

Pre-Council Meeting
April 7, 2025
Carolyn Robbins Conference Room
700 Watson Blvd. Warner Robins, GA 31093
4:30 pm

1. Discussion of April 7, 2025 Draft Agenda
2. Old Business
3. New Business
 - a. Backyard Chickens
 - b. Shopping Cart Containment
4. Discussion

DRAFT

STAFF REPORT

DEPARTMENT: CITY ADMINISTRATOR

SUBMITTED BY: JAMES DRINKARD

MEETING DATE: APRIL 07, 2025 (PRE-COUNCIL ONLY)

AGENDA ITEM

Discussion: Shopping Cart Containment Ordinance

Discussion during the Pre-Council Meeting of a proposed ordinance to provide for and regulate the keeping of chickens on certain residential properties in the City of Warner Robins.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is being presented for information and discussion purposes only. No formal action is being requested at this time.

BUDGET AND PROCUREMENT

Budgeted Item: No

Included In Current Operating Budget: No

Fiscal Impact: No

Total Project Cost: N/A

Included In Current Capital Budget: No

Appropriations: No

Account Title / Number	Dollar Amount
N/A	N/A

External Funding Sources:

Account Title / Number	Dollar Amount
N/A	N/A

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Recently, the City of Warner Robins has received requests from residents interested in the City providing for the keeping of chickens on residential properties in the city. The requests received to-date are from residents interested in keeping chickens on their property for personal rather than commercial use.

Staff has researched the ordinances and policies of a number of cities around Georgia and found that many have adopted ordinances in recent years to provide such allowance and to establish regulations regarding minimum lot sizes, minimum setbacks, prohibiting the keeping of roosters, maximum number of hens allowed, and defining minimum facility requirements.

Staff also contacted Code Enforcement offices in several jurisdictions and were advised that those cities had experienced no significant complaints regarding the keeping of chickens in compliance with their ordinances.

ALTERNATIVES

This item is being presented for information and discussion purposes to determine if the Mayor and City Council have interest in providing for such an allowance and if so, what limitations and regulations may be deemed appropriate.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Current Draft Ordinance

DRAFT

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5, ANIMALS, OF THE
CODE OF THE CITY OF WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA TO
PROVIDE FOR REVISED PROVISIONS FOR FOWL; TO REPEAL
ALL ORDINANCES AND PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT
HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, the City of Warner Robins, Georgia (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "City") is a municipality duly formed and existing pursuant to Georgia Law; and

WHEREAS, the 1983 Constitution of the State of Georgia provides for the self-government of municipalities without the necessity of action by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the City of Warner Robins, Georgia has the legislative power to adopt clearly reasonable ordinances, resolutions or regulations relating to its property, affairs and local government for which no provision has been made by general laws, and which are not inconsistent with the Constitution or any charter provision applicable thereto; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Warner Robins, Georgia desires to amend Chapter 5 of the Code of Warner Robins, Georgia as set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED, by the governing authority of the City of Warner Robins, Georgia, by the authority of the same, as follows:

Section 1. That Chapter 5 - Animals, Article I - In General, Section 5-8 – Keeping of wild animals, livestock, or fowl; shall be amended by striking the Section in its entirety and replacing it with a new Section as follows:

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to raise, keep or permit to be raised or kept on premises that he owns or controls within the city limits of Warner Robins any wild nondomestic animal, or any cattle, horses, ponies, donkeys, mules, goats, sheep, or fowl, unless permitted by the ordinances of the city.
- (b) Notwithstanding the prohibition in section (a) above, the keeping of chickens may be allowed, if all of the following requirements are met:
 - (1) No more than eight (8) hens are kept on a residential lot as a non-commercial accessory use.
 - i. Said residential lot must be 21,780 square feet or greater.
 - ii. Residential lots greater than 8 acres may keep one additional hen per every whole acre over 8 acres.
 - (2) No rooster shall be kept upon the property.

