

# 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Having outdated ordinances amended to exclude mini pigs from prohibited pets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This detailed guide will walk you through the process of having outdated or nonexistent ordinances amended or put in place to protect your pig.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 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. Essentially, "mini" doesn't refer to the size a pig will be when grown, instead, it is a comparison and classification term as stated above. Most mini pigs will weigh somewhere between 80-200 pounds when fully grown. Maturity is sometime between 3-5 years old. A pig's size will change dramatically between birth and 5 years old in most cases.

This guide was created by the Mini Pig Info team as a way to help those who are attempting to have outdated ordinances amended.



## Ordinances

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.
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.



## 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, neglect and/or being seized from loving homes. And if there are no pro-animal items on the agenda, you can also 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.



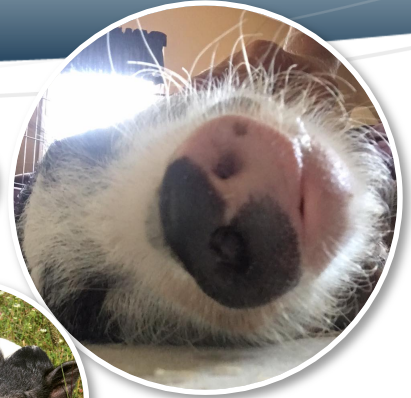
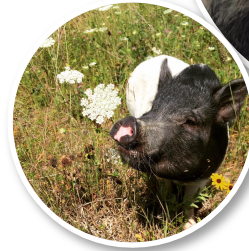
This is one of the many pig rescues scattered across the US. There are hundreds of people who have added "just one more" pig to their household to help a pig in need. YOU need to be sure a pig is the right pet for you **BEFORE** you get one. Visit any of the pig rescues to help you determine if a pig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



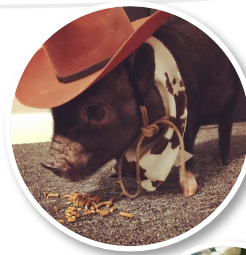
*Always be professional when discussing your situation with a city official.*

- 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. It is important that you know how meetings are ran and how information is presented prior to your presentation.
- 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 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 addressed in this packet.



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

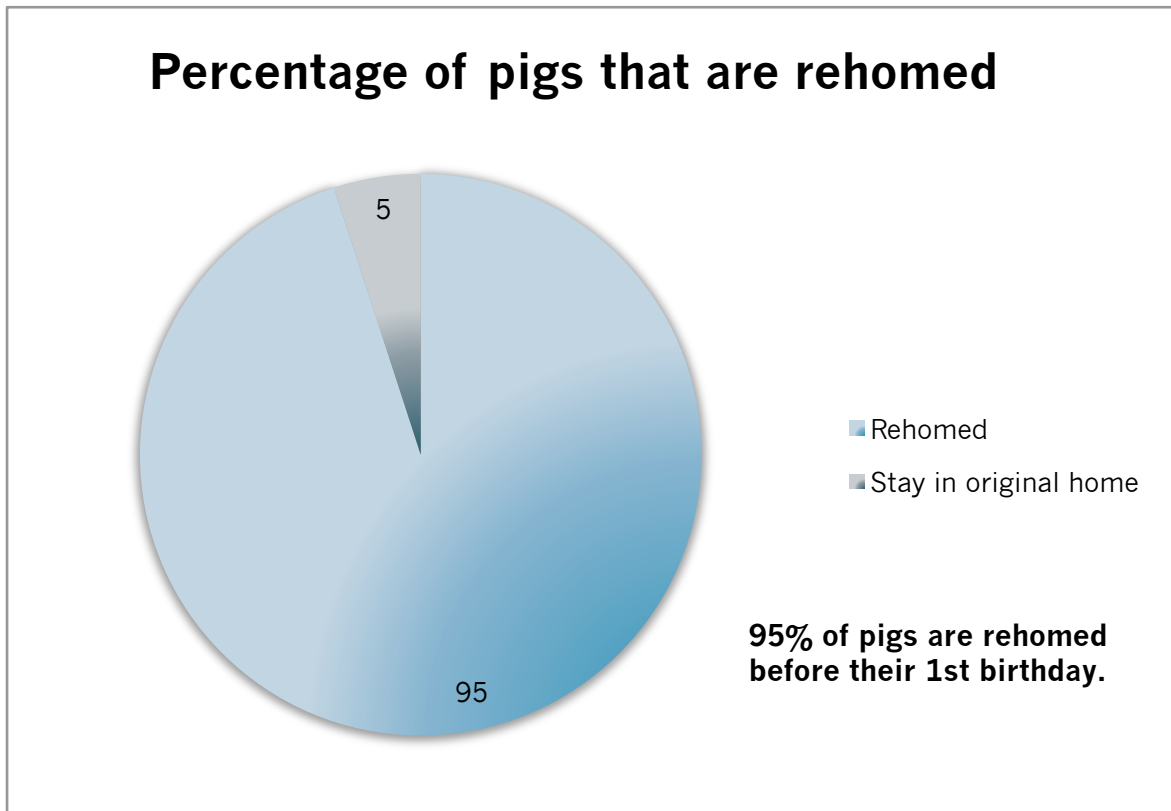
- Obtain endorsements from influential individuals and organizations in your community. Ask your neighbors to write letters of support. Ask any organizations that may have solicited you and your pig to participate in events to write letters on your behalf.
- Prepare well-researched and well-written informational packets that include a factsheet on the proposed reform and, if possible, a list of endorsements. We have included a checklist so you can be sure to address specific common concerns with regards to amending ordinances to allow companion pigs to reside within city limits. This is your chance to teach others about pigs and also become a community resource as someone who is knowledgeable about pigs and show them that your commitment to your pig is a serious one.
- Find advocates in each district and ask them to contact their legislators. Ask others to write polite letters to their legislators that demonstrate support for the proposed ordinance amendment. Letters that use the people's own words, rather than pre-written/standardized 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 or media stations to garner more support for the effort.

