**DURHAM COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting of January 28, 2020**

**Present:** *Committee Members:*Jenny Campbell, Jan Paul, Heidi Carter, Kate Bremser, Joy Nolan, Marianne Bond

*APS Board Members and APS Staff:* Tim Deck, Shafonda Davis

*Community Members:* Kristin Lang,Anissa Litwin, Sarah Reichman, Beth Wyatt

*Attorney to the Board:* Willie S. Darby

**Next Meeting: March 24, 2020** **at 7:00 p.m. at APS Shelter**

**Item I - Approval of Minutes and Introductory Remarks**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jenny Campbell at 7:15 p.m. The minutes of the meeting of September 23, 2019, were approved as amended.

**Item II – Budget Report**

Capt. Tim Deck provided a summary of the budget retreat that occurred last week. Effective August 2019, workload and personnel shortages caused Animal Services to cutback its hours of operation to Priority 1 calls. After 7:00 p.m., response will be for aggressive, dangerous, and injured animals and severe bites (i.e., not strays). Calls for service are up 12% for the year. Regarding response time, an ABL service switch on 4/20 or 5/20 should help improve response time for calls. Animal Services has impounded 2,370 animals, representing a 1% increase because of large cases. The number of raccoons impounded has doubled because the animals were reported to display symptoms, but most were negative for rabies, and there have been a large number of cats trapped at multiple locations. 212 animals were returned in the field, up from approximately 145 over the prior year; more than 650 have been returned during the 4 years the program has been in effect.

**Item III – Shelter Report**

*Intake, Outcome, Euthanasia Statistics*

Shafonda Davis, Shelter Director, provided a report on intake and outcome statistics and euthanasia reasons (attached to minutes and incorporated herein by reference). Intake has increased. Significantly, more non-dogs and cats were taken in. The shelter is getting in more strays, fewer surrenders and euthanasia requests by owners. Adoptions are up, euthanasia is down, return to owners is down because of (1) returns from the field, and (2) aggressive microchipping programs. Shelter staff are encouraged by December’s live release rate. 14 animals are currently on a cruelty hold in the court system, including 3 goldfish. Volunteers logged 2,370 hours in December, representing a 45% increase from last year. In addition to dogs and cats, rats, guinea pigs, and rabbits have been in the small animal shelter.

Participation in the feasibility study for a new shelter was excellent. Animal Arts, the designer, brought shelter experts with them, visited the Orange County Shelter, and assessed needs, growth, and types of animals in the community – the number of dogs is down, the number of cats is up. Last week, there was a review of what it would take to repair the building, including a new roof, plumbing, and electrical improvements and repairs. It is anticipated that the Phase One plan will be ready to present to the County Commissioners by March. AWAC Chair Jenny Campbell can attend the Boards and Commissions Comprehensive Plan Program on January 30th from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

**Item IV – Old Business**

*Animal Control Advisory Committee Official Name*

Committee Chair Jenny Campbell will follow up on the request to have the County Commissioners consider a curative resolution to reflect the Committee’s name as “Animal Welfare Advisory Committee,” consistent with the name as it appears in the Committee’s bylaws. She will also follow up with the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the Committee seat vacated by ADA Brittany Edwards; ADA Kendra Montgomery-Blinn is currently the head of the DA’s Office’s Special Victims Unit, that will prosecute animal cruelty offenses.

*Feral Cat Program*

Currently, it is estimated that there are 60,000 feral cats in Durham. Previous recommendations concern a feral cat program, that helps scale back the number of animals going to the shelter; 170 more were taken in this year than last. State regulations are on hold on this issue. Chair Campbell sent out files from articles and a previous Durham report. Several counties in the area are doing some form of Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR), including but not limited to Wake, Alamance, Guilford, Person, Mecklenburg, Orange, Onslow, and Cumberland. Capt. Deck will procure details on policies. Cumberland received a grant from Best Friends; Durham County’s new health director, Rodney Jenkins, comes to us from Cumberland. Very few cats are redeemed each year; most people come in seeking dogs, not cats. Although the requirement for a trap permit was originally created to protect animals, if trapped, the animals must come to the shelter. This is not a positive outcome for feral cats, because their primary way out of the shelter is by euthanasia, not adoption; additionally, it is argued that caging feral cats is not humane. Citizens might provide care for the cats on their property were such legal, but current requirements include agreement from the property owner, rabies vaccinations, and a declaration of who is the owner. Also implicated is the issuance of a licensing fee. Now, if an animal has had at least one rabies vaccination, the animal can get a booster instead of a hold. TNR programs in Guilford and Orange are doing away with trap-and-kill.

Issues surrounding TNR include effect on wildlife and songbirds, as well as on public health. However, it is suggested that if there is no TNVR program, the population will continue to increase; thus, having a greater negative effect on wild animals and public health. Proponents of TNR/TNVR note that there will still be remedies for problematic populations through nuisance laws, and also that such programs preserve animal control resources.

Currently, all trapped wildlife (e.g., squirrel in attic) are euthanized; they cannot be released. The Committee discussed having a wildlife biologist and a feral cat expert present to the Committee, Education is an important aspect, especially for residents of apartment complexes and institutions of higher education, including the importance of keeping friendly cats indoors; it would be important overall to have a high re-trap and neuter rate. Chair Campbell and Capt. Deck will try to arrange a presentation for our next meeting.

**Item V – New Business**

*General Education*

In addition to educating the community on the issue of feral cats, it is important for citizens to understand why strays should be brought into the shelter. The APS Education Committee will provide an infographic and presentation for the Committee at some point in the future.

*Shelter Tour*

The shelter tour for the Committee is on hold pending scheduling and shelter readiness arrangements.

*Animal Control Advisory Committee*

Capt. Deck brought up the issues of the Committee membership, voting and non-voting rights, and terms, including the number of terms that can be renewed. It was suggested that the ordinance be changed so that the Commissioners can waive limitations in certain circumstances.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Perrin Paul, Secretary

<Attachments>

* Intake, Outcome, Euthanasia Reasons Statistics December 2019
* Intake, Outcome, Euthanasia Reasons 7/1/19-12/31/19
* Intake, Outcome, Euthanasia Reasons Statistics 2019
* Court Holds Listing
* Volunteer Report December 2019