

Franklin County Animal Advisory Board Minutes October 22, 2008

The Animal Advisory Board of Franklin County, North Carolina met at 7:00 p.m. at the Animal Shelter on T Kemp Rd. The following Board Members were present: ex-officio members: Franklin County Animal Control Director Graham Stallings, Commissioner Bob Winters, Franklin County Humane Society President Ida Estep and Kimberley Barth, DVM; voting Board Members: Dianne Barrett, Chip Broughton, Elyse Goldman, DVM, Brenda Simmons, and Paulette Woods. Also present were Franklin County Manager Angela Harris and Lawanna Johnson, a member of the general public. Absent: voting members Bess Nicholson and John Ryan.

1) Feral Cat Issue

Johnson made a public comment regarding the handling of feral cats at the County landfill and their subsequent treatment at Animal Control. Just prior to the AAB meeting, Johnson had attended a meeting at Franklin County Manager Angela Harris's office, during which she requested permission to create a managed feral cat colony at the landfill. Citing liability issues, County attorney Darnell Batton had declined such permission.

Speaking to the AAB, Johnson detailed more of her concerns, again requesting permission to manage, via a trap/neuter/release program, feral cats at the landfill. She stated that the work would be underwritten by a fund at Safe Haven, which would undertake the sterilization, vaccination and other veterinary treatment of cats trapped at the site. Adoptable cats would be placed in an adoption program. After recovery, feral cats would be returned to the site, which Johnson would manage, feeding them away from public contact and monitoring and tracking the colony. Johnson currently manages other feral cat colonies in the County and believes this proposal would decrease County costs.

Johnson also asked that AC ensure that trapped cats be given food and water and generally humane treatment. Further she suggested that the state-mandated three-day holding period for strays be extended for cats since, without a leash law, people with outside cats might not realize their cats were missing until after the three-day period. Also she recommended that AC notify neighborhoods where trapping has taken place and that residents visiting AC seeking lost cats be allowed to view all cats available, whether deemed domestic or feral.

Responding to Johnson's proposals, Barrett observed "that when you have a rescue group that is willing to spay/neuter, test, give shots, feed and monitor at no charge, an opportunity like that doesn't come around often".

Observing that the AAB acts as an advisory Board with policy recommendations to the Commissioners, Harris recommended additional training for AC staff in recognizing and

differentiating between domestic and feral cats. She agreed that trapped cats should have food, water and that the holding period should be extended. After a discussion of various ways of dealing with the liability issue, Harris stated she would talk with Darnell Batton concerning the liability of Johnson on county property and then the AAB could make their recommendations on handling the feral cats at the landfill.

Simmons stated Chatham County currently has a program in place to handle feral cats and she will inquire into their procedure.

Stallings stated once the procedure for handling feral versus domestic cats is decided it will be added to AC SOP. He agreed with the neighborhood notification recommendation and stated food and water will be provided for trapped cats and people searching for a lost animal will be allowed to view these cats.

Barth stated if you concentrate T/N/R in a restricted area you will reduce the number of cats, also reducing the number entering the shelter and being euthanized. She added that the shelter scans animals for an identifying microchip but is in need of a universal scanner.

Estep stated that the Humane Society had donated a scanner to AC and she will check into having a universal scanner provided for the shelter.

2) Focusing on one idea to completion

Harris stated the AAB needs to narrow its scope of projects, concentrating on spay/neuter and public education to reduce the population at large, thus reducing the large number of animals euthanized at the shelter.

Broughton stated the AAB has many issues to discuss, we should focus on one topic, research, vote and move onto the next.

Stallings recommended focusing on licensing and fees for dogs and cats, different fees for sterilized versus not sterilized. Once licensing is enforced it will take care of spay/neuter and rabies.

Winters suggested charging a different fee for show and hunting dogs.

Simmons stated every study has shown that mandating spay/neuter, licensing, charging more for animals not sterilized are the only things that will reduce the number of animals. Simmons will check county websites for updates and their license fees.

Barth stated she can provide a list of low cost spay/neuter options.

Broughton stated the AAB will revisit the licensing information from Simmons and recommend licensing fees.

3) Update on Volunteers and the Recruitment Meeting/Disaster Planning Meeting

Barth suggested creating a volunteer training manual, giving volunteers a cohesive plan, what is expected of them; to feel like a part of the facility.

Harris stated any program has training, expectations laid out; reinforced with what is expected of them, giving volunteers a sense of pride being able to accomplish these tasks.

AC and the AAB would like to have the volunteers involved in the writing of the training manual.

Stallings stated NCSU Veterinary Students have finished training at the shelter giving exams and shots.

Simmons stated in the future this would be a good opportunity to follow up with publicity which may help get animals adopted since they would already have exams, tests, shots and wormed. Then adopters could take animals to local vets for spay/neuter.

Stallings stated the volunteer recruitment meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2008. The meeting will be an open forum allowing volunteers to ask questions and become familiar with the shelter.

Estep stated that on November 10, 2008 at the Emergency Service Building (EOC) at 2 p.m., there would be a meeting to discuss the Franklin County Companion Animal Sheltering Plan, emergency preparedness for animals.

4) The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Shelter.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by Paulette Woods, Secretary to the Board

