

DURHAM COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of September 28, 2021

Present:

Committee Members: Marianne Bond, Jan Paul, Kari Linfors, Brian Mulligan, Joy Nolan, Amanda Gardner
Non-voting Members: Commissioner Heidi Carter, Mark Manning, Richard Rose, Leah Santelli, Shafonda Davis

Community Members: Anissa Litwin, Sarah Reichman

Committee Counsel: Willie Darby

Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, November 23, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Item I - Introductory Remarks

The meeting was called to order by acting Chair, Marianne Bond. The July 2021 meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum; therefore, the minutes of the May 25, 2021, meeting were approved as amended.

Item II – Animal Services Report

Capt. Manning reported that the DCSO had 789 calls for service in August. The average overall dispatch time was 19 minutes. There were 183 incident reports and 195 offenses involving different animals, including dogs, cats, goats, birds, bats, rabbits, raccoons, and large tortoises; offenses included abandonment, nuisance, and failure to vaccinate for rabies. 103 animals were impounded, and 10 were returned to owner (8 dogs, 2 goats). 11 rabies reports were investigated, involving 10 bats and 1 cat, but none tested positive for rabies. 39 animals were surrendered (35 dogs, 4 cats).

Commissioner Carter commended Capt. Manning and his team for their responsiveness to citizen complaints and extended thanks to the Durham County Sheriffs Office on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.

Item III – Shelter Report

The shelter has been extremely busy; the kennels are full of dogs. Most animals come in as strays; 363 entered in August, the majority being dogs. The shelter is committed to giving more animals a chance, including those with behavioral challenges, and medical cases in foster homes. Animals have been transferred to other rescues; 195 were adopted. The APS appreciates information being disseminated relating to tags and chips. Most euthanasia cases are for behavioral issues; other reasons include rabies suspects, feral cats, medical issues, and age. There is a hospice care foster program for elderly animals. There are many cats in foster care, as many as 200 at a time. There is a need for additional care, technicians, although the shelter has a full-time veterinarian and 3 medical technicians. More adult cats need to be adopted or fostered.

Tails at Twilight

The Tails at Twilight Gala will again be held virtually given the COVID Delta variant. Information is posted on the APS website.

Volunteers

The shelter welcomed back volunteers in person; many are back to work. Individuals 16 years of age and older can apply to volunteer.

Item IV – Old Business

Bylaws

The Bylaws need to be updated and corrections made; Jan Paul will send a copy of the existing bylaws to attorney Darby, who will revise them and provide them to the Committee.

TNVR

On September 9th, Jan Paul gave a presentation to a work session of the Board of County Commissioners relating to Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Release Programs. Workgroup members Marianne Bond and Sarah Reichman were invaluable in working on the PowerPoint for the presentation. The PowerPoint presentation addressed various issues surrounding TNVR, and focused on needs, goals, financial implications, and community partnership resources. Attorney Darby commended the presentation, noting that the issue is now further down the road, and stated that Kelsey Gilmore-Futeral, J.D., Legislative Attorney for Best Friends Animal Society, has assisted the Durham County Attorney's office in redlining Durham's existing ordinances and suggesting changes to make Durham TNVR friendly as recommended by this Committee. Attorney Darby will prepare a draft ordinance for this Committee to review, discuss, and possibly vote on in its December 2021 meeting. Any recommended ordinance changes will be sent to the Board of County Commissioners. If a new ordinance is adopted, next steps will include a discussion of program costs and who will bear what costs, as well as how and by whom a program will be developed and implemented. Some Committee discussion ensued, including the observation that in general, a nonprofit organization runs a TNVR program. It is rare that a county bears the costs of a TNVR program, although Burlington in Alamance and Lincoln County do. The issues of who, how, and how much are required to develop and administer a TNVR program depends on overall community resources.

If and only the Board of County Commissioners adopts an ordinance that would allow TNVR, issues will then need to be addressed such as the personnel and other resource costs of trapping, shelter care, and euthanizing community cats versus the costs of TNVR. It is hoped that such a program would be funded by grant, donated, or other funds. Durham's APS is currently facing financial struggles and would not currently be in a position to spearhead or finance a TNVR program, and the Durham Sheriff's Office is facing a staffing level crisis, with approximately 90 vacancies agencywide. Independent Animal Rescue has been a valuable resource in Durham. The APS and the Sheriff's Office would be encouraged to partner with a community organization to achieve this Committee's goals for a Community Cat Program: A decrease in the euthanasia rate; a decrease in the feral cat population in the community; minimization of public health risks; and obtaining resources to assist the Shelter and Animal Services in providing services and education.

Committee Member Terms and Election of Officers

Attorney Darby will check with the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners to verify whose terms expire at the end of January and obtain information on appointments and election of officers. A December agenda item will be to form a nominating committee for AWAC appointments.

Item V – New Business

The Committee asked Commissioner Carter to extend its thanks to the Board of County Commissioners for allowing the TNVR presentation in its September work session and for its support of a TNVR program in Durham.

Item V – Public Comments

Without objection from the Committee members, public input was permitted out of order during the Agenda Item IV, discussion of TNVR.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

Following the close of business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Perrin Paul
Committee Secretary