

COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of November 22, 2022

Present:

Committee Members: Kate Bremser, Kari Linfors, Paul Mackinnon, Elizabeth Overcash, Jan Paul

Non-voting Members: Commissioner Heidi Carter, Wendy Pinner, Leah Santelli, Shafonda Davis

Community Members: Sarah Reichman, Jenny Campbell, Brian Mulligan

Committee Counsel: (not present)

Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, January 24, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

Item I - Introductory Remarks

The meeting was called to order by acting Chair, Kari Linfors. The minutes of the September 2022 meeting were not available and approval was deferred.

Item II – Animal Services Report

Deputy Pinner reported that the DCSO had 757 calls for service in October; response time averaged 19 minutes, with on-scene response time 25 minutes. There were 10 community events/presentations by the DCSO to various groups, including schools, animal safety presentations, and a PAC meeting. There were 170 reports, 172 incidents, including abandoned, injured, stray, and dangerous animals. 127 animals were impounded, including 50 dogs (1 nuisance), 16 cats (nuisance), 1 chicken, 1 rabbit. There were 3 rabies investigations involving 2 bats and one cat tested; 2 were negative. 34 animals were surrendered, including 29 dogs, 4 cats. Rabies clinic inoculated 74 animals. There were 63 warnings, including civil penalties for at-large animal violations. There were 25 unfounded abuse cases. DCSO Animal Services personnel have been spread thin, covering patrol, the jail, parades. The DCSO is signing trapping permits so that citizens can set traps, and are currently not initiating trapping at the request of APS.

Item III – Shelter Report

Shelter is significantly up. The shelter is full of dogs, cats, and guinea pigs. Adopting out is improving, rescues have increased, foster-to-adopt and overnight/weekend fosters are options. The shelter vet is returning full-time, and Dr. Susan Elmore is helping as an emergency surgeon. A search is ongoing for Development Director for fundraising purposes, to replace Darlene Fiscus. The Gala raised \$243,000, nearing the goal of \$279,000. The community spay neuter program served 60 animals in September, and microchipping programs are continuing. The shelter has discussed barn cat/working cat options to deal with population issues.

Item IV – Old Business

The members discussed proposed updated Bylaws prepared by Attorney Darby. Concerns were voiced regarding the provision that AWAC would set fees for spay-neuter adoption, as these fees are and should be managed by APS. Officer elections are to be held at the AWAC January 2023 meeting.

Marianne Bond will serve as interim AWAC Chair, and Amanda Gardner will be interim Secretary. Kari Linfors and Amanda Gardner will serve as the nominating committee.

Community Cat/TNVR

Following a stakeholder meeting, the County Manager determined that three attorneys were to meet to discuss legal issues related to the proposed AWAC TNVR ordinance; The County Attorney's office (Massey), the attorney for the DCSO (Lovelace), and an attorney for Best Friends Animal Society (Gilmore-Futeral, who was instrumental in drafting the initial proposed ordinance).

Wendy Pinner reported that after a line-by-line review of the proposed ordinance, the DCSO saw possible problems with proposed language, including the definition of ownership; issues with people who wanted to take responsibility for community cats but not be legally responsible; nuisance provisions (a section of the ordinance was removed); remedies for citizens who don't want cats; the permit requirement (DCSO cannot give permission for individuals to go upon the property of others); the hold period. The DCSO does not oppose the removal of the permit requirement. Concerns include the liability and responsibility of the DCSO.

Commissioner Carter expressed her confidence that although discussions are behind with respect to the timetable set by the BOCC for finalization of the proposed ordinance (July through February, and not started until the end of October), Attorney Massey is working on it.

The Committee discussed the hold period – State law requires 72 hours, while Durham County's ordinance requires 5 days. Opinions expressed included how the hold period affects the issue of strays, potentially dangerous dogs, and does not save lives. Surrounding issues involve consideration of defending humans, and mitigating circumstances.

Item V – New Business

There was no new business.

Item VI – Public Comments

Dr. Jenny Campbell talked about the need for community education and discourse, and for the community to understand how difficult the issues confronting Durham are. 60% of strays are lost pets.

Future agendas should include conversation regarding feral cats, pet overpopulation, and resource needs. The Committee discussed the need for low-cost spay-neuter education and outreach. The biggest need is for strong spay-neuter resources. Needed community resources were reviewed and discussed. Independent Animal Rescue is an important and critical contributor to this need. Among topics debated were costs of surgery (\$170 for a private vet to spay a cat; need-based \$20 "fix" programs), County funding options.

The next (virtual) meeting will be Tuesday, January 24, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Perrin Paul, J.D.
Acting Committee Secretary