

DURHAM COUNTY
ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 24, 2022
7:00 PM

Present:

Committee Members: Marianne Bond, Jan Paul, Kari Linfors, Amanda Gardner, Dr. Kate Bremser, Kari Linfors, Paul MacKinnon, Joy Nolan

Non-voting Members: Commissioner Heidi Carter, Mark Manning, Wendy Pinner, Leah Santelli, Shafonda Allen

Observer: Brian Mulligan, Kelsey Gilmore-Futeral, John Graves, Shenell Little

Community Members: Sarah Reichman, Sarah McDonald

Committee Counsel: Willie Darby

Item I – Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Jan Paul provided welcome remarks and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A roll call was taken and there was a quorum.

Item II - Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Marianne Bond and seconded by Dr. Kate Bremser to approve the meeting minutes from the January 25, 2022, meeting. The minutes were approved.

Item III – Animal Services Report

Captain Manning provided the following highlights for the Animal Services Report: Officers responded to 902 calls for service in April, which is down 100 from March. Response times were 21 minutes, and 199 reports were taken in April. One hundred ninety-nine animals were impounded which include cats, dogs, birds, fish, etc. Twenty-two were returned to their owners (21 dogs and 1 cat). Twenty-one home checks were conducted, and 37 animals were surrendered in April.

Other activities reported include: 41 dogs impounded, responding to 92 nuisance animal calls year to date, and 76 animals received rabies vaccines.

Item IV – Shelter Report

Director Allen reported that there was a significant increase in animals coming into the shelter this year as compared to last year. Currently there are more dogs at the shelter than they can care for, and most are healthy and happy. However, there are several that need special

surgeries. Dr. Bishop remains the veterinarian of record but retired several months back. The special surgeries are being done at partner veterinarians at a discounted cost.

Although the shelter has a record number of dogs, they have also adopted out more animals in the last 6 months than they have in history.

The shelter also had two vans; however, both have become inoperable this past month. The shelter is in need of new vehicles for transportation. Director Allen also said the shelter continues to partner with out of state rescues and shelters. Dr. Bremser has assisted with providing last minute health certificates for these animals. See attached reports for further information.

Item V – Old Business

Bylaw Update: The correction/modification of Committee Bylaws is in the process of being updated. Attorney Darby has the most recent document and is in the process of reviewing.

BOCC Action on AWAC's Proposed Ordinance Modifications:

The county commissioners met on April 23 and there was some discussion about the proposed ordinance updates. The ordinance is clear and a public hearing is scheduled for July 11, 2022.

https://durhamcounty.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1307

There was a discussion to clarify that the ordinance does not establish a TNVR Program -- the ordinance amendments are intended only to remove barriers so that a program could be allowed. Captain Manning spoke on behalf of the Sheriff Birkhead who had concerns about the way the amendments were written in that, in his opinion and that of the Sheriff's legal staff, the changes placed responsibility for TNVR on the sheriff's department and APS of Durham. Director Allen with APS states that their understanding was that neither sheriff's office nor APS were solely accountable for implementation. APS wants the barriers to be lifted so that the community can act. The sections of the ordinance in question were briefly reviewed and the language says "may" which will give authority to the sheriff's department to act in reference to TNVR and not require them to take action.

A question was asked, and Acting Chair Jan Paul requested a motion to change the order of business on the agenda. Marianne Bond made a motion to move away from the agenda and allow questions. The motion was seconded, and Mr. Graves said that the most successful TNVR programs are those where a non-profit and other members of the public create a partnership.

Commissioner Carter expresses appreciation to APS and this committee regarding their work trying to resolve these complicated issues.

Expiring Terms and Election of Officers:

Jan Paul reviewed the voting member positions and questioned if there was another position that needed to be filled. Mr. Mulligan tendered resignation from the committee, and he was an at large member selected by the County Commissioners. Mr. MacKinnon was appointed as an at large member from sheriff's department in March 2022. Confirmation with the clerk is needed to determine whether there is still an open position.

The election of officers for the committee is two years overdue and the Nominating Committee did not have an update as to recommendation for the selection of officers. They plan on having a recommendation at the next meeting.

Attorney Darby suggested that the positions for the committee be determined. A motion was made by Amanda Gardner that the following positions be created in the bylaws and those officers elected: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Assistant Secretary. The motion was seconded by Dr. Bremser and passed unanimously.

Dangerous Dog Law and Ordinance:

Mr. Mulligan brought up an issue with the dangerous dog law and ordinance in the way it is written, in that, a leashed dog that defends itself against an unleashed, uncontrolled dog, may be deemed a dangerous dog. Mr. Mulligan said he is working to get the law changed but has run into a few roadblocks. There were questions as to whether the issues presented fall under this committee and, or whether county commissioners need to direct the committee to research it more. Lt. Pinner, with animal services, said they can only enforce the way they are written and determine whether the victim dog is in the wrong or not; Animal Services understands the trauma on both sides. A suggestion to add the language of "without provocation" to the ordinance was made and Mr. Mulligan believes the county can make changes whereas amending the state statutes is very unlikely.

Item VI – New Business

None noted.

Item VII – Public Comments

Community member, Sarah McDonald, had a question about the animal shelter report and the reasons for the increases in returns and surrenders. Director Davis and Assistant Director Santelli spoke on the subject and said that the majority, 63% of strays in April seems to be a trend of well-kept animals, running loose untagged. They also saw issues of animals being surrendered because of lack of housing or changes in living situations as well as financial problems. Ms. McDonald asked about Beyond Fences and Ms. Santelli provided information that they are limited to a specific zip code. Lt. Pinner also mentioned breed restrictions for housing.

The meeting was adjourned, and the next meeting will be held Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianne Bond, Acting Secretary