TITLE III – PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY (Chapters 20-23)

CHAPTER 21

ANIMAL CONTROL AND DANGEROUS DOGS

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21.01 PURPOSE.

This chapter provides for the regulation of keeping domesticated animals and regulations related to dangerous dogs, determining what conduct of a dog and owner shall be illegal, establishing consequences for dog and owner, and providing reasonable rights of notice and hearing before the imposition of penalties.

21.02 DEFINITIONS.

For use in this chapter, the following terms are defined:

- 1. "Administrative Authority" is the Warren County Health Services Administrator or his/her authorized representative or designee,
- 2. "Animal" means nonhuman vertebrate.
- 3. "At Large" means any animal found off the premises of its owner and not under the control of a competent person, restrained within a motor vehicle or fenced-in area, housed in a veterinary hospital or kennel, on a leash (electronic or otherwise) or "at heel" beside a competent person and obedient to that person's command.
- 4. "Attack" means an act committed by an animal with the ability to execute such an act that either by threat of physical contact or actual physical contact causes fear, pain or injury to the human being or a domestic animal so long as the latter has not first committed such an act on the offending animal.
- 5. "Bite" means an injury inflicted on a person or animal by a dog in which the skin, muscle, tendons, or surficial tissue has been broken, scratched, punctured, bruised, or otherwise damaged.

- 6. "Board of Health" means the Warren County Board of Health.
- 7. "Board of Supervisors" means the Warren County Board of Supervisors.
- 8. "Breeding animal" means any animal kept for the purpose of breeding.
- 9. "Cats" means both male and female animals of the feline species, whether altered or not.
- 10. "Control" is established when an animal is secured by a leash or lead, confined in a fenced-in area or vehicle, or obedient to a competent person's commands.
- 11. "County" means Warren County, Iowa.
- 12. "County Agent" is a public or private entity either employed or under contract with the County to assist the County in regulating various sections of this chapter.
- 13. "Dangerous Animal" means
 - a. Any animal which is not naturally tame or gentle, and which is of a wild nature or disposition, and which is capable of killing, inflicting serious injury upon, or causing disease among human beings or domesticated animals and having known tendencies as a species to do so; or
 - b. Any animal declared to be dangerous by the Board of Health upon reasonable notice to the owner thereof who shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board of Health; and
 - c. The following animals shall be deemed dangerous per se:
 - i. Wolves, coyotes or foxes.
 - ii. Badgers, wolverines, weasels, mink, and other Mustelids.
 - iii. Bats.
 - iv. Bears.
 - v. Gila monsters and lizards that are venomous or poisonous.
 - vi. All apes (including chimpanzees), baboons and macaques.
 - vii. Monkeys.
 - viii. Elephants.
 - ix. Wild boar.
 - x. Black widow and brown recluse spiders, and scorpions.

- xi. Snakes that are naturally venomous or poisonous.
- xii. Snakes which are constricting and exceeding four (4) feet in length.
- xiii. All cats, except domestic cats (*felis catus*), including but not limited to lions, cougars, tigers, jaguars, leopards, lynx, ocelots, and bobcats.
- xiv. Racoons, opossums, and skunks.
- xv. Any animal that while running at large has attacked or bitten any person without provocation, or any animal that has exhibited violent propensities in present or past conduct by acting in the following manner: by biting a person or persons on two separate occasions within a twelve (12) month period.
- 14. "Dogs" means both male and female animals of the canine species, whether altered or not.
- 15. "Dangerous Dog" means a dog that has
 - a. Engaged in or has been trained to engage in exhibitions of fighting; or
 - b. Attacked a person or domestic animal without justification causing serious bodily injury or death; or
 - c. Behaved, on two or more occasions within twelve (12) months, in a manner that a reasonable person would believe posed an unjustified threat of serious injury or death to a person or domestic animal; or
 - d. Was declared a dangerous dog by an animal control authority, Court of another jurisdiction, and/or governing body of another jurisdiction.
 - e. Any dog that while running at large has attacked or bitten any person without provocation, or any dog that has exhibited violent propensities in present or past conduct by acting in the following manner: by biting a person or persons on two separate occasions within a twelve (12) month period.
- 16. "Domestic Animal" means all livestock, household animals, breeding animals and kennel animals.
- 17. "Household Animal" means any companion animal normally kept by an owner anywhere on that owner's property, whether indoors or outdoors, for the purposes of pleasure, protection, working or hunting.
- 18. "Impound" means taken into custody by law enforcement, Administrative Authority, veterinarian, or animal shelter designated by the County Board of Supervisors.
- 19. "Kennel Animal" means any animal that under normal conditions is housed in a veterinary hospital or registered kennel.