- (3) The slaughter of any hen on site is strictly prohibited.
 - (4) Hens shall be confined to a fenced enclosure located in the rear yard only.
 - i. The enclosure shall be at least twenty-five (25) feet from any property lines and fifty (50) feet from any residential structure on adjacent property.
 - ii. The enclosure shall enclose an area of not less than 10 square feet per hen.
 - (5) Within the fenced enclosure, a well-maintained structure (henceforth referred to as a coop) shall be required for the hens. The coop must be less than fifteen (15) feet in height and impermeable to rodents, wild birds, and predators, including dogs and cats, and must contain 2 square feet per hen.
 - (6) The coop and area within the fenced enclosure must be clean and odor-free, always kept in a neat and sanitary condition, in a manner that will not disturb the use or enjoyment of neighboring lots due to noise, odor or other adverse impact.
 - (7) Odors from hens, hen waste, or other hen-related substances shall not be perceptible at the property boundaries.
 - (8) Provision must be made for the storage and removal of hen droppings and any dead birds.
 - i. All stored droppings shall be covered by a fully enclosed structure with a roof or lid over the entire structure.
 - ii. All other droppings not used for composting or fertilizing shall be removed.
 - iii. In addition, the coop, enclosure and surrounding area must be kept free from trash and accumulated droppings.
 - iv. Dead hens must be disposed of in a sanitary manner and shall not be placed in trash or recycling carts as part of the City's curbside solid waste collection program.
 - (9) Perceptible noise from hens shall not be loud enough at the property boundaries to disturb persons of reasonable sensitivity.
- (c) The prohibitions contained in this section shall not apply to real property owned by any governmental entity for use as a school farm.

Section 2. All ordinances or resolutions in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 3. If any provisions of this ordinance are held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any of the other provisions which can be given effect without the invalid provision, and, to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are declared to be severable.

The provisions of this Ordinance were first read on the _____ day of _____, 2025 and shall become effective immediately upon adoption on the _____ day of _____, 2025.

CITY OF WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA

By: _____
LaRhonda W. Patrick, Mayor

Attest:

Mandy Stella, City Clerk

DRAFT

STAFF REPORT

DEPARTMENT: CITY ADMINISTRATOR

SUBMITTED BY: JAMES DRINKARD

MEETING DATE: APRIL 07, 2025 (PRE-COUNCIL ONLY)

AGENDA ITEM

Discussion: Shopping Cart Containment Ordinance

Discussion during the Pre-Council Meeting of a proposed ordinance to regulate shopping carts in the City of Warner Robins including requirements for shopping cart owners to utilize tools to contain shopping carts to their properties.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is being presented for information and discussion purposes only. No formal action is being requested at this time.

BUDGET AND PROCUREMENT

Budgeted Item: No

Included In Current Operating Budget: No

Fiscal Impact: No

Total Project Cost: N/A

Included In Current Capital Budget: No

Appropriations: No

Account Title / Number	Dollar Amount
N/A	N/A

External Funding Sources:

Account Title / Number	Dollar Amount
N/A	N/A

ITEM DESCRIPTION

There has been an increasing trend of shopping carts being taken from store properties and later abandoned at locations throughout Warner Robins, often along sidewalks, near bus stops, in public parks, and on undeveloped private properties. Abandoned shopping carts are a visual blight as well as potential hazards for pedestrian and vehicular traffic on streets, sidewalks, pathways, flood control property, and private property.

The issue is not unique to Warner Robins. According to retail industry research, in the United States, a shopping cart is stolen, damaged, or destroyed every ninety (90) seconds, costing retailers approximately \$180 million annually. The issue also challenges cities across Georgia and throughout the

United States, and a variety of local ordinances have been adopted in an attempt to reduce the ability for individuals to remove shopping carts from the owners' premises and hold shopping cart owners accountable for implementing simple measures to mitigate the nuisance.

During this workshop, the City Attorney will discuss the draft of a shopping cart containment ordinance and seek feedback from the Mayor and City Council. The intent is to determine if the Mayor and City Council have an interest in pursuing adoption of such an ordinance and if so, if any changes to the draft ordinance are desired prior to beginning the public hearing process.

