendments:



*Always be professional
when discussing your
situation with a city
official.*

- Strive to be well informed about the issue so that you come across as credible and knowledgeable. This will require research and possibly contacting others who have worked on similar campaigns in the past.
- Research current relevant laws via the Internet or your local library.
- Find out if there is anyone else in your area working on the same issue — if so, join them, so that efforts will not be duplicated.
- Get a feel for the legislative process. For example, if you are contemplating a county-wide ordinance, contact the county council office information on enacting legislation. Then attend an open council meeting to become familiar with how they function.
- Establish rapport with legislators' support staff early on — they are often more accessible than the legislators and can provide good information. Keep all contact brief and professional, remembering to thank them for their time and assistance.

Education

Educating yourself and arming yourself with the means to speak intelligently on behalf of pigs will serve you well. Going in unprepared with inaccurate "facts" or information that isn't applicable will not help. Be direct, concise and accurate. Know what ordinances are in place for surrounding areas so you can reference their ordinances and look up the meeting minutes from the revision to that city's ordinance and see what was presented. Having too much information at your disposal has never been a problem. Overwhelming the council with unneeded information is NOT a good thing, so make an outline with key points you want to make and stick to that. Should there be any questions, you want to be able to reference the answers if you do not know off hand. And if you cannot find what they're asking for, ask for an extension or delay so you are better able to respond with accurate information. We can help you research and find the information your city council may ask for if it's not already here.

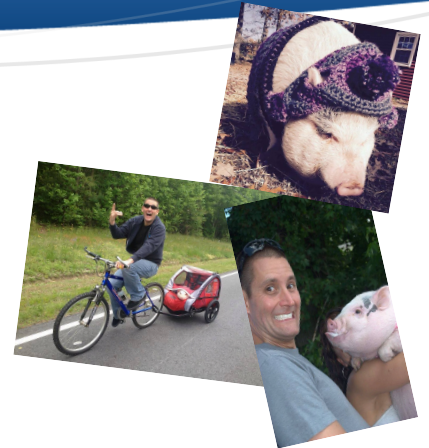


*Educating yourself
allows you the ability to
answer questions that
may arise.*

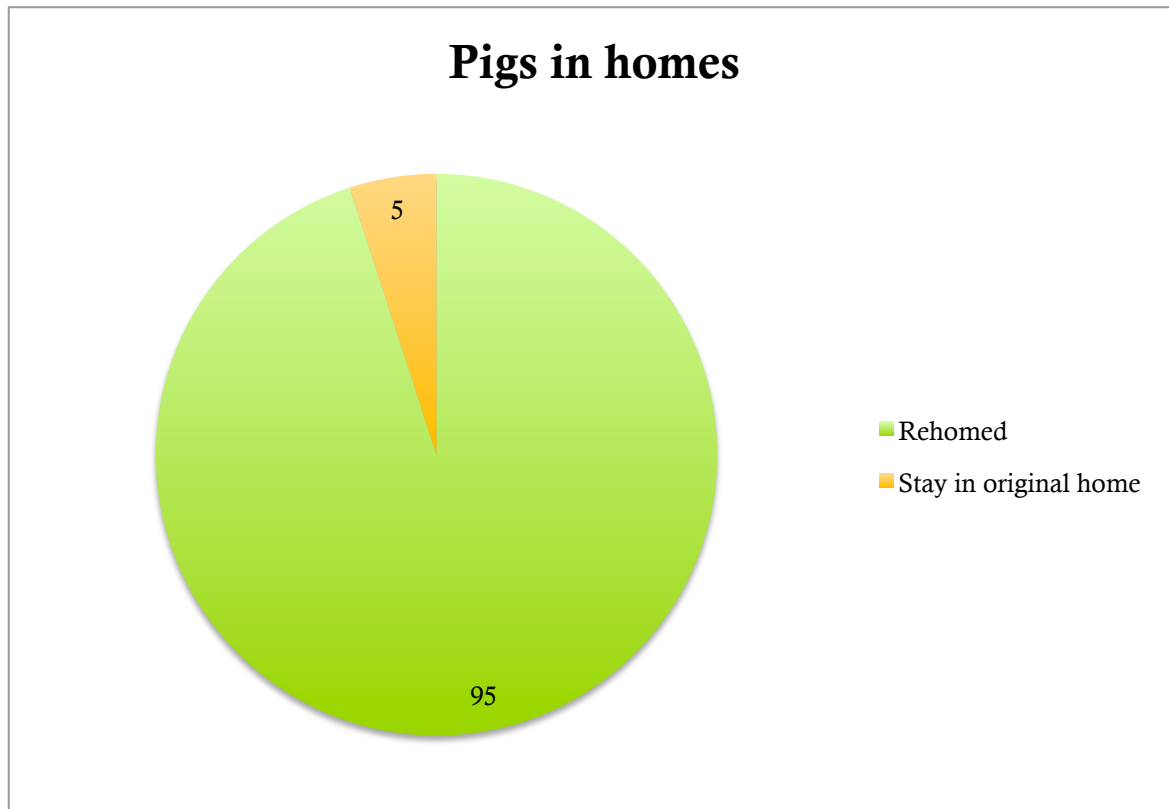
- Obtain endorsements from influential individuals and organizations in your community.
- Prepare well-researched and well-written informational packets that include a factsheet on the proposed reform and, if possible, a list of endorsements.
- Find advocates in each district and ask them to contact their legislators. Ask constituents to write polite letters to their legislators that demonstrate support for the proposed legislation. Letters that use the constituent's own words, rather than form letters, postcards or e-mails, will be taken more seriously. Personal letters, preferably sent through the mail, are generally given more weight than e-mails. Advocates can also write letters to the editor of their local newspapers to garner more support for the effort.