- 20. "Livestock" means animals kept for use or pleasure, especially farm animals kept for use and profit including fowl.
- 21. "Neglected or Suffering Conditions" means any condition or situation in which the animal is in imminent danger.
- 22. "Owner" means a person who:
 - a. Has the right of property or custody of a dog (or other animal) provided that the right is not merely temporary;
 - b. Keeps or harbors the dog (or other animal) other than temporarily; or
 - c. Knowingly permits a dog (or other animal) to remain indefinitely on or about any premises occupied by that person. If the owner is under the age of eighteen (18), that person and his/her parents or guardians shall be deemed the owner for the purposes of "dangerous dog."
- 23. "Potentially Dangerous Dog" means a dog that may reasonably be assumed to pose a threat to public safety as demonstrated by any of the following behaviors:
 - a. Causing an injury to a person or domestic animal on public or private property that is less than severe bodily injury or severe injury as defined in paragraph 27 of this chapter.
 - b. Without provocation, chases or approaches a person, a domestic animal, or a wheeled conveyance upon the streets, sidewalks, or any public or private property, in an apparent attitude of attack; or has a known propensity, tendency, or disposition to attack unprovoked, causing injury or otherwise threatening the safety of humans or domestic animals.
 - c. Acts in a highly aggressive manner within a fenced yard/enclosure and appears to a reasonable person able to jump over a fence/enclosure or escape.
- 24. "Proper enclosure" means any pen or kennel with side attached to a secured top and a secured bottom, floor or foundation. In lieu of a secured top, a fence may be used that is at least six feet in height or six feet taller than any structure (such as a doghouse) in the pen or kennel. In lieu of a bottom, floor or foundation, a fence that is imbedded into the ground at least two feet to prevent any digging under the fence, may be used.
- 25. "Provoked" means but is not limited to:
 - a. Any willful trespass or other tort upon premises occupied by the owner or keeper of the dog.
 - b. Any act of teasing, tormenting, abusing, or assaulting or threat to act, being committed by a person or domestic animal against a dog or the other or keeper of the dog.

- 26. "Restraint" means a dog shall be considered under restraint if it is:
 - a. Within the real property limits of its owner and securely confined by a physical fence or kennel, or is confined indoors a building or house; or
 - b. Secured by a leash or lead no more than six feet in length being held by a person capable of controlling the dog.
 - c. A dog that frees itself from its owner's real property limits, a leash or lead, or a dog that is in a vehicle in a manner that would not prevent escape or contact with other persons or animals, shall be considered NOT TO BE UNDER RESTRAINT.
- 27. "Serious Bodily Injury" or "Severe Injury" means any physical injury to a person that results in muscle or tendon tears, joint injuries, lacerations, or requires stitches, staples or surgical glue.
- 28. "Stray" means any animal unlawfully running at large, the ownership of which cannot with reasonable investigation be ascertained or any animal which has been abandoned by its owner.
- 29. "Unincorporated Area" means any area not within the confines of an incorporated city.

21.03 OWNER RESPONSIBILITY.

- 1. Every dog found to be potentially dangerous or dangerous shall be kept under restraint at all times.
- 2. No dog shall trespass.
- 3. Every dog within Warren County shall be identified at all times by an identification tag, that at a minimum, tracks the name and address of the dog owner and current vaccination records as stipulated in Iowa Code Chapter 351.25 through 351.35.
- 4. All dog bites shall be reported immediately to the Warren County Health Services Administrator or his/her authorized representative or designee by the dog owner and/or local law enforcement as stipulated in Iowa Code 351.38, veterinarian or treating physician.
- 5. In determining whether a violation of any of these provisions has occurred, it shall not be a defense that the dog owner was free from negligence or had taken reasonable measures to ensure compliance.
- 6. If at any time a dog is quarantined, impounded, and during the process of appeal, all costs shall be the responsibility of the dog owner.

