**DURHAM COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of March 10, 2021**

**Present:**

*Committee Members:*Shannon McCabe, Jan Paul, Capt. Marianne Bond, Kari Linfors, Brian Mulligan, Amanda Gardner, Joy Nolan

*Non-voting Members:* Commissioner Heidi Carter, Shafonda Davis, Capt. Tim Deck, Lt. R. Rose, Leah Santelli

*Community Members and Observers:* Rodney Jenkins (Director, Durham Co. Health Dept.), Sarah McDonald (HSUS & IAR), John Graves (Best Friends Animal Society), Sarah Reichman, Lisa \_\_\_\_, Heidi Cope (HSUS and IAR), Gail Thomassen (HSUS), Malkia Rayner, Wendy Pinner (Durham Co. Animal Services), Ledy VanKavage, Esq. (Best Friends Animal Society)

*Presenters:* Jessica Arias, Dr. Josh Fisher, Paula Gillikin, Hannah Houser, Mary Dow, Kelsey Gilmore-Futeral, Best Friends Animal Society,

Committee Counsel: Willie Darby

**Next Special Meeting:** Tuesday, March 23, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

**Next Regular Meeting:** Tuesday, April 27 2020, at 7:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

**Item I - Introductory Remarks**

The special meeting was called to order by acting Chair, Capt. Tim Deck. The topic of the special meeting is the issue of community cat management. Capt. Deck welcomed and introduced the presenters. The meeting was recorded on GoToMeeting and will be available for a period of 12 months, ID 117510077.

Presentations were provided relating to the issue of TNVR were made by the following:

* Jessica Arias, CAWA, Director of Animal Services, City of Burlington, NC – Provided a PowerPoint presentation/handouts and spoke on the successful Burlington Animal Services Mighty Mousers Community Cat Program (TNVR) in Alamance County. The purpose of the Program is to stabilize and reduce the free-roaming cat population, prevent newborn kitten litters, prevent other animal and human diseases, and reduce unwanted/nuisance behaviors. Healthy stray and/or free-roaming cats are not removed from their environment and taken to the shelter, except in unavoidable circumstances. Mighty Mouser cats (feral cats for placement in barns, farms, or warehouses) receive FVRCP and rabies vaccines, spay/neuter, flea/tick treatment, deworming, and eartipping; adopters agree to provide shelter and food to supplement what they catch.
* Dr. Josh Fisher, MHA, CAWA, Director of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Care & Control, and President, National Animal Care and Control Association –Spoke on the need for public education and the benefits of a community cat coordinator, public health implications, nuisance issues, control strategies (microchipping, sterilization, vaccination), program costs. Specifically addressed unnecessary euthanasia, programs in which animal control and an animal shelter work collaboratively with a local non-profit humane group, placement of feral cats in working cat programs, and overall gross cost savings to the county that funds chips, sterilization, vaccination, as it lowers calls-for-service. Discussed local ordinances, including issues regarding “harboring’ vs. “ownership.”
* Paula Gillikin, Central Sites Manager, NC Coastal Reserve, and Beaufort Community Cat Program – Provided a Power Point presentation and advocated non-lethal solutions to manage feral cat population; discussed feral cat policies, species’ conflicts (Endangered Species Act), wildlife implications. Spoke about support from PetSmart Charities that enabled review of an Arizona program showing the positive impact for targeted free-roaming cats for spay-neuter programs. Discussed removal and relocation of cats on the recommendation of wildlife advocates. Recommended publications by Michael Stoskopf, PhD, DVM, NC State Dept of Veterinary Medicine, and Brian Kordis, DVM.
* Hannah Houser, Director of Animal Services, Lincoln County – Presented on successful community cat management program. Discussed microchipping ownership implications.
* Mary Dow, Independent Animal Rescue – Discussed TNR issues in Durham, problems re: ownership and microchipping issues
* Kelsey Gilmore-Futeral, Best Friends Animal Society – Discussed benefits and reasons to support TNVR programs; TNVR is also supported by the National Animal Control Association and the American Bar Association. Spoke on threats to the human community, including rabies (rats, skunks), and how TNVR is a preferable response and that is supported by scientific research from the National Feline Research Council.

The question-and-answer period following the presentations addressed the goal of having fewer free-roaming cats; the non-efficacy of trap-and-euthanize approaches; the fact that of wildlife rehabilitation injuries, 99% are not caused by feral cats; that an appropriate TNVR program is more efficacious than a trap/euthanize approach. Research in a Frontiers in Veterinary Science Study regarding free-roaming cat strategy is helpful.

Committee counsel Willie Darby will contact Kelsey Gilmore-Futeral to discuss ordinance modification options in the event the Committee recommends such to the Board of County Commissioners.

Following the presentations, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by Janice Perrin Paul

Committee Secretary