Make Contact

Lobbying is nearly impossible without personal contact and you are not trying to change a statewide bill, your target is people on the city council, so they typically have an office somewhere within the city, call the councilman's office and schedule an appointment. Making this initial contact will allow you to gauge how the other councilmen may react to your proposal. While you may feel most comfortable attending the appointment as part of a group, it is advisable to go alone or with just a few others. Appoint one person to be the main spokesperson. The following pointers will help the visit go smoothly:



- Dress professionally.
- Identify yourself as a concerned citizen, pig lover, constituent, business owner, voter or whatever may apply. Remember that legislators prefer to get feedback from people who vote, rather than organized lobbyists.
- Be positive, brief and to the point, supporting your argument with facts. Provide just enough background information to explain the proposal, as public officials are busy and may know little or nothing about the issue. Explain how the proposed bill will have a positive impact on their constituents. Consider showing a short video if it would help illustrate the issue. (We can help you with that as well, we already have one in the works)
- State clearly what you want the representative to do — sponsor a bill, vote no on an anti-animal amendment, etc. In this case, you would like his/her support in amending an outdated ordinance or having an ordinance put in place to protect your pig.
- Offer to work to publicize the issue and find additional support.
- Leave a packet of information that contains a clear, concise summary of your proposal.
- Always follow-up with a personal thank you to the councilman and support staff after every visit or positive action taken by the legislator.
- If you are speaking publicly at a council meeting or committee hearing, follow the above procedures, keeping your presentation clear and concise.