21.04 CONDITIONS FOR IMPOUNDMENT.

A dog or other animal may be impounded if any or all of these conditions apply:

1. The dog or animal is a stray or found at large.

- 2. Licensed or not, the dog or animal is causing a disturbance.
- 3. When no owner can be identified after a reasonable investigation.
- 4. When a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog poses, or the dog is believed to pose, a risk or threat of harm to any person or domestic animal.

21.05 CONFINEMENT.

When the Warren County Health Services Administrator or his/her authorized representative or designee, or the animal shelter in Warren County, or the Warren County Sheriff's Department Office receives information that any person has been bitten by an animal, including a dog, or that a dog or animal is suspected of having rabies, the Warren County Health Services Administrator or his/her authorized representative or designee or the animal shelter or Warren County Sheriff's Office shall order the owner to confine the animal or dog as set forth below:

- 1. An animal or dog must be quarantined by a licensed facility or licensed vet at the owner's expense if:
 - a. The animal or dog has no record of a current rabies vaccination. Unvaccinated animals and dogs cannot be vaccinated until the end of the 10-day quarantine period. After the quarantine period, the animal or dog must be vaccinated at the owner's expense before the animal or dog is released from confinement.
 - b. The events leading to the incident are such that rabies is suspected, there was no due cause for the incident, or the animal or dog has suspicious recent history. This will be used even if the animal or dog has a record of being currently vaccinated for rabies.
- 2. Home quarantine may be permissible if:
 - a. Conditions listed in Subsection 21.05(1) are not applicable and the owner can provide proper confinement of the animal, complete with the posting of a sign, provided by Warren County Health Services, in a conspicuous place, warning of possible rabies infection. Confinement will be done by the penning of the animal so that there is a metal barrier to prevent the intimate approach of any other animal or person.
 - b. The owner of the animal shall sign an agreement to adhere to the rules of confinement for the designated length of time, and also agrees to notify the County immediately if the animal sickens, dies or escapes.
 - c. The animal or dog must be revaccinated if the bite occurred within two months of the expiration date of the current vaccination.

The quarantine period shall be 10 (ten) days for all animals, including dogs. The day of the bite will be considered day zero and the next day will be considered day 1, and so forth. With the approval of a licensed veterinarian, the animal may be euthanized at the cost of the owner, and the brain sent for examination, if it is not practical to confine the animal for reasons of health and safety. If the owner fails to confine such animal in the manner directed, the animal shall be apprehended and impounded, and after ten (10) days, the animal may be humanely destroyed. If

such animal is returned to its owner, the owner shall pay the cost of impoundment, including any necessary treatment and vaccination(s). Code of Iowa, Section 351.39. If costs are incurred by the County for examination of the animal brain, those costs will be reimbursed to the County by the owner.

21.06 DETERMINATON OF A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DOG.

- 1. Once the Administrative Authority has received notice from the public, law enforcement, veterinarian, or animal shelter, that there has been an incident involving a potentially dangerous dog, he or she must conduct an investigation within 48 hours, consistent with the definition of a potentially dangerous dog. Within five (5) days of completing the investigation, the Administrative Authority shall notify the owner of the dog in writing by certified mail or hand delivery by law enforcement that the dog has been determined to be potentially dangerous, citing this ordinance.
- 2. Following notice to the owner, if the Administrative Authority has probable cause to believe that the dog is potentially dangerous and may pose a threat to public safety, the Administrative Authority shall require proof of current rabies vaccination from veterinarian or animal provider, and one of the following:
 - a. The owner shall quarantine the dog on his or her property for a period of 10 (ten) calendar days.
 - b. Impound and quarantine the dog with a veterinarian or the County-contracted animal shelter, as determined by law enforcement or the Administrative Authority, that provides adequate confinement for a period of ten (10) calendar days.
- 3. The owner of the dog shall be liable for the costs of impounding and keeping the dog. For each of the requirements listed above, the Administrative Authority may require any or all of the following as a condition of release of the dog to its owner:
 - a. Installation of an identification microchip by a licensed veterinarian.
 - b. The dog, while on the owner's property shall at all times be kept indoors, or in a securely fenced yard or enclosure from which the dog cannot escape, and into which children cannot trespass or access. It may be required that the dog be kept in an enclosure which is enclosed on all sides with a top and a cement floor, and which is locked by padlock. The yard or enclosure must be inspected and approved in writing by the Administrative Authority prior to release of the dog.
 - c. The dog may be off the owner's premises only if it is:
 - i. Muzzled in a manner that its teeth cannot touch anything outside the muzzle; and
 - ii. Restrained by a substantial leash, not exceeding six (6) feet in length, while the leash is held by an adult capable of restraining

and controlling the dog. At no time may the dog be left unattended, even if muzzled, leashed, or tied, while off the owner's premises.

