

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
Report for the Village
2/18/2025

SUBJECT:	SUBMITTED BY:
Cat Declawing Ban	Enza Petrarca, Village Attorney

SYNOPSIS

An Ordinance has been prepared banning cat declawing procedures, and a Resolution has been prepared supporting State legislative action to prohibit cat declawing in the State of Illinois.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The strategic plan goals for 2023-2025 include *Exceptional Municipal Services*

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

RECOMMENDATION**UPDATE & RECOMMENDATION**

This item was discussed at the February 11, 2025 Village Council meeting. Based upon Village Council direction, the ordinance has been amended to reflect a January 1, 2026 effective date and language has been added providing for an automatic repeal of the ordinance if the State adopts a similar State law. Staff also contacted the five veterinary clinics in Downers Grove. Four of the clinics said they do not offer cat declawing and one clinic said they offer it on a case by case basis. Staff recommends action at the discretion of the Village Council.

BACKGROUND

The proposed ordinance defines procedures that fall under cat declawing and bans the procedure from being performed. It also assesses fines for each procedure performed in violation of the ordinance. The fine structure in the proposed mirrors the language contained in [SB0257](#).

The proposed resolution supports State legislative action to adopt a ban against cat declawing in the entire State of Illinois. It also encourages veterinarians in Downers Grove to not perform declawing procedures.

To date, only two cities in Illinois have taken any formal action regarding cat declawing- Evanston and Buffalo Grove.

- In December of 2024, Evanston adopted an ordinance banning cat declawing. It is similar to the proposed State legislation in that it defines declawing procedures, states they are illegal unless necessary for therapeutic purposes, and it assesses a fine (\$2,000) for anyone performing the procedure in violation of the ordinance.
- In August of 2024, Buffalo Grove issued a proclamation in support of State action to enact a ban against cat declawing and to urge veterinarians in the municipality to not perform declawing procedures.

The State of Illinois has recently considered two separate bills banning cat declawing.

HB1533

- Introduced in the 2023-2024 legislative year.
- Prohibits declawing unless for therapeutic purposes.
- Assesses civil penalty against anyone performing this procedure unless for therapeutic purposes
- Overseen by Department of Agriculture
- It passed the House, but was not voted on in the Senate, and therefore did not become law.

SB0257

- Introduced on 1/22/2025 and has been referred to Assignments
- Prohibits declawing unless performed for therapeutic purposes.
- Authorizes the Attorney General and State's Attorneys to seek civil penalties against those seeking to have declawing procedures performed and injunctions against veterinarians performing the procedure.
- The Humane Society of the United States, which is a proponent of this bill, has indicated that they will be working on an amendment to provide that only those performing declawing procedures will be subject to fines.

The list of states that have banned cat declawing include:

- New York
- Virginia
- Washington D.C.
- Massachusetts
- Maryland

ATTACHMENTS

Ordinance

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

COUNCIL ACTION SUMMARY

INITIATED: Village Attorney **DATE:** February 18, 2025
(Name)

RECOMMENDATION FROM: _____ **FILE REF:** _____
(Board or Department)

NATURE OF ACTION:

- ☒ Ordinance
- ☐ Resolution
- ☐ Motion
- ☐ Other

STEPS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT ACTION:

Motion to Adopt "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5 OF THE DOWNERS GROVE MUNICIPAL CODE TO PROHIBIT CAT DECLAWING IN THE VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE", as presented.



SUMMARY OF ITEM:

Adoption of this ordinance shall prohibit cat declawing.

RECORD OF ACTION TAKEN:

ORDINANCE NO. _____**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5 OF THE DOWNERS GROVE MUNICIPAL CODE TO PROHIBIT CAT DECLAWING IN THE VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**

WHEREAS, the Village of Downers Grove (“Village”) is a home rule unit of local government pursuant to Section 6 of Article VII of the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and has the authority to exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs; and

WHEREAS, subject to said Section, a home rule unit may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the procedure commonly referred to as cat “declawing”, as defined herein, is not merely a cosmetic procedure akin to trimming nails but a severe surgery that can lead to significant physical and behavioral issues in cats; and

WHEREAS, declawing has been shown to inhibit cats from performing integral means of movement and defense, normal posture, normal use of toes in walking and running, and their ability to satisfy instinctive impulses to climb, exercise, and stretch; and

WHEREAS, the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove finds that it is in the best interest of the Village of Downers Grove residents to amend Chapter 5 of the Downers Grove Municipal Code to prohibit the declawing of cats in the Village.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove in DuPage County, Illinois, as follows: (Additions are indicated by redline/ underline; deletions by ~~strikeout~~):

Section 1. That Section 5.112 is hereby added as follows:**Sec 5.112 Cat Declawing Prohibited**

(a) Definitions: As used in this Section 5.112, the following words, terms and phrases have the following meanings:

- (1) Declawing: An onychectomy, a tendonectomy or any other procedure to alter a cat’s toes, claws, or paws to prevent the normal functioning of the cat’s toes, claws, or paws. “Declawing” does not include the trimming of nonviable claw husk or placing nonpermanent nail caps.**
- (2) Onychectomy: A procedure in which a portion of the paw of a cat is amputated to remove or disable a claw, including, without limitation, procedures commonly referred to as declawing.**
- (3) Tendonectomy: A procedure in which the tendons to a cat’s limbs, paws or toes are cut or modified so that the normal functioning of the claws is impaired.**

- (4) Therapeutic purpose: A medically necessary procedure to address an existing or recurring infection, disease, injury or abnormal condition in the claws, nail bed, or toe bone, which jeopardizes a cat's health. "Therapeutic purpose" does not include a procedure performed for a cosmetic or aesthetic purpose or to make the cat more convenient to keep or handle.
- (b) Prohibition: No person shall perform a declawing by any means within the Village of Downers Grove unless the procedure is necessary for a therapeutic purpose. Any declawing procedure performed for a therapeutic purpose shall be performed by a licensed veterinarian.
- (c) Violation: Any person who performs a declawing in violation of Section 5.112(b) shall be fined five hundred dollars (\$500) for the first violation, one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for s second violation and two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for a third or subsequent violation. Each declawing procedure shall constitute a separate and distinct offense to which a separate fine shall apply.

Section 2. That all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 3. That this ordinance shall be in full force and shall become effective January 1, 2026.

However, if the State of Illinois adopts similar legislation banning cat declawing in the State of Illinois prior to January 1, 2026, then this Ordinance shall automatically be repealed by operation of law without further action by the Village Council.

Mayor

Passed:

Published:

Attest: _____

Village Clerk