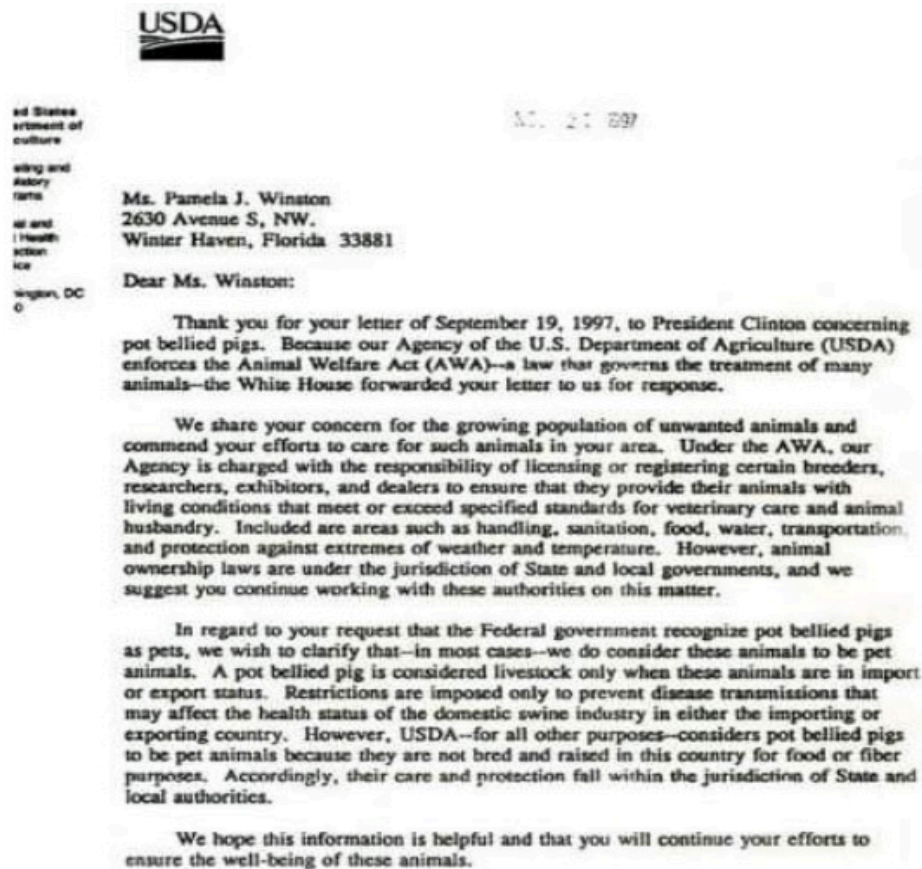
Based on information collected over the last several years, it has been estimated that 95% of pigs are rehomed before their 1st birthday. Some of these pigs are rehomed because of zoning restrictions forbidding them to live within city limits. This is something we hope to change.

Information YOU need to research for your specific area of the country

During each public hearing, citizens are invited to speak in support of, or in opposition, to each request. In preparing a presentation, groups or communities sharing similar concerns are encouraged to select representatives to address the Board or Commission. This preparation will assure that all opinions are expressed while avoiding repetitive comments. The public hearing begins with a presentation of the request by a staff member. The applicant then discusses the case. Individuals wishing to speak to the request present their views and the applicant will be permitted closing remarks. The Commission and Board are experienced in balancing development and in protecting area neighborhoods and adjacent properties. They are knowledgeable about traffic, drainage and land transition issues throughout the County. It is important for citizens to provide specific comments about how the request will affect their neighborhood. This is how the system is designed to work. Each voice or concern has the opportunity to speak and plead their case either for or against the ordinance being amended.

One of the first things that needs to be addressed is the definition of livestock and the definition of a pet. (see pictures below from the online Oxford dictionary) The use of word swine or pigs typically refers to meat animals when referring to livestock, potbelly pigs are not meat animals, therefore shouldn't be classified in the same livestock category. They provide nothing but companionship. Livestock indicates there is an underlying use from the animal. Cows and milk, pigs and meat, etc. The USDA does not regulate potbellied pigs, as they're not used as a food source.

There is the USDA letter that reflects their view, but it is an older letter and I am in the process of writing to them to get this clarified and updated.



Sincerely,

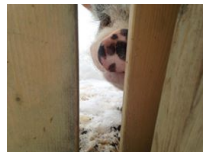
Terry L. Medley
Administrator

The latest statement from the USDA in response to a question asking whether miniature potbellied pigs are considered livestock or pets?