- 4. The owner shall immediately notify the Administrative Authority in the event the dog is:
 - a. At large; or
 - b. Has committed an attack on a person or animal; or
 - c. Has been sold or otherwise disposed of; or
 - d. Has died.
- 5. The dog and owner must complete an obedience course at the owner's expense within sixty (60) days after release of the dog to its owner. The course shall be approved by the Administrative Authority. Documentation of course completion must be submitted to the Administrative Authority within ten (10) days of course completion. The instructor must be notified as to the reason for the dog's attendance.
- 6. The owner of the dog must give written notice of the potentially dangerous dog determination to the United States Postal Service (local branch) and all utility companies which provide service to the premises where the dog is kept. The owner shall provide a copy of such notice to the Administrative Authority within thirty (30) days after the dog has been released to the owner.
- 7. The Administrative Authority will work with the dog owner to determine where the dog will be housed on the property and will provide written notice to the victim.
- 8. The owner of the dog which has been determined to be potentially dangerous may be prohibited from owning, possessing, controlling, or having custody of any dog for a period of up to three years, if the Administrative Authority finds that:
 - a. The owner previously was in possession of a dog that was determined to be dangerous; or
 - b. The owner was in possession of more than one dog declared to be dangerous; or
 - c. Ownership possession of a dog by the owner would create a significant threat to the public health, safety, and welfare.
- 9. If the owner is restricted from owning a dog as stated above and is found to be owning another dog, the dog will be impounded and placed at the discretion of the Administrative Authority. The owner is liable for penalties pursuant to Section 21.14 of this Chapter.
- 10. At no time shall the dog being evaluated by the Administrative Authority be removed from Warren County by the owner or other person, without consent from the Administrative Authority.
- 11. This section applies to any potentially dangerous animal.

21.07 DETERMINATION OF A DANGEROUS DOG.

- 1. After an investigation, which must be initiated within two business days after the situation becomes known to the Administrative Authority, the Administrative Authority shall determine whether a dog is dangerous based on the factors listed in Section 21.02(15) of this chapter and shall notify the dog owner by hand delivery by law enforcement of that status within 2 business days upon completing the investigation.
- 2. Following owner notification, if the Administrative Authority has probable cause to believe the dog is a dangerous dog, within the definition in Section 21.02(15) of this chapter, and that the animal poses an imminent threat to public safety, the Administrative Authority or law enforcement, or the contract shelter for the County may take the following action:
 - a. Impound and quarantine the animal for ten (10) calendar days in an approved location that confines the animal for observation and public safety protection.
 - b. If a dog has previously been found to be Potentially Dangerous as defined by this ordinance, and reoffends by causing an injury to a person or domestic animal on public or private property OR without provocation, chases or approaches a person, domestic animal or a wheeled conveyance upon the streets, sidewalks, or any public or private property, in an apparent attitude of attack, the Administrative Authority will require the dog be quarantined for ten (10) calendar days at a location determined by the Administrative Authority. Once the quarantine period has expired, the dog may be humanely destroyed.
 - c. If the dog has bitten a person below the shoulders and caused serious bodily injury, the animal shall be impounded and quarantined for ten (10) calendar days at a location determined by the Administrative Authority. Once the quarantine period has expired, the dog shall be humanely destroyed.
 - d. If a dog bites a person above the shoulders with or without a prior history of biting, the animal shall be impounded and quarantined for ten (10) calendar days at a location determined by the Administrative Authority, and once the quarantine period has expired, the dog shall be humanely destroyed.
- 3. The owner of the dog shall be liable to the County for the costs of impounding and keeping the dog, including treatment costs. In addition, the Administrative Authority may initiate additional requirements on the dog owner including:
 - a. The owner of a dog which has been determined to be a dangerous dog may be prohibited from owning, possessing, controlling, or having custody of any dog for a period of up to three years, if the Administrative Authority finds that:
 - i. The owner previously was in possession of a dog that was determined to be dangerous; and/or

- ii. The owner was in possession of more than one dog declared to be dangerous; and/or,
- iii. Ownership or possession of a dog by the owner would create a significant threat to public health, safety and welfare.

