

**From:** Daisy Ruiz  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 7, 2021 11:23 AM  
**To:** Karen Phillips; Bryan Pankhurst  
**Cc:** Christina Flores  
**Subject:** FW: Item 10a in upcoming meeting

Good morning,

Can you please add this email to the agenda item?

Thank you,

**Daisy Ruiz**

*Executive Assistant*

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**Sent:** Thursday, January 07, 2021 9:39 AM

**To:** Daisy Ruiz <[DRuiz@cityofpsl.com](mailto:DRuiz@cityofpsl.com)>; Greg Oravec <[Mayor@cityofpsl.com](mailto:Mayor@cityofpsl.com)>

**Cc:** Shannon Martin <[Shannon.Martin@cityofpsl.com](mailto:Shannon.Martin@cityofpsl.com)>; Christina Flores <[CFlores@cityofpsl.com](mailto:CFlores@cityofpsl.com)>;

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**Subject:** Item 10a in upcoming meeting

Jan 7, 2021

Dear City Council Members,

Happy New Year to you all! While there are residual effects from 2020, we are given a fresh start with the first month of a new year. I hope you are inspired for transformation within and with your leadership in your community.

I am writing again on the subject of Rabbits and your consideration of a Retail Pet Sale Ban that includes them. There is a new reason for action and if you had any doubts about going forward with a Ban, I hope this information erases those doubts.

I was going to update you on the latest horrors of the reality of "rabbit dumping" ( a domestic bun 'set free', and subsequently shot with an arrow, rescued after several days, and taken to a Vet for surgery that the Vet "never wants to do again"). However an even greater horror made an entrance with the New Year. Please check with your own Animal Services for more information on the direct impact this rabbit virus may have on your area.

The Rabbit Community has been keeping tabs on a virus, RHDV ( Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus ), that has spread from Canada to the American North West, to the South West. This virus has now made a leap to Florida in an as-yet undetermined manner. This virus is lethal and highly contagious to wild and domestic rabbits. ( I think of it as Rabbit Ebola) There is a vaccine available in Europe but is entangled in red tape in the U.S.

Specific details are easily available on the Web from Rabbit.org or House Rabbit Society. Sara Kornegay at The Humane Society of the Treasure Coast will be in the information loop on this subject as well as Jennifer Yowonski (who has a small rescue local to you and has advocated for this ban). I am including a link for the map of this virus from the USDA. It does not show the very recent outbreak in Lake County, Fl. which is currently being investigated and involves 18 rabbits on a private property.

The impact of this virus will affect the entire State in regards to the intake of rabbits at shelters, rescues, and even perhaps Veterinary Offices. As rabbits will need a minimum of 14 day quarantine before integration with rabbits already at a facility, the intake at shelters and rescues is going to be minimal. The virus can be tracked in on clothing, shoes, and the paws of other animals which necessitates specific quarantine conditions. People looking to get rid of their “pet” rabbits are going to resort to the “set them free” (or put them in the dumpster) method of disposal (yes, people put rabbits in dumpsters! More often than you want to know).

Due to the highly contagious and lethal aspects of this virus, any outdoor domestic rabbit (whether contained or dumped) is going to be a receiver or spreader of the virus with the wild rabbit population.

As Pet Supermarket rabbits have been documented as coming from a warehouse in Georgia from unknown breeding sources, there is no way to ascertain that consumers are being sold an uninfected rabbit. There are also no protections from employees or consumers spreading the virus in the above mentioned manner. As there is no qualified education being distributed with the sale of a rabbit.....especially if an outdoor hutch is sold as suitable housing.....the virus will be more readily spread by the uninformed.

I sincerely hope that in this New Year you become part of the change that needs to happen for the safety of the consumer and domestic and wild rabbits.

Thank you,  
Gwen Burley  
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<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/rhd>