For the purposes of USDA's animal disease surveillance, response, and control activities, as well as our import/export requirements, pot-bellied pigs are classified as "swine," which are considered "livestock" under the broad authority of the Animal Health Protection Act. Definitions and associated regulations for our animal disease regulatory programs are primarily found in title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Some species of animals are commonly kept as household pets but are susceptible to diseases that are subject to control or eradication by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). For example, pot-bellied pigs are susceptible to the same diseases as farm-raised swine, such as pseudorabies. Further information about specific diseases of concern can be found

at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information>

APHIS also enforces the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The AWA requires that minimum standards of care and treatment be provided for certain, warm-blooded animals bred for commercial sale, used in research, transported commercially, or exhibited to the public. Although pot-bellied pigs intended for use as food or fiber would be exempt from AWA regulation, if the animals are being used for a purpose covered by the AWA—for exhibition or research, for example—they would be subject to AWA regulation. However, the AWA does not cover pot-bellied pigs used as companion animals or pets.



One of the issues I have seen is property value decline is conjecture and unsubstantiated. The Appraisers association lists factors, none of which address neighboring pets. On the property values issue, I would recommend adding a few pics of the front, sides and back of the property to show there is no evidence of any animal on the property and no destruction or nuisance associated with having a pig as a pet. I would take pictures of inside accommodations for your pig as well as outside areas. They need to understand this is a pet, certainly not a conventional pet, but a pet nonetheless. Include pictures of your family with you pig, they need to see that pigs aren't nuisance animals, but friendly and adapt to a household much like conventional animals do. Pigs do dig, that is a fact, but a pig rooting up some of YOUR yard isn't problematic, I wouldn't highlight the rooting as a benefit, but certainly include that you have set aside an area for your pig to "be a pig" in your packet so that is addressed and off the table as a possible opposition.

Another issue I've seen people complain about on various threads is the smell of pigs. As pig owners, we know pigs don't sweat or emit a foul odor. Pet pigs and a pig farm are two separate entities and shouldn't be compared. Having 1,2, even 4 pigs will not cause an odor. As a responsible pet owner, you definitely need to be aware of animal waste ordinances and do your part to clean up after your pig. Feces in itself isn't a pleasant smell and this shouldn't be a reason why a pig isn't allowed. All animals urinate and defecate and owners need to be sure to clean up after their animals.

State or local governments typically regulate companion and farm animals. Local municipalities also enforce zoning laws, which may or may not classify pot-bellied pigs as agricultural animals. Accordingly, we suggest that you contact authorities in your State and local government offices for information about any laws that apply to pot-bellied pigs. You can find contact information on the right side of the U.S. Government's official Web portal, www.usa.gov.

pet 
noun | \ˈpet\

Definition of PET

Popularity: Bottom 50% of words

- 1 a : a pampered and usually spoiled child
b : a person who is treated with unusual kindness or consideration : **DARLING**
- 2 : a domesticated animal kept for pleasure rather than utility

livestock 
noun | live-stock | \lɪv-ˈstɒk\

Simple Definition of LIVESTOCK

Popularity: Bottom 50% of words

: farm animals (such as cows, horses, and pigs) that are kept, raised, and used by people

Full Definition of LIVESTOCK

: animals kept or raised for use or pleasure; *especially* : farm animals kept for use and profit

Our "pet" pigs obviously do not serve any other purpose other than a companion pet.

Some cities allow pigs while the HOA does not. You are responsible for checking out any agreements you sign when moving into a house or neighborhood, if you moved to an area where there is a homeowners association, be sure to look at the pet section and try and handle that before you get a pig, to save on court costs and heartbreak. You cannot break the rules because you decide you want a pet pig and they've already forbid that type of pet. You can ask beforehand for a waiver, but do not try to "hide" a pig, eventually you will be caught and then you'll have to find another home or fight to keep your pig.

An additional comment I've seen posted is regarding aggression and pigs. ANY animal has the potential to be aggressive without proper training. Pigs are no different. I would collect information from animal control about animal bites over the last several years and compare that to how many of those were bites from a pig. (Hopefully that number will be zero). Pigs are not known to be aggressive animals by nature, feral pigs have been known to be aggressive, but that's to protect themselves, pigs don't seek trouble under routine circumstances. Take a video of your pig playing in the yard, ask others to share their videos of their pigs playing with their families, other pigs, at community events, like kiss the pig events, or pigs that visit nursing facilities, etc. Show them domesticated pigs don't typically have aggression like wild animals do.