If the owner is restricted from owning a dog as stated above and is found owning another dog, the dog will be impounded and placed at the discretion of the Administrative Authority. The owner is liable for penalties pursuant to Chapter 2 County Infractions of this ordinance.

At no time shall the dog being evaluated by the Administrative Authority be removed from Warren County, by the owner or other person, without consent from the Administrative Authority.

No dog determined to be dangerous shall be taken from or brought into Warren County.

This section applies to any dangerous animal.

21.08 EXCEPTIONS TO THE DANGEROUS DOG ORDINANCE.

No dog shall be declared a potentially dangerous or dangerous dog if:

- 1. The dog was used by law enforcement or military official(s) for legitimate law enforcement or military purposes; or
- 2. The threat, injury or damage was sustained by a person:
 - a. Who was committing, at the time, a willful trespass or other tort upon the premises lawfully occupied by the owner of the dog; or
 - b. Who was provoking, tormenting, abusing, or assaulting the dog on its own property or who can be shown to have repeatedly, in the past, provoked, tormented, abused, or assaulted the dog; or
 - c. Who was committing or attempting to commit a crime; or
- 3. The dog was:
 - a. Responding to pain or injury or protecting its offspring; or
 - b. Protecting or defending a human being within the immediate vicinity of the dog from an attack or assault, while on the owner's property; or
 - c. Defending property within the immediate vicinity of the dog on the owner's property.

21.09 KEEPING OF DANGEROUS ANIMALS.

No person shall keep, shelter or harbor any animal as a pet, or act as a temporary custodian for such animal, or keep, shelter or harbor such animal for any other purpose or in any other capacity within the County except as provided in Section 21.10 of this chapter.

21.10 EXCEPTIONS TO KEEPING DANGEROUS ANIMALS.

The prohibition against keeping dangerous animals as defined in Section 21.02(13) shall not apply in the following circumstances:

- A. The keeping of illegal animals in a public zoo, bona fide educational or medical institution, humane society or museum where they are kept as live specimens for the public to view or for the purposes of instruction, research and study.
- B. The keeping of illegal animals for exhibition to the public by a bona fide traveling circus, carnival, exhibit or show.
- C. The keeping of illegal animals in a licensed veterinary hospital or clinic for treatment.
- D. The keeping of illegal animals by a wildlife rescue organization with appropriate permit from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

21.11 LIABILITY FOR DAMAGES.

The owner of a dog shall be liable to any injured party for all damages done by the dog, when the dog is caught in the act of biting, worrying, maiming, or killing a domestic animal, or the dog is attacking or attempting to bite a person, except when the party damaged is doing an unlawful act, directly contributing to the injury. This section does not apply to damage done by a dog affected with rabies unless the owner of the dog has reasonable grounds to know that the dog was afflicted with rabies and by reasonable effort may have prevented the injury.

21.12 HEARINGS AND APPEALS.

In the event that any person or owner is aggrieved by a written ruling or order made by Warren County Health Services Administrator, his/her authorized representative or designee, that person or entity may within five calendar (5) days of the date of such ruling or order, appeal in writing to the Board of Health, stating the reasons for requesting the ruling or order to be rescinded or modified. Within five (5) days of receiving the appeal, the Health Administrator shall hold an inperson or virtual public hearing, hear testimony from the aggrieved party and the Health Administrator or his/her authorized representative or designee, review the action of the Administrative Authority, and modify or withdraw the order, or affirm and require compliance with the order.

