**DURHAM COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting of May 25, 2021**

**Present:**

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

*Non-voting Members:* Commissioner Heidi Carter, Mark Manning, Leah Santelli, Shafonda Davis

*Community Members:* Anissa Litwin, Wendy Pinner, Richard Rose, Sarah Reichman, Susan Teer

Committee Counsel: Willie Darby

**Next Regular Meeting:** Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

**Item I - Introductory Remarks**

The meeting was called to order by acting Chair, Marianne Bond. The minutes of the January 26, 2021, meeting were approved as amended; the minutes of the March 10, 2021, and March 23, 2021, meetings were approved; and the minutes of the April 27, 2021, special meeting were approved as amended.

The Committee discussed membership and leadership issues. It was agreed that officers will be elected at the next meeting. Capt. Tim Deck has retired from the Sheriff’s Office and was unable to attend tonight’s meeting; he had indicated a willingness to remain involved in the Committee’s Feral Cat Project. Capt. Manning, who replaced Capt. Deck, emphasized that the Sheriff’s Office takes no official position on the feral cat policy issues, but will enforce the law and ordinances. Marianne Bond made a motion, seconded by Brian Mulligan, that Jan Paul serve as head of the Feral Cat Project. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item II – Animal Services Report**

Capt. Manning reported that the DCSO had 1044 calls for service last months, representing a 1.1% increase from the previous month. The average overall dispatch time was 17 minutes, up from 16. There were 211 incident reports, including bites, nuisance, return to owner, trapping, and potential dangerous dog. 148 animals were impounded in April, 18 were returned (17 dogs, 1 cat). The most common call was about stray dogs; 40 were impounded. 60 animals have been impounded on nuisance calls so far this calendar year. 68 warnings have been issued for various violations – 10 written, the rest verbal. No immediate plans exist for a rabies or microchip clinic; rabies vaccinations can ben given Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays by appointment with the DCSO.

Commissioner Carter inquired about calls requiring the use of a weapon. All non-civil, sworn law enforcement officers carry tasers, firearms, batons. Sgt. Pinner stated that a female deputy was attacked by a dog and was dispatched/euthanized while the dog was biting the deputy’s leg. There have been no such euthanizations of domestic animals. The sheriff’s office occasionally euthanizes a deer. Raccoons are not euthanized in the field because they may be rabies vectors. Coyotes may be humanely euthanized.

**Item III – Shelter Report**

Traffic is increasing at the shelter. 293 animals were brought in in April, compared to 138 in 2020 at the start of the Pandemic – 151 cats, 123 dogs, 19 others. The majority (63%) are strays; 23% were surrendered. 42% of animals were adopted, 17 transferred to rescues, 8 returned to owners. Animals have been euthanized for medical reasons, but not for lack of space. Volunteers are coming back into the shelter. The shelter will re-open to the public (not on an appointment-only basis, as last year) effective June 1st. Masks will be required for the unvaccinated. The shelter is working to manage intakes for surrenders or strays by making appointments to discuss options. Resources are needed. The May 29th Walk for the Animals will be virtual again this year – the fundraising goal is $74,000, with the shelter having reached $69,000 so far.

Leah Santelli reported that the food pantry is still in high demand and its operations are going well. Dog and cat food are always needed – especially dry dog food. The shelter is trying to get spay/neuter partners for a low-cost spay/neutering program.

**Item IV – Old Business**

The Committee unanimously agreed on the following goals for the Feral Cat Program:

1. A decrease in the euthanasia rate. This is the primary goal.
2. A decrease in the feral cat population in the community – trapping and euthanizing are not working.
3. Minimization of public health risks.
4. Seeking resources to assist the Shelter and Animal Services in providing services and education

The Committee and the County Attorney’s offices will work with Best Friends Animal Society to review other counties’ ordinances and to develop a strategy for Durham. The Committee discussed the need to present at a work session of the Board of County Commissioners on the critical need to revise our animal welfare ordinances in order to achieve the above-stated goals. The Committee will make a strong recommendation for a Trap/Neuter/Vaccinate/Release (TNVR) Program. A motion to seek an audience with the BOCC to present the four goals and to recommend that further options be pursued to remove barriers to Durham County’s adopting a TNVR policy was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. Commissioner Carter will recommend such a presentation to Chair Howerton; it is hoped that the Committee can present at the August 2, 2021 BOCC work session. The Committee will create a presentation – Committee members Jan Paul, Marianne Bond, Amanda Gardner, and community volunteer Sarah Reichman will work to create a PowerPoint presentation to focus on needs, goals, financial implications, and community partnership resources.

Other old business included an agenda item for the election of officers at the Committee’s July 27th meeting.

**Item V – New Business**

There was no New Business.

**Item V – Public Comments**

None.

The next (virtual) meeting will be Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Perrin Paul, J.D.

Committee Secretary