If you have started a petition on change.org, I would include that in your packet you submit to your county/city. I would also ask supporters to email you, neighbors to write letters of support and have any supporters accompany you to the hearing. The city/county needs to know you're not alone. There are 1000's of other people who love pigs and treat them as part of the family. Ask others in the pig community to share stories and pictures that can be included. The elected officials may need to be educated on how smart pigs are or the fact they bond with their human family and grieve when removed. Let them know about the pig community and educational resources available to you, them and anyone else who is considering getting a pig as a pet.

Provide documentation from your vet with a clean bill of health. Check the other pet restrictions and be sure if they're required to have vaccinations so that your pig is in compliance. Be sure to check the animal welfare rules to ensure you have all the appropriate accommodations your city/county requires. Make sure they know the pig is contained, lives IN the house although may have accommodations outside for extreme temperatures. Due diligence will help you with your case. Checking rules and restrictions for other animals will point you in the direction you need to go. Although a pig is not a dog, in terms of having a pet, they're treated much the same, so be sure you know the ordinances for dogs and be sure that you have done everything you can to be compliant with the rules pertaining to other domesticated/traditional pets.

Be sure to let them know other cities/counties DO allow pet pigs within city limits.
<http://www.ljworld.com/news/2012/jan/some-pigs-city-allows-potbellied-swines-pets>

Here are some other success stories you may want to include in your packet
<http://articles.latimes.com/1997/dec/pigstays/local/me>
<http://abcnews.go.com/US/florida-family-fights-potbellied-pet-pig/story>
<http://wilbursardo.com>
http://www.nbcnews.com/us_news-life/t/swine-get-break-colorado-springs
<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Familys-pot-bellied-pig-can-stay-despite>
<http://tucsoncitizen.com/2007/board-ruling-lets-family-keep-beloved-pet-pig>
<http://www.newspressnow.com/news/locals-tjoseph-allows-petpigs>
<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/nov/03/local/la-me-sierramadre-pig>

Look up ordinances in neighboring cities in your area, see if any allow pigs and include those cities in your packet. Collect additional information about those cities such as licensing requirements and fees. Offer to be a mentor in your area for other pig parents, let the city know you're passionate and care about these animals like they are your children and how the pig community is strong and helps each other. Ask for regulations in breeding of pigs in your area, discuss the amount of space, realistically, a pig needs. Another concern is that animal controls are not prepared to handle pigs in their facilities and those hard concrete floors aren't ideal for pigs either. Come up with useful alternatives, find a network of foster parents in your area so the city can call prepared and knowledgeable people to help care for pigs that are found to be strays or unwanted. Prepare with shelter guides for the animal control centers in your area. (You can download and print off our shelter guide by [clicking here](#)) Also let them know that not everyone should have a pig, they're intelligent animals that need constant stimulation, but for the right families that are prepared, they likely won't have any negative repercussions from allowing them to live within city limits. Collecting as much information as you can regarding the differences and similarities between the "typical" domesticated pets and your pet pig can truly show these people how much pigs mean to not only you, but also a whole community of people. Get letters from your veterinarian that demonstrates the relationship and responsibility you have taken to ensure your pig is well cared for and appropriately taken care of.

This city asked very specific questions and did research to answer their questions. Perhaps being on top of this and having appropriate documentation to address these up front would be useful. The questions are 1. Is a miniature pig a farm animal? 2. If a miniature pig is not a farm animal, does it behave similarly to other domesticated animals, therefore it could be considered a pet? Attached with the packet is his presentation, which helped to change the ordinance in his county. <http://www.midland-mi.org/government/commissions/meetings/pdf>. If you are unable to open that link for any reason, we are also attaching a file with the same information within. See below for "zoning commission paperwork" PDF. Take pictures of your pig with you, take pictures compared to the size of various dogs, all of this will help you establish key size differences. While 150lbs sounds like a lot, compared to a dog weighing the same amount, and because pigs are such dense animals, 150lbs isn't what they think it is.