ALTERNATIVES

This item is being presented for information and discussion purposes to determine if it is a desirable option for addressing abandoned shopping carts.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Current Draft Ordinance

DRAFT

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 16, NUISANCES, OF THE
CODE OF THE CITY OF THE CITY OF WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA TO
DEFINE AND PROVIDE FOR REGULATION OF SHOPPING CARTS; TO
PROVIDE FOR EFFECTIVE DATES; TO REPEAL ALL ORDINANCES IN
CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, the City of Warner Robins, Georgia (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "City") is a municipality duly formed and existing pursuant to Georgia Law; and

WHEREAS, the 1983 Constitution of the State of Georgia provides for the self-government of municipalities without the necessity of action by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, retail businesses provide shopping carts for the convenience of customers shopping on the premises of those businesses; and

WHEREAS, abandoned, lost, and/or stolen shopping carts on public or private property contribute to conditions of blight in the community and reduce property values; and

WHEREAS, such shopping carts on public or private property can obstruct free access to sidewalks, streets, and other rights-of-way, interfere with pedestrian and vehicular traffic on pathways, driveways, public and private streets, and impede emergency service vehicles and personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) § 16-8-21 establishes the theft of a shopping cart as a misdemeanor; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council desire to modify and amend the Code of Ordinances so as to regulate the management of shopping carts by retail businesses and improve the regulation of abandoned, lost, and/or stolen shopping carts in the City in order to benefit the public health, safety, and welfare;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED, by the governing authority of the City of Warner Robins, Georgia, by the authority of the same, as follows:

Section 1. That the Code of Ordinances of the City of Warner Robins is hereby amended by adding a new Article IV to Chapter 16 as provided in Exhibit A.

Section 2. Severability

It is hereby declared to be the intention of the Mayor and City Council that the sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases of this Ordinance are severable, and if any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, or section hereof shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional or, if the provisions of any part of this Ordinance as applied to any particular situation or set of circumstances shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity shall not be construed to affect the portions of this Ordinance not so held to be invalid, or the application of this Ordinance to other circumstances not so held to be invalid. It is hereby declared as the intent of the Mayor and Council that this Ordinance would have been adopted in its current form without the invalid or unconstitutional provision contained therein.

Section 3. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall be effective sixty (60) days following adoption.

Section 4. Repealer

All ordinances or parts of ordinances found to be in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

The provisions of this Ordinance were first read on the _____ day of _____, 2025 and shall become effective immediately upon adoption on the _____ day of _____, 2025.

CITY OF WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA

By: _____
LaRhonda W. Patrick, Mayor

Attest:

Mandy Stella, City Clerk

Exhibit A

ARTICLE IV. SHOPPING CART CONTAINMENT

Section 16-42. Purpose

The purpose of this article is to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Warner Robins, Georgia by providing for the prompt retrieval of abandoned, lost, and/or stolen shopping carts; to require the owners and operators of businesses providing shopping carts to use the means available to them to deter, prevent, or mitigate the removal of shopping carts from their business premises; and to prevent the illegal removal of shopping carts from business premises.

Section 16-43. Definitions

For the purposes of this article, the following terms shall apply:

- (a) "Shopping cart" shall mean a basket mounted on wheels or a similar device which is generally used in a retail establishment by a customer for the purpose of transportation of goods of any kind.
- (b) "Abandoned" shall mean a shopping cart that is left unattended or discarded upon public or private property other than the premises of the retail establishment from which the shopping cart was removed, regardless of whether such shopping cart was removed from the premises with the permission of the owner. For purposes of this article, any shopping cart left unattended or discarded on any public property shall be presumed abandoned, and any shopping cart left unattended or discarded on any private property shall be presumed abandoned unless the owner or occupant of the private property is: (i) the owner, employee, or authorized agent of the owner, entitled to possession of said shopping cart, (ii) an officer, employee, or agent of a cart retrieval service hired by the owner to retrieve shopping carts, or (iii) is enforcement personnel retrieving, storing, or disposing of a shopping cart pursuant to the provisions of this article.
- (c) "Preventative measures" shall mean a description of the specific measures that a business owner will implement to prevent removal of any shopping cart from the business premises. Such measures shall include electronic or other disabling devices on any shopping cart so they cannot be removed from the business premises.