If the owner or keeper of the dangerous dog or dangerous animal contests the determination by the Board of Health, he or she may appeal within 15 days to the District Court in Warren County, Iowa. After service upon the Warren County Health Administrator has been made by the

aggrieved party, the Court will set a hearing and determine whether the Board of Health has followed the Chapter 21 of the Warren County Code of Ordinances. If the Court finds that the Board of Health's ruling is in compliance with Chapter 21, the Court may affirm the Board of Health's decision. If the Court finds that the Board of Health's ruling does not comply with Chapter 21, the Court may overturn the Board of Health's decision and order that the dog be released to its owner or caretaker. The Court may rule in the matter whether the owner or caretaker fails to appear at the hearing or attends the hearing. The determination of the District Court shall be final and conclusive upon all parties. Any future actions of the dog or animal shall subject the owner and dog or animal to Chapter 21.

Any costs due to impoundment and/or treatment during the appeal process shall be the responsibility of the owner of the dog or animal. If the animal is to be humanely destroyed, the owner shall be the responsibility of the owner or caretaker.

If such an appeal is initiated, no impounded animal that is the subject of said appeal shall be destroyed until the matter is resolved at any appeal level. The Administrative Authority shall be responsible for notifying the impounding facility of the appeal. The owner shall be responsible for all of the costs of impoundment and treatment.

21.13 ANIMAL WELFARE AND CARE.

Suspected cases of animal neglect will be investigated by the County Sheriff's Office.

All animals shall be maintained with a minimum level of care. This means the care sufficient to reasonably preserve the physical health and condition of the animal(s), and except for emergencies or circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the owner includes but is not limited to the following requirements:

- 1. A sufficient quantity of wholesome feed suitable for the animal's species and age, sufficient to maintain reasonable levels of nutrition, at intervals of not more than twenty-four (24) hours or longer if the dietary requirements of the animal require.
- 2. Reasonable access to a supply of clean, fresh water provided for drinking in amounts and at intervals suitable for the species, not to exceed twenty-four (24) hours at any interval.
- 3. If the animal is a pet, adequate access to a shelter sufficient to ensure that the pet does not suffer unreasonable distress due to natural elements, including but not limited to wind, rain, snow, sun, cold or dampness.
- 4. If the animal is livestock, adequate access to a natural or constructed barrier sufficient to offer reasonable protection against temperature extremes, wind, rain, or snow.
- 5. If the animal is restricted in a confinement area for an extended period, the area shall be kept reasonably clean and free from contaminates, including animal waste, which may threaten the health of the animal.
- 6. Veterinary or farrier care if a reasonably prudent person would advise such care to relieve distress from injury, disease or neglect.

- 7. If the animal is a pet, a confinement area with adequate space for the exercise necessary to preserve the health of the animal and which provides a dry area for the animal to rest. The air temperature or ventilation shall be suitable to preserve the health of a normal animal of the same species.
- 8. If an animal is fastened by a leash, including a rope or chain, which restricts movement of the animal, a leash must be attached to a the animal by a well-fitting collar or harness that is fastened to the animal in a manner designed to prevent injury or entanglement. A leash shall not restrict an animal from access to adequate shelter or sufficient food and water.

In the event that the Warren County Sheriff's Department or the Administrative Authority finds animals in neglected or suffering conditions, the Sheriff (or Warren County Deputies) or the Administrative Authority shall have the right to immediately remove or cause to have removed any such animals to a safe place for care at the owner's expense, providing that the owner is notified by certified mail or by personal service by the Warren County Sheriff's Department or the Administrative Authority before removal, and that removal is conducted pursuant to Chapter 21 of the Warren County Code of Ordinances. If it is determined by the Warren County Sheriff's Department or the Administrative Authority that the animal's status is of a critical nature, the Warren County Sheriff's Department or the Administrative Authority may take immediate steps to protect the animal, including but not limited to having the animal examined by a veterinarian. Return of the animal to the owner shall not be permitted until the owner has made full payment for all expenses incurred by Warren County. Criminal charges may be pursued by Warren County, pursuant to Iowa Code 717 or 717A, if warranted.

21.14 PENALTIES.

Any animal owner or caretaker found to be in violation Chapter 21 herein shall be subject to civil penalties set forth in Chapter 2, County Infractions, Warren County Code of Ordinances. Enforcement of penalties pursuant Chapter 2 County Infractions does not preclude enforcement of penalties under the Code of Iowa.

21.15 SEVERABILITY CLAUSE.

If any section, provision, or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any section, paragraph, provision, or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.