Some family's have chose to relocate to an area that is already zoned to allow pigs or doesn't have an ordinance in place forbidding them, but many have been successful in changing the minds of the officials simply by using facts and supporting their case with data they collect and information that's available. The next page is Ann Varner's packet that she submitted to her city and won. She used various documents and emails from supporters along with her general knowledge of pigs. She was prepared. If you don't have a basic understanding of pigs or pig behavior, it would be worthwhile for you to research or read this site's information about pigs in general and arm yourself with facts. Please let us know if we can be of help to you and good luck! Starting a petition, such as change.org, can be helpful in showing your county/city that there are other pig owners who are supportive of your decision to keep a pig as a pet. Asking your neighbors to write emails or letters of support are also helpful, but make sure you have all the info you need BEFORE petitioning the city to amend or change the ordinance.

Does size matter?

Some cities put restrictions on the weight of a pig that is “allowed” to reside within the city limits. Please try to discourage that. Pigs come in all shapes and sizes and while obesity is absolutely a problem in pig world, it is also a problem in the human world and we are not restricting the weight of people in homes because they know people come in various shapes and sizes. Requiring vaccinations and vet care should be encouraged as a way to promote responsible pig parents, but weight restrictions seems as if they would possibly do more harm.



The Someone Project

Scientific studies that conclude that pigs aren't much different from other traditional companion pets? Yes there are published documents that state just that. Here is an example of one below.

With intriguing descriptions of the abilities of pigs, a new white paper concludes that “pigs are not very different from the dogs and cats we share our homes with. They may even be not very different from ourselves.”

Written by Kimmela Executive Director Lori Marino and Emory University Prof. Christina M. Colvin, the paper is entitled Thinking Pigs: Cognition, Emotion, and Personality – An Exploration of the Cognitive Complexity of *Sus Domesticus*, The Domestic Pig.



The published study:

http://www.kimmela.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Someone-Project_PIGS_WhitePaper.pdf

Use this research study as proof that pigs aren't very different from other conventional animals. They shouldn't be excluded because they're not the traditional pets.

The authors conclude that pigs:

- have excellent long-term memories;
- have a sense of time, remember specific episodes in their past, and anticipate future events;
- are whizzes with mazes and other tests requiring location of desired objects;
- love to play and engage in mock fighting with each other, similar to play in dogs and other mammals;
- live in complex social communities where they keep track of other individuals, both pigs and humans, and learn from one another;
- cooperate with one another and show signs of Machiavellian intelligence such as perspective-taking and tactical deception;
- are emotional and exhibit empathy;
- have distinct personalities.

Dr. Marino explains that “We have shown that pigs share a number of cognitive capacities with other highly intelligent species such as dogs, chimpanzees, elephants, dolphins, and even humans. There is good scientific evidence to suggest we need to rethink our overall relationship to them.”

Based on the authors' review paper published in the International Journal of Comparative Psychology in 2015, this is the first white paper from The Someone Project.

Source: <http://www.kimmela.org/2016/07/14/new-scientific-white-paper-concludes-that-pigs-are-behaviorally-cognitively-and-emotionally-complex-individuals>



Mini Pig Info

Zoning Ordinance Checklist

Pig Information

Name: _____ Birth date: _____
 Sex: _____ Spayed/Neutered: _____

Ordinance Info

- ☐ Existing ordinance forbidding "pigs" or "livestock" to live within city limits.
☐ No ordinance in place

Education

- ☐ Review education basics.
- Anti-parasite regimen
 - Vaccinations
 - New pig parent information
 - Pig-proofing
 - Disease/illness identification
 - Biosecurity
 - How to handle behavioral issues
 - Appropriate containment for pigs
 - Appropriate mini pig nutrition
 - Traveling restrictions with pigs
 - Outdoor/Indoor shelter or pens
 - Toxic foods/products
 - CPR/Heimlich for pigs
 - Enrichment for mini pigs
 - Breeds of pigs
 - Common myths about pigs
 - Emergency preparedness
 - Zoonotic Diseases