Section 16-44. Registration required.

- (a) No business, store, or retail establishment with ten (10) or more shopping carts shall provide any shopping cart for customer use without first obtaining a registration certificate under this article.
- (b) An owner of a business, store, or retail establishment required to obtain a registration certificate under this article, or their designated representative, shall submit an application to the Department for a registration certificate on a form provided by the City, on an annual basis, accompanied by a non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00. Such application shall include:
 - 1. The name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the applicant;
 - 2. Ownership information, including the name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number of each person or entity with an ownership interest in the business, store, or retail establishment;

3. The complete street address of the premises where shopping carts are to be offered to customers for use;
 4. A copy of the Shopping Cart Containment and Retrieval Plan required by Section 16-47;
 5. Acknowledgement that the owner or applicant has or will post, at the premises, the notice required in Section 16-45;
 6. Acknowledgement that the owner or applicant has or will affix the required identification to all shopping carts of the business as required in Section 16-46; and
 7. Acknowledgment that the applicant has read and understands all regulations of this article.
- (c) Within 10 business days of the filing of the completed application, the [REDACTED] Director, or his or her designee, shall issue a registration certificate to the applicant, or shall issue a written notice of denial. A registration certificate shall be issued to an applicant unless the application does not meet the minimum requirements of this article.
- (d) All certificates granted under this article shall expire on December 31 of each year.

Section 16-45. Required Posting Of Signage By Businesses

The owner of each business, store, or retail establishment with ten (10) or more shopping carts is required to post at each exit from the establishment signage, with a minimum of three-inch red or black lettering on a white background, advising that the unauthorized removal of shopping carts from the premises is a misdemeanor.

Section 16-46. Required Identification Affixed To Shopping Carts

- (a) Each business, store, or retail establishment with ten (10) or more shopping carts shall affix and permanently maintain on each shopping cart made available for use by customers signage, with a minimum of one-inch lettering, containing the following information:
1. The identity of owner, or owner's business establishment, or both;
 2. The address of the owner of the business establishment for shopping cart return and a working phone number at which a person may contact the owner to retrieve the shopping cart; and
 3. Notification to the public that the unauthorized removal of the shopping cart from the premises is a misdemeanor.
- (b) It shall be a violation of this article for any person to detach the sign or deface the name or address marked on a sign, which is properly marked on a shopping cart in conformity with this section.

Section 16-47. Shopping Cart Containment And Retrieval Plan

Each business, store or retail establishment with ten (10) or more shopping carts shall prepare, submit, implement, and comply with the terms of a specific plan to contain its shopping carts on its premises, to prevent the unauthorized removal of any shopping cart from the premises, and to provide for the retrieval of shopping carts if found removed from the premises. Plans must be provided to the City as part of the annual application for a registration certificate as provided in Section 16-44, as well as within twenty-four (24) hours upon request by the City. The plan shall include:

- (a) Owner/point of contact information. The name of the owner/manager; the physical address where the retail establishment is conducted; and the name, address, and telephone number(s) of the owner/manager and any point of contact to call and report an abandoned cart, including any changes of such persons.
- (b) Acknowledgement that every shopping cart shall have a sign permanently affixed to it fully compliant with the requirements of Section 16-46 of this article.
- (c) Acknowledgement that signs shall be placed and maintained on the premises, as required by Section 16-45.
- (d) Preventative measures. The plan must list all preventative measures the business, store or retail establishment will use and maintain to shopping carts on its premises.
 1. At a minimum, these measures shall include:
 - a. Electronic or other disabling devices on any cart so they cannot be removed from the business premises.
 - b. Providing personnel for the purposes of the retrieval of lost, stolen, or abandoned shopping carts. Such personnel may be either employees of the business or one or more independent contractors hired by the owner to provide shopping cart retrieval services, or a combination of both.
 2. Additional preventative measures may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Installing bollards and chains around business entrances/exits to prevent cart removal;
 - b. Providing carts for rental or sale that can be temporarily or permanently used for the purpose of transporting purchases;
 - c. Use of courtesy clerks to accompany customers to their vehicles and return carts to the inside of the business premises;
 - d. Education provided to customers regarding criminal penalties associated with the unauthorized removal of shopping carts from the premises; or
 - e. Other demonstrably effective measures likely to prevent removal of carts from the business premises.
- (e) At any time, each business, store, or retail establishment may modify its plan to address a change in circumstances, address an unanticipated physical or economic impact of the plan, or modify an inadequate or ineffective plan. Any such modification shall be transmitted to the City within two (2) weeks of modification.

