

Franklin County Animal Advisory Board Minutes September 24, 2008

The Animal Advisory Board of Franklin County, North Carolina met at 7:00 p.m. at the Animal Shelter on T Kemp Rd. The following Board Members were present: ex-officio members: Franklin County Animal Control Director Graham Stallings and Franklin County Humane Society President Ida Estep; voting Board Members: Chip Broughton, Elyse Goldman, DVM, Bess Nicholson, Brenda Simmons, and Paulette Woods. Also present Franklin County Manager Angela Harris. Absent: voting members Dianne Barrett, John Ryan and ex-officio members Commissioner Bob Winters and Kimberley Barth, DVM. There were no members of the general public present.

- 1) Board members reviewed and approved minutes of the August 27, 2008 meeting.
- 2) Emergency Preparedness

Harris stated the old shelter would not be available for emergency animal housing as the space has already been committed to another department for storage and office space. The inside fencing will be sold as surplus. She reported that Emergency Management Director Randy Liken agreed this area needs work and recommended the AAB taking the lead.

Simmons stated in other counties they designate one school for evacuation for people with animals or set up the hallways in schools. Animals must be contained in crates which the owner provides along with vet records. Harris will contact Liken regarding using schools for animals. Estep and Stallings recalled that Liken had earlier reported that the school system was opposed to this plan.

Goldman stated a coalition of veterinary and other groups called SART, State Animal Response Team, may offer guidance for developing a Franklin County program.

Broughton stated the AAB would revisit emergency preparedness at the next meeting.