# Make Contact

Lobbying is nearly impossible without personal contact and while you are not trying to change a statewide bill, your target is people on the city council, so these people are part of your community and typically have an office somewhere within the city. Call the councilman's office and schedule an appointment, if appropriate. 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 and be sure to ask if this person has a few minutes to speak/meet with you. Do not assume that they do, that's rude and presumptuous. If you have an appointment, you should still be respectful of their time and keep your meeting brief.
- Identify yourself as a concerned citizen, pig lover, constituent, business owner, voter or whatever may apply. Remember that the city council is elected and feel much the same as other elected officials, they want to hear from the citizens in their community, but they'd prefer to hear from them in an organized manner. Do NOT make contact if you're upset or mad about the situation. Collect your thoughts and approach when you can maintain a civil conversation. Do NOT argue or degrade the council as a whole and do NOT speak poorly of the ordinances already in place. Only address the proposed amendment and ask for support.
- 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 citizens. 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/allow your pig to reside within city limits.
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> birthday. Some of these pigs were rehomed because of zoning restrictions, which forbid them to live within city limits.**

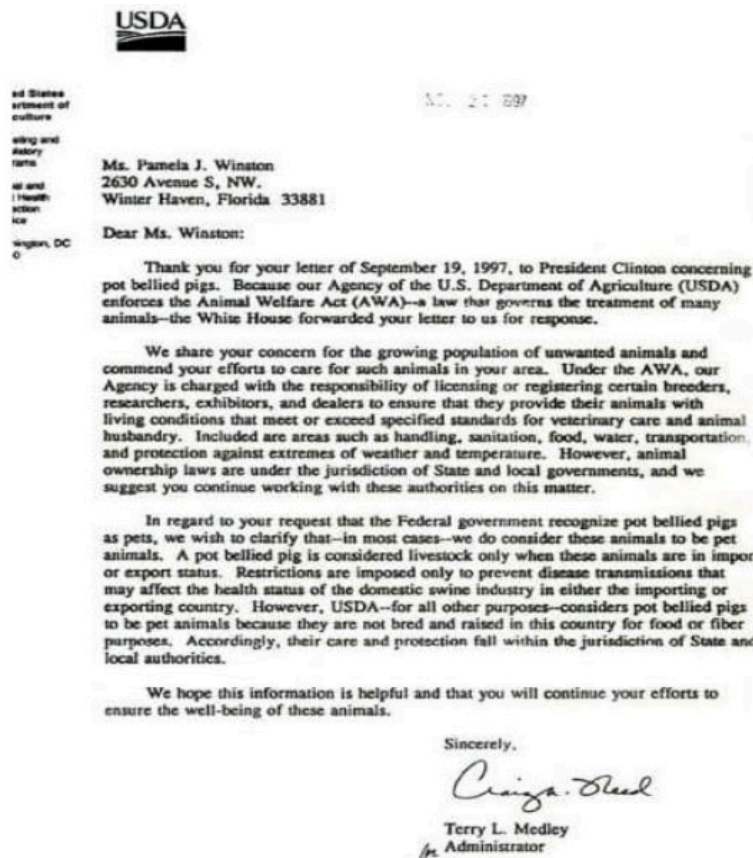
**Obviously this is something that we wish to help change. This is something we hope to change.**