Section 16-48. New Development Requirements

New developments and/or business establishments of 10,000 square feet or more in building area and having ten (10) or more shopping carts shall be required to provide, upon request, a Shopping Cart Containment and Retrieval Plan prior to the issuance of a business license.

Section 16-49. Employee Training

The owner of each business, store, or retail establishment with ten (10) or more shopping carts shall communicate the Shopping Cart Containment and Retrieval Plan to new and existing store managers designed to educate such employees concerning the requirements of the plan and the provisions of state law prohibiting the unauthorized removal of shopping carts from the premises of

the business, store, or retail establishment.

Section 16-50. Impoundment Of Abandoned Shopping Carts

The City may immediately impound an abandoned or lost shopping cart found on private land within the City with the consent of the party in possession of the land and may immediately impound an abandoned or lost shopping cart on public land within the City. However, nothing in this code section shall prevent the City from contacting the owner of a shopping cart to provide for the prompt removal of an abandoned or lost shopping cart as an alternative to impoundment.

Section 16-51. Operation Of Shopping Cart On Public Right-Of-Way

In addition to any criminal penalties that may be applicable under state law for theft of a shopping cart, a person found in possession of or operating a shopping cart on any public right-of-way within the City is guilty of a violation of this article.

Section 16-52. Enforcement

The provisions of this article shall be enforced by City police or City code enforcement officers, who may exercise good faith discretion in the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this article. Nothing in this article shall in any way preclude the City from taking any other civil action authorized by law in furtherance of enforcing the requirements of this article.

Section 16-53. Civil Penalties

- (a) Any violation of this article shall be a civil violation and shall not constitute a misdemeanor or infraction, and shall result in the imposition of the following progressive civil penalties and actions:
1. The first violation within a consecutive 12-month period shall result in a civil penalty not to exceed \$250.00 and a written warning notice of violation.
 2. The second violation within a consecutive 12-month period shall result in a civil penalty not to exceed \$500.00 and a certificate suspension for a period of not less than thirty (30) days nor more than ninety (90) days.
 3. The third or any subsequent violation within a consecutive 12-month period shall result in a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000.00 and the revocation of the registration certificate, and neither the owner nor the retail establishment shall be eligible to reapply for a certificate under this article for a period of six (6) months from the date of revocation.
- (b) Nothing contained in this subsection shall be construed to preclude the City Council from suspending or revoking a certificate for a period exceeding those periods identified in sections 16-53(a)(2) or (3) or from revoking the certificate if the City Council determines in its discretion that such action is necessary and in the best interest of the public health, safety, and welfare of the City.
- (c) In all cases, the mandatory suspension period may be mitigated by the City Council upon presentation of evidence that the retail establishment has established practices and procedures to prevent the violation from occurring.

Section 16-54. Appeals of Civil Penalties

- (a) Assessments of civil penalties under Section 16-53(a) of this article, or appeals of the administrative denial of a registration certificate under this article, may be appealed by

filing a written notice of appeal, setting forth the reasons for the appeal, with the [redacted] Director or his or her designee within fourteen (14) days after the date of notification of the assessment of civil penalties or other enforcement or administrative decision.

