

DURHAM COUNTY
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 24, 2023
7:00 PM

Present:

Committee Members: Marianne Bond, Jan Paul, Kari Linfors, Dr. Kate Bremser, Paul McKinnon, Joy Nolan, Elizabeth Overcash, Dr. Jenny Campbell (*not yet sworn in at time of meeting*)

Non-voting Members: Captain Mark Manning, Lieutenant Wendy Pinner, Leah Santelli, Shafonda Allen

Community Members: Brian Mulligan, Kelsey Gilmore-Futeral, Sarah Reichman, Commissioner Heidi Carter

Committee Counsel: Nathan McKinney

Item I – Introductory Remarks

Jan Paul provided welcome remarks and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A roll call was taken and there was a quorum. Attorney Nathan McKinney was introduced as the new committee counsel.

Item II - Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to approve from the past meeting. Later discussion resulted in agreement that the September and November minutes would be typed up from committee members' notes taken during those meetings, along with highlights from the Animal Services and Animal Shelter reports. Those minutes will be ready for review and emailed to committee members prior to the March 28 meeting so that they can be approved at the March 28 meeting.

Item III – Animal Services Report

Captain Manning provided highlights for the Animal Services report. He reported that Animal Services officers responded to approximately 11,000 calls for service in 2022 with a total of just nine staff members. During that same time, Animal Services officers took in 2,097 stray dogs; of those dogs, 36% were reunited with their owners. Animal Services held 42 community events for the year (up from 24 events the year before).

Captain Manning highlighted Animal Services' rabies vaccinations clinic, which has provided 79 free rabies vaccination vouchers and administered 892 rabies vaccinations. He reported that last month Animal Services responded to a total of 657 calls for service, with an average response time of 18 minutes, and impounded 118 animals. He noted that this response time was a great improvement from the same time one year before.

Captain Manning reported that a fully staffed Animal Services department would consist of a total of 12 positions, including three civilian positions. He reported that Animal Services will be requesting an additional seven positions.

Both Director Allen and Commissioner Carter noted that these successes need to be celebrated more and shared with the public.

Item IV – Shelter Report

Director Allen reported that for the first time in a long time the cat population at the shelter has decreased to be within the legally allotted limit. She noted that the dog population is up. Director Allen stated that the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services recently inspected Durham APS and its surgery suite, and the shelter passed inspection. She stated that the medical department within the shelter is now fully staffed.

Director Allen reported that Durham APS has added a new position that is grant funded. The position focuses on community partnerships and helping facilitate animal placements. Director Allen reported on some of the community programs that the shelter is currently administering. The shelter has expanded its food pantry and has also partnered with Meals on Wheels to provide pet food to Meals on Wheels clients in need. The shelter is currently microchipping every animal who comes into the shelter, which should help reunite more animals with their owners. The shelter is also planning its annual Walk for the Animals event.

Director Allen noted that the shelter may not be adequately measuring the total number of animals that the shelter is helping in Durham. She suggested creating a report that combines the successes of both Durham APS and Animal Services into one report. Captain Manning was in agreement.

Item V – Old Business

Review of proposed committee bylaws: The AWAC sent the proposed committee bylaws to attorney Nathan McKinney for review and input. The wording of Article V is still in question, and Attorney McKinney asked that any notes, references, and/or opinions on this article be sent to him by Tuesday, January 31. After that, there may be back and forth discussion via email with the goal that Attorney McKinney will have a thoroughly-discussed, final version of the bylaws ready to adopt at the next committee meeting on March 28, 2023.

Comments on Article V centered around a question of whether the listed duties and responsibilities lead the AWAC toward making policy rather than simply providing recommendations on policy. Jan Paul reminded the committee that the original charge of the AWAC from the county commissioners was to make recommendations on animal welfare and animal control matters in Durham. Lieutenant Pinner voiced a concern with the AWAC affecting Sheriff's Office policies, particularly those related to community cats. Jan Paul and Director Allen opined that the AWAC is making recommendations on the policies, not creating policies, per the committee's original charge.

TNVR (Community Cat Program) – Update: After the last AWAC meeting, examples of other animal control ordinances were provided to Attorney Curtis Massey. Attorney Massey has since been working with attorneys from the Sheriff's Office and Best Friends Animal Society to develop the Durham ordinance. Attorney Massey recently met with Director Allen and let her

know that things were moving forward. Attorney Massey also told Commissioner Carter that he would like this ordinance issue resolved in a month or so.

Appointments and Elections: Dr. Jenny Campbell will be the Durham APS replacement on the AWAC. She is not yet sworn in but will be sworn in before the next meeting on March 28, 2023.

Three officer positions need to be filled: chair, vice-chair, and secretary. Marianne Bond has been serving as chair, but she will not be continuing in this role. She is willing to serve as secretary.

Kari Linfors agreed to remain on the nominating sub-committee, as a non-voting member. Two voting members will also need to be on the sub-committee with her. Marianne Bond agreed to be one of the voting members on this sub-committee.

Given that Dr. Campbell was not yet sworn in and the by-laws are not yet finalized, the committee decided it would be best to keep the roles as they currently are (with Marianne as chair) until the March 28 meeting. Marianne made a motion, which Jan Paul seconded, to postpone the election of officers until the March 28 meeting.

Item VI – New Business

Community Education Initiatives – community member suggestion: Brian Mulligan made this suggestion. He voiced that we need to prioritize recommendations for a new animal shelter. Commissioner Carter stated that Durham has a 10-year capital plan that includes a new animal shelter. Dr. Jenny Campbell voiced that the shelter is in appalling condition, and a new shelter is warranted.

Sarah Reichman suggested that we take time each meeting to talk about community education. She suggested that we might have events where we invite speakers to discuss various topics in animal welfare. She stated that Amanda Arrington would be willing to speak; Arrington is the founder and director of Beyond Fences and the director of the Humane Society of the United States' Pets for Life program.

Community Cats/pet overpopulation: Dr. Jenny Campbell voiced that there needs to be improved outreach and communication in Durham. Committee members discussed how we can get the message out to the community about animal-related concerns and resources. Director Allen agreed that this is needed, noting that there is a huge access-to-care problem in Durham, meaning that not all residents have equal access to care for their pets. For example, there is no low-cost clinic in Durham, leaving underserved areas with little to no access to veterinary care for their pets.

Item VII – Public Comments

There were no public comments.

A motion was made by Marianne to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting is March 28, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.