## 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 his or her 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. Furthermore, farmers aren't taxed on certain things, such as feed for the livestock animals they care for, whereas private households that purchase mini pig feed ARE taxed which also demonstrates that there are absolutely differences between "pet pigs" and pigs that have an agricultural use. Livestock animals can be domesticated but are used for cultivation and not kept as companion pets. Pets are called "pets" because we pet them on a regular basis. This theory works in classifying dogs and horses as pets, but if you regularly pet a goldfish or a canary you'll kill them. There is a debate about what is considered pet and what is considered livestock; which will likely never be resolved. I've heard it suggested that you could teach pets to do tricks. But we have a pig that we taught to "sit and spin" and a golden retriever that we can't teach to do anything. Does that mean our pig is a pet and our dog is livestock? People around the world live in different ways, have cultural differences and consume different things. For example, dogs are eaten in other countries, but that wouldn't go over well here in the US. Scientists call it a "recovered memory" when an animal remembers you were nice to it and responds accordingly. However, pigs will harbor grudges, which negates that theory. Having said all of that, I took my pig to be spayed and even though she was in pain and not at all happy, she didn't attack me when she woke up, as a matter of fact, she ONLY wanted to lay with me and cuddled up next to me afterwards which is my definition of a pet.

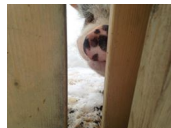
**Below is the USDA letter that reflects their view, but it is an older letter and I have written to them to get this clarified and updated. Their latest explanation on their website doesn't necessarily clarify information, but does state that for their intent and purpose, pigs are pigs and can transmit diseases to each other regardless of the breed, which is true. It does NOT address the livestock versus pet debate.**



### 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, potbellied 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, potbellied 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.



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](http://www.usa.gov).



#### 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



noun | live-stock | \lɪv-stɑk\u

#### 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 which would appropriately classify them as pets rather than livestock.**

One of the issues I have seen is property value decline, which 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 pictures 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 more traditional animals do. Pigs dig/root, 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 it is addressed and off the table as possible opposition.

Another issue I've seen people complain about on various threads is the smell of pigs. As pig parents, 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 parent, you definitely need to be aware of animal waste ordinances and do your part to clean up after your pig. Feces 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 responsible pet owners need to be sure to clean up after their animals. Nonetheless, be sure to include your own waste management plan with your documentation that you plan to present to the city council.



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 decide to add a pig to your family, 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 or their babies, 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 therapy pigs that visit nursing facilities, etc. Show them domesticated pigs don't typically have aggression like wild animals may occasionally display.

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 complaint 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.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>

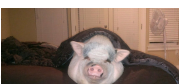
[http://www.newspressnow.com/news/locals-tjoseph-allows-petpigs\\_](http://www.newspressnow.com/news/locals-tjoseph-allows-petpigs_)

<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 that info 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. Ask for regulations in the area of breeding pigs in your area, discuss the amount of realistic space a pig needs. Another concern is that animal control's are not prepared to handle pigs in their facilities and those hard concrete floors aren't ideal for pigs either. Identify useful alternatives, form a network of foster parents in your area so the city can call knowledgeable people to help care for pigs that are found to be unwanted or at large. Prepare with shelter guides for the animal control centers in your area. (You can download and print off our shelter guide by [clicking here](#)) Be honest about the fact that not every family should add a pig and that they're intelligent and 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 them how much pigs mean not only to you, but a whole community of "pig people". Get letters from your veterinarian that demonstrates the relationship you have with your pig and the amount of responsibility you and your family have demonstrated by ensuring your pig is appropriately cared for by a qualified medical professional.

