

The Town of River Bend realizes the many benefits and joys of pet ownership. River Bend is a pet friendly community. We even provide a dog park for our four-legged (and two-legged) residents. We also have many pet waste collection sites around town. However, pet ownership also comes with some responsibilities. Some of those responsibilities are a matter of law. Following is language from our Code of Ordinances on a potentially unpleasant topic:

#### **§ 9.01.015 RUNNING AT LARGE PROHIBITED.**

*(A) No person owning or having possession, charge, custody or control of any animal shall cause, permit or allow the animal to stray or in any manner to run at large upon any public street, sidewalk or other public property or to stray, run at large or otherwise trespass upon the private property of another.*

#### **§ 9.01.003 ANIMAL FECES.**

*It will be unlawful for any person within the town to fail or neglect to remove immediately any animal feces deposited on public or private property without the consent of the owner of the property, by an animal in the care, charge, control or custody of the person, or owned, possessed or harbored by the person.*

*(Prior Code, Ch. 6, Art. VI) Penalty, see § 1.01.999*

There are not many things that are more frustrating than finding out that a violation of the animal feces ordinance above has occurred and you were the person who discovered the violation on the sole of your shoe. This is especially frustrating if you are not a pet owner. However, there is one thing that can be more frustrating than discovering the violation: that is being fined for the violation. Following is more language from our Code of Ordinances:

#### **§ 1.01.999 GENERAL PENALTY.**

*(A) In accordance with G.S. § 160A-175, any act constituting a violation of the provisions of this Code or a failure to comply with any of its requirements shall subject the offender to a civil penalty of \$500.00, or any lesser amount if so stated in the citation. If the offender fails to remedy the violation and pay any civil penalty within ten days after being cited for said violation (or within the time prescribed by a citation if it provides for a longer period of time than ten days), the civil penalty may be recovered in a civil action in the nature of a debt.*

A violation of our Animal Control Ordinance is punishable by a \$500 fine. Nobody wants to be fined \$500 for something that is so easily avoidable and we certainly do not want to issue a \$500 fine. While it is nearly impossible to completely eliminate “violations” from occurring, they can be greatly reduced if all pet owners would: 1) make sure your animal is in your control at all times, i.e. not running at large, 2) carry bags with you when you are enjoying a walk with your pet and most importantly, 3) be sure that **YOU** pick up any and all feces that your animal drops. Unless the animal poops in your yard or in the yard of a person who has given you permission for your animal to poop on their property, any poop is a violation. This includes town streets, town parks, all town properties and even in the dog park. There are two simple rules to follow. One is the golden rule. The other is: If your animal poops, then you should scoop. Please be a responsible pet owner and do your part to eliminate this issue.