City requirements for other domesticated pets

- ☐ Review general administrative ordinances.
- Required vaccinations by the city
 - Leash laws
 - Housing/Shelter requirements
 - Number of pets allowed in general
 - Waste cleanup
 - Breeds of other pets allowed/restricted
 - Weight /size restrictions for other pets
 - Yard restrictions such as size for other pets
 - "Property value decline"-other allowed pets
 - Offer shelter guide by MPI for animal control

Collecting general for YOUR case

- ☐ Meet your council members. Schedule appointments with each one to discuss your case in a professional manner.
- ☐ Offer a tour of your home:
- Fencing
 - Bedroom or sleeping area
 - Waste management
 - Veterinarian records
 - Abilities of YOUR pig
 - Vaccination records
 - Outdoor shelter
 - Pictures of your family pet
 - Veterinarian contact info
 - Pig proofing efforts
 - Meet and greet with YOUR pig
 - Appropriate feed for pigs/eating area
 - Emergency supplies

Collecting additional information to support your case

- ☐ Dog bites in your city and where they originated. Dogs bites? Cat bites? Pig bites?
☐ Zoning ordinances for surrounding areas (be sure to include sister cities that allow pigs and include this in your packet)
☐ Find others who may be battling the same city ordinance and join forces (if possible)
☐ HOA rules (if applicable) These rules are separate from the city zoning restrictions and will be handled differently
☐ Pictures and videos of your pig performing tricks or participating in community events or charities
☐ Emails and handwritten letters of support from neighbors, families, friends and veterinarian
☐ Change.org petition (electronic and handwritten copies)

- ☐ Advise them that you have a support group to help with day to day care. Talk about educational resources available to you
- ☐ Additional cities nationwide that allow pigs or have had people propose an ordinance be amended
- ☐ History of "mini pigs" to the United States
- ☐ Come prepared with definitions of "pet" and "livestock" and be ready to discuss the differences
- ☐ Scientific evidence to support the intelligence and emotional bond between pigs and their human families
- ☐ Look for property values in cities before and after allowing pigs to note any "drop" in value
- ☐ Cleanliness of pigs compared to other animals
- ☐ Proof THIS pig brings joy to not only your family, but perhaps other community residents while participating in events
- ☐ Collecting pictures and statements from other "pig people" who enjoy their pig as part of the family
- ☐ Does size matter info- use our pictures or pictures of others dogs compared to pigs as a reference tool
- ☐ Determine if there are any current regulations for breeders in your area and suggest there be some
- ☐ Suggest that each pig family should apply for a city license like other "pets"
- ☐ Provide a solution to unwanted pigs, such as yourself being a reference to those families & shelter guide by MPI
- ☐ Be sure your pig is in compliance with other ordinances directed towards other traditional animals and be in compliance
- ☐ Publicize your troubles with the city so others can reach out to you or offer their expertise or support
- ☐ Definitions of "pet" and "livestock" to clear up any misunderstanding about the type of pet you are caring for
- ☐ Provide information about the personality and welfare of a pig, also prove that you can provide this care
- ☐ Provide the council with information supporting the intelligence level of pigs and their mental capabilities of a 3-4 year old

Veterinarian Information

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vet care (provide proof) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spay/Neuter• Vaccinations• Size• "Shedding" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual/routine care• Letter from vet• Breed• Rooting behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Routine maintenance records• Availability of vet after hours• Pigs disposition |
|---|--|---|--|

Additional resources

Provide the council with more than enough to satisfy any doubt or question in their mind. Train your pig, go through the process in the appropriate way. Do not try to do all of this in a week and expect there to be a positive outcome. ALWAYS protect your pig by getting statements in writing by city officials. Address concerns they may have up front so they do not become an issue.