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 this 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 on our website. 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, 150lbs doesn't mean that a pig is overtly gigantic, especially since mini pigs are such dense animals. Hearing a weight like that forces people to assume a pig would be the same size of an adult weighing 150 pounds and that isn't the case.

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 section of our website is Ann Varner's packet that she submitted to her city and successfully had the ordinance amended. 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 sites 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. (We do have a petition that we started to help others from having to obtain signatures case by case that you can find the link to it within this packet) 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 could possibly do more harm. If there are no weight restrictions for other pets that are allowed to live within city limits, I would definitely include that weight restrictions

shouldn't be used as a tool to eliminate the possibility of pigs being allowed, but instead remind them that just like other animals, pigs come in all different sizes, shapes and colors and although a “mini” pig is much different from a standard farm pig, there are no guarantees as far as adult sizes are concerned.

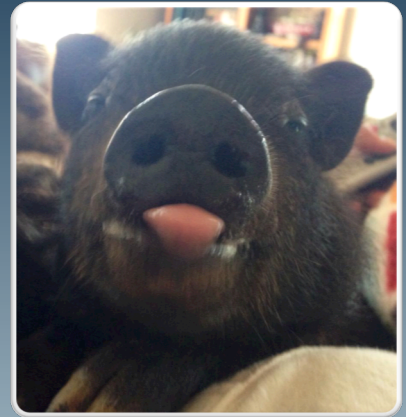


# The Someone Project

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](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)

## Mini Pig Info

- 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

- Vet care (provide proof)
  - Spay/Neuter
  - Vaccinations
  - Size
  - "Shedding"
  - Annual/routine care
  - Letter from vet
  - Breed
  - Rooting behaviors
  - Routine maintenance records
  - Availability of vet after hours
  - Pigs disposition

### Additional resources

**Provide the council with more than enough information to satisfy any doubt or address questions they may have. Be prepared for opposition and maintain a great attitude. If there are people there who are opposed to the idea of allowing mini pigs to reside within city limits, work towards changing their opinion about pigs. Do not assume everyone has an open mind; most people have never had any personal interaction with a pet pig, so show them that having a pig next door will not affect their household. Be honest, be accurate, be knowledgeable. Explain that your pig is part of your family just like any other pet that you may have is. Promote RESPONSIBLE pet ownership. Be a responsible pig parent. Ask the city council to consider your proposed amendment, but also be prepared to appeal a decision that is not in your favor. Help them understand the complicated relationship between a pig and their human family, but be factual in the information that you present. Pigs DO cry real tears, pigs ARE sensitive animals, pigs DO become attached to their loving family and pigs WILL become depressed if forced to relocate. These are facts.**

**Pay attention to those who are speaking up about mini pigs, the good and bad. Sometimes these statements can provide insight and/or clues about the overall attitude with regards to allowing mini pigs to reside within city limits. Most often the stereotypical views can be professionally addressed and factual information can be injected into conversations. Remember, most people have never seen a pig, much less considered adding a pig to their family. So these are the people that will need to understand how precious these pigs are to us. Often times it's not that they're opposed, they're simply misinformed or flat out don't know enough about mini pigs to make an informed decision. That's why you will be there, to educate. After presenting, be sure to thank every person for their support and consideration for your proposed ordinance amendment and ask when the decision will be made. Follow up for any questions that weren't addressed. Do not be afraid to say "I don't know, let me get that information together and bring it back to you." Do not speak about subjects that you are unsure of. Please reach out to us if we can be of assistance. An example of a letter we would provide to you is below on the next page....**

# Mini Pig Info

[www.minipiginfo.com](http://www.minipiginfo.com) • [minipiginfo@gmail.com](mailto:minipiginfo@gmail.com)



Date:

To whom it may concern, (Dear City Council of \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town)

I am writing a letter on behalf of (insert name here) and their family. As someone who is very familiar with pigs, I can quote statistics regarding mini pigs such the fact that 95% of pigs are "rehomed" before they reach their 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, so it is extremely heartbreaking to be notified that a family is having difficulty with zoning ordinances that may prevent "pigs" from residing in their home. We have found that in most cases, ordinances have been put into place long before the potbellied pig was introduced to the United States and since most residents of the US aren't in the pet pig community, which leaves room for misunderstanding. The words pig and swine are ones with broad definitions, but they encompass everything related to our porcine pals, both production pigs and the smaller breeds that we refer to as "mini pigs". The USDA doesn't regulate potbellied pigs because they're not considered livestock. The definition of livestock includes an underlying purpose for the intended animal; miniature pigs are not used as a food source, strictly as a companion pet, therefore, they are appropriately placed in a "pet" category rather than livestock. We happily support families who are attempting to have outdated or sometimes-conflicting ordinances amended to allow "mini" pigs such as potbellied pigs to reside within city limits.

