**DURHAM COUNTY ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting of September 22, 2020**

**Present:**

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

*Non-Voting Members:* Tim Deck, Shafonda Davis, Leah Santelli

*APS Board Members:*  Kari Linfors

*Community Members:* Sarah Reichman

Committee Counsel:

**Next Meeting:** November 24, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. – Virtual Meeting

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

The meeting was called to order by Shannon McCabe at 7:10 p.m. The meeting agenda was approved. The minutes of the meeting of 9/22/2020 were approved.

**Item II – Animal Services Report**

Animal Services responded to 990 calls in August, low for the summer months. This is likely due to reduced response hours from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for all but emergencies, and because of the auto-dispatch system the Sheriff’s Office initiated in August, which has been a major project. Animal Services impounded 218 animals, returned 25 animals in the field.

There has been a significant increase since given the increased number of padlocks in evictions since the eviction moratorium ended. Last Monday, for example, they encountered 70 padlocks in one day. This has placed a strain on the Civil Division of the Sheriff’s Office, APS, and Animal Services. More animals are being picked up and transported to Animal Services.

Animal Services would like to hold microchip clinics. Rabies vaccination clinics have been resumed are going well. Individuals are not to leave their vehicles; staff with clipboards take the information. Current hours are 9:30-3:30, every half hour, Tuesdays through Thursdays, at the Animal Services Office, 3005 Glenn Road. Cost is $10 cash per animals. Appointments can be made by calling the office.

**Item III – Shelter Report**

*Statistics:* Shelter Director Shafonda Davis reported that things were going well in August and euthanasia numbers were significantly down. Since evictions started in September and trapping has increased, the kennels are full. 200 animals are in foster placements. Euthanasia will be bad in September because of evictions. There is more strain than normal on the shelter.

There is a minimum of 10 business days to hold animals for evictions. 65% of the shelter animals are strays, as opposed to 45% previously. Intake, outcome, and euthanasia statistics are included in the Shelter Report, attached to these minutes and incorporated herein by reference.

*Safety Net Report:* The APS helped spay, neuter, and provide free microchips, ID tags. The goal is to reunite more animals in the community. 45 were returned in August. The community is supportive of the Safety Net Program; the Shelter needs community assistance, particularly with donations of food and litter. It was suggested that there be more outreach on social media, such as on NextDoor, by the Durham Public Information Director. Shafonda Davis will send information to that office.

*Volunteers* are back in limited numbers, with 3 per shift. The shelter is taking temperatures, working with placement partners. The food pantry is busy.

*Court Evidence Holds* – The ADAs are helping to get cruelty cases on the court calendars more quickly. They are seeking pro bono or low bono attorneys to help represent parties. If an animal is taken because of cruelty, the owner can pay board for the coat of care or forfeit ownership, in which case, issues arise relating to placement, euthanasia. Of note is that the Durham APS is not licensed to take constrictors (must go to the zoo) or venomous snakes (museum). Bonding and Forfeiture proceedings need to be evaluated. Christopher Tyner, who replaced Aimee Wall at the UNC School of Government, is a good resource on this issue.

*Trapping* – Capt. Deck reported that Animal Services is receiving more pick up and trap requests; therefore, trapping has increased. Recently, 30 cats were trapped at one house. They were being fed in a chicken coop until Animal Services could come get them; some were not well.

**Item IV – Old Business**

The Committee again discussed the Committee membership and vacancies, and the need for a process to add members and elect a new chair was again discussed. The makeup of the Committee, including membership selection process, qualifications, term lengths and limitations, and attendance requirements, are established by the Durham Board of County Commissioners. The composition of the Committee, as contained in the AWAC Bylaws, was included in the minutes of the July meeting, and is reproduced below. In addition to the other vacancies, DA Deberry still needs to appoint a DA’s Office member. Attorney Darby was to contact County Clerk Macio Carlton and his assistant, Tania de los Santos, to begin the process of posting member vacancies and giving notice for an election at this September meeting, to be listed on the County Boards and Commissions website for AWAC; however, Attorney Darby was not present at this meeting to report on what has transpired, and Heidi Carter offered to follow up with the County Attorney’s office as well as with Macio Carlton and Tania De Los Santos in the County Clerk’s Office. The Committee still needs to nominate and elect officers, as former Chair, Jenny Campbell, rotated off of the Committee. Officer elections will be suspended until the slots are filled; thereafter, notices for the election day meeting will need to be sent by the Clerk to the County BOCC. A motion was made and seconded to select an interim chair until the positions are filled and elected; Shannon McCabe was elected temporary chair. The County Commissioners, the County Clerk, and the County Attorney need to be notified; the attorney to the Committee, Willie Darby, will be asked to make those notifications.

*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; vacant {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 Cats and Advisory Group*– Leah Santelli reported that the feral cat situation in the county is worsening. The barrier is the requirement of a trap permit. Trapped animals must be transported to the shelter by Animal Services. A fundamental question is whether state statutes need to be changed, or whether counties and municipalities have the power to eliminate the requirement of a trap permit. Research is needed as to what is allowable in the N.C. General Statutes and local ordinances, as well as on legal issues relating to ownership and liability. All legal options need to be explored; other ordinances need to be gathered and studied. Members recalled that at the July meeting, a resolution was made and approved to the effect that AWAC recognizes the need to establish an advisory board relating to the issue of TNR/TNVR to gather educational information and to ensure that all sides of the feral cat issue are presented fairly and objectively. Again, it would be advisable to have input from the Board of County Commissioners with regard to developing an advisory group, and to have assistance in advertising to determine interest in participating in a study. Commissioner Heidi Carter will take the Committee’s request for research and an advisory opinion to the County Attorney.

**Item V – New Business**

None.

**Item VI – Public Comments**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Perrin Paul, Secretary