- (b) The failure to file a notice of appeal within this period shall constitute a waiver of the right to contest the assessment of civil penalties or other enforcement or administrative decisions.
- (c) Appeals will be considered by the [redacted] Director, or a hearing officer designated by the [redacted] Director. Appeal hearings shall be conducted within fourteen (14) calendar days of the filing of the appeal, unless the parties mutually agree to extend the time for such a hearing. The [redacted] Director or hearing officer shall review an appeal from the assessment of civil penalties or other enforcement or administrative decisions using a preponderance of the evidence standard. Notwithstanding a determination that the preponderance of the evidence supports the assessment of civil penalties or other enforcement or administrative decision, the [redacted] Director or hearing officer shall have the discretion to dismiss or reduce civil penalties or reverse any other enforcement or administrative decision upon a finding of good cause or extenuating circumstances. The [redacted] Director or hearing officer shall make a decision regarding the appeal within five (5) days of the hearing and shall provide notice of same to the appellant in writing.
- (d) The decision of the [redacted] Director or designated hearing officer may be appealed to the City Council in accordance with the provisions of Section 16-56. An appeal to the City Council must be filed in writing within fourteen (14) days after the date of the notice of decision by the [redacted] Director or hearing officer.

Sec. 16-55. – Suspension or Revocation of Registration Certificate

Any suspension, revocation, or forfeiture of an issued certificate shall occur only after notice and opportunity for a hearing before the City Council consistent with the procedures set forth in this article and upon the following occurrences:

- (a) A retail establishment is found to be in violation of this article.
- (b) An applicant furnished fraudulent or untruthful information in the application for a registration certificate, or omitted information required in the application for a registration certificate, or failed to pay all fees, taxes, or other charges imposed under the provisions of this article, in which case the City Council may immediately suspend or revoke the registration certificate.
- (c) A retail establishment does not meet the qualifications set forth in this article at any time such knowledge becomes known to the City Council, in which case the City Council shall immediately suspend or revoke the registration certificate.
- (d) A retail establishment has offered shopping carts to customers for use during a period of suspension of a registration certificate, in which case the City Council shall immediately revoke the registration certificate.

Sec. 16-56. – Hearing on Denial, Suspension or Revocation

- (a) Upon receipt of a timely appeal (accompanied by a fee of \$250.00) of a decision of the [redacted] Director or designated hearing officer as set forth in Section 16-54, upon presentation of evidence to the [redacted] Director of a violation of this article as

contemplated in Section 16-53(a)(2) or (3), or upon a showing of any of the other occurrences set forth in Section 16-55, the [redacted] Director shall schedule a hearing before the City Council and provide written notice to the adverse party of the time, place and date of the scheduled hearing. The [redacted] Director shall also state in the written notice the basis for the administrative denial or the violation or occurrence alleged that forms the basis for the denial or potential suspension or revocation. After notice of hearing, matters scheduled for hearing may only be continued by agreement of the City Attorney and the adverse party and/or counsel for the adverse party.

- (b) The City Council shall have the duty of conducting hearings concerning the denial, revocation, or suspension of a certificate, as well as appeals of decisions as contemplated in Section 16-54. The standard of proof on all issues in the hearing shall be a preponderance of the evidence and a determination will be made on the basis of the evidence presented at the hearing.
- (c) At the hearing, after presentation of the case against the adverse party, the adverse party will have an opportunity to present his case, to rebut the allegations made against him, and present whatever defenses he has. The adverse party shall have the right to be represented by an attorney, at the expense of the adverse party, and to present evidence and cross-examine opposing witnesses.
- (d) At the conclusion of the hearing, the findings and conclusions of the City Council shall be forwarded to the [redacted] Director, and it shall be the duty of the [redacted] Director to provide written notification via certified mail to the adverse party of the decision of the City Council.
- (e) The decision of the City Council shall be final unless appealed to the Superior Court of Houston County within thirty (30) days of receipt of the [redacted] Director's written notification to the adverse party of the City Council's decision.
- (f) For purposes of this section, notice shall be deemed delivered when personally served or when served by certified mail postage prepaid within three (3) days after the date of deposit in the United States Mail.