I understand there are concerns regarding rabies and no approved vaccination for swine in general, more specifically, pet pigs. Many cities also require a vaccination for this purpose and allow the rabies vaccination to be given "off-label" since there have not been any documented cases of vaccinated pigs contracting this horrible disease to date. "Pet pigs" are still a relatively new concept; therefore, there hasn't been enough research dedicated to learning every aspect of a pig's environment as there has been for more traditional pets like cats and dogs. In my research, I have found it is rare for a pig to contract rabies and have only found a handful of documented cases. With respect to pet pigs, it is understood that owners cannot be at our pigs side all hours of the day leaving room for a rabid animal to somehow get inside the contained area where we may keep our pigs, but this percentage of "possibility" would not be any higher than other pets that have periods of time that they spend outside. Pigs, in general, are prey animals and will usually run from any threatening animal versus other traditional pets like a dog that has predator instincts which would be much more confrontational and at a much higher risk of contracting rabies.

Miniature pigs can make great pets. There are pig communities on social media where families discuss the care of pigs and share ideas and advice with one another, so we get a deeper view inside of other peoples lives with regards to having pet pigs in their family. We have created resources/websites to assist people with common issues associated with their pig(s). However, because we have formed a network of people who love pigs, we also see the rate at which pigs are discarded, so we try to assist those who are attempting to have ordinances amended in order to keep their pig in their home. This family shares the same love for pigs that I have, so I am especially passionate about helping to keep a pig in their home. I know this family cares very much for their pig because they reached out to us for assistance in this matter. Pigs grieve the loss of their family, they will cry real tears and often become depressed and refuse to eat or drink for days after being forced to relocate. Obviously this is never the intended outcome, but often, this is what happens. Please consider the collateral damage that can be done by forcing a pig or pigs(s) to find new homes. There really are no homes for these pigs to go to. Pig rescues and sanctuaries are full; people have doubled and tripled the number of pigs they have in order to help pigs that were discarded. The reasons why people do not keep their pig vary like other traditional pets, but most common are unrealistic size expectations followed by families who weren't prepared for a pig to begin with. We created a website to try and get ahead of the problem by providing accurate and factual information with the hopes that people would research miniature pigs prior to making the decision to add one to their family including zoning ordinances.

Pigs aren't dogs, but are easily trained and usually well mannered once trained. I suspect if you compare the number of dog bites in your town/city with the number of pig bites, the number of pig bites will be zero. So, pigs do not pose an overwhelming threat to anyone in terms of being malicious or aggressive. While we understand that pigs may not be a "conventional" pet by most standards, pigs are our specialty and what we are knowledgeable about. The number of pigs in homes in the United States has grown substantially over the last 10 years and it is believed that there are more than 500,000 in homes today, so mini pigs have become quite normal in the pet world.

We are writing you to ask for your consideration in allowing this family to be the 1<sup>st</sup> in your city to legally house a "mini pig" and set the tone for future pig parents. They didn't discard their pig at the first sign of trouble; instead, they elected to pursue amending an ordinance or having one created to protect their pet. Please don't remove this pig from his/her family and instead vote yes to allow miniature pigs to reside in the homes of your citizens. I do appreciate your time in reading this letter and welcome any questions you may have. Feel free to read more about pigs by going to our website that was created for the sole purpose of helping all pig parents provide excellent care for their pig. ([www.minipiginfo.com](http://www.minipiginfo.com)).

Sincerely,  
Mini Pig Info

**\*\*This is an example of the type of letter we would submit on your behalf if asked. Encourage others to write personal letters in support of you keeping your pig; ask neighbors and other residents to write supportive letters as well. Emails are perfectly appropriate too. Collect all of these and submit them along with your presentation to the city council.**