**DURHAM COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes for the Meeting of November 24, 2020**

**Present:**

*Committee Members:*Jan Paul, Marianne Bond, Kate Bremser, Shannon McCabe, Joy Nolan, Heidi Carter

*Non-voting Members:*Shafonda Davis, Leah Santelli

*APS Board Members:*  Kari Linfors

*Community Members:* Sarah Reichman

Committee Counsel: Willie Darby

**Next Meeting:** January 26, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

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

Shannon McCabe called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Committee members reviewed the meeting minutes from September 22, 2020 and two items were identified for correction. One correction included the placement of attendees and movement of non-voting members to a separate subcategory. The second correction was in the Shelter Report involving animal holds after evictions. After both corrections were confirmed, the minutes of the September 22, 2020 were approved.

**Item II – Animal Services Report**

Captain Tim Deck was not able to attend and there was no Animal Services Report.

**Item III – Shelter Report**

Shelter Director Shafonda Davis reported that the ongoing changes with COVID regulations have been challenging with the limitations set for persons allowed in the buildings. The shelter has to account for employees, volunteers, and members of the public. Shelter Staff are working to adapt to the new normal. Director Davis announced that the annual Tails for Twilight was very successful, considering the changes to the event, and the event raised $115,000 for the animals.

The Food Pantry program is ongoing and Shelter Operations Manager, Leah Santelli, reported that they gave out 10,325 pounds of dog food and 120 pounds of litter. Manager Santelli also reported that the majority of items given away were from shelter purchases. The most needed item was dog food, but they are currently well stocked on wet cat food. There are minimal requests for needs of other animals.

Director Davis also reported that the shelter has been providing assistance to those who are homeless who want to keep their animals and come in to retrieve them. She also reported that there is a minimal amount of pocket pets and there are currently a couple hundred animals in foster care. The majority of the animals in foster care are cats and kittens.

Director Davis provided four documents to all Committee Members: Court Holds, Safety Net Report, Shelter Stats Oct 2020, and Shelter Stats Fiscal 7-1-20 to 10-31-20. (see attached)

**Item IV – Old Business**

***Committee membership and vacancies***

Commissioner Heidi Carter reported that the County Commissioners voted Brian Mulligan in for the at large committee member vacancy. Mr. Mulligan will be sworn in and attend the January meeting. The committee discussed the timing for voting on position vacancies and the consensus was to wait for the new member to attend the January meeting. An additional vacancy for an appointment from the District Attorney’s Officer is pending.

*Voting members* – may serve two consecutive 3-year terms and may resume after a 1-term hiatus. They are appointed as follows (current appointees in brackets):

*By the Durham County Sheriff*

1 veterinarian [Bremser]

2 at-large members [McCabe; Paul]

*By the Durham County Commissioners*

1 representative from the APS of Durham [Linfors (replaced McKinney)]

2 at-large members [Bond; Mulligan {formerly Campbell)]

*By the Durham County District Attorney*

1 member [vacant (formerly Edwards)]

*By the Durham County Director of Public Health*

1 member [Nolan]

Non-voting members (terms not defined in Bylaws):

One or more representatives from the Durham Board of County Commissioners [Carter]

One or more representatives from the Durham County Sheriff’s Department [Deck]

One or more representatives from the Durham County Animal Shelter [Davis]

One representative from the Durham County Attorney’s office, as legal advisor [Darby]

***Feral Cat Update***

Senior Attorney Darby provided the committee with research about feral cats and the current Durham County Animal Ordinance, as well as the Wake County Animal Ordinance. A high-level overview of pros and cons related to Trap Neuter Return (TNR) were also included. The committee discussed the need for presentations and an advisory group to provide balanced research. Commissioner Carter said this issue was not discussed during the November 23rd County Commission Meeting but there have been discussions about policy changes when the feasibility study for a new animal shelter was presented. The committee agreed that there was a need to review the recommendations from an advisory group of experts. Committee members also agreed that the group of experts be balanced and include wildlife, a neutral party and those on both sides of a TNR program. Attorney Darby said an advisory committee needed appointment.

A motion was made to appoint Jan Paul Motion to lead a steering committee for the selection of subject matter experts on pros and cons of TNR and who will provide information to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC). The motion passed. Jan Paul requested contact information for subject matter experts, who could speak about potential policy change, both pros and cons, be sent by email. The subject matter experts should have supporting data and research. A final selection of members of the TNR advisory group requires appointment by the AWAC. Senior Attorney Darby said a meeting would need to be called to discuss and select members of this advisory meeting.

The decision was made to complete this selection in January 2021 at the next scheduled meeting.

**Item V – New Business**

No new business

**Item VI – Public Comments**

No public comments

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Submitted by Marianne Bond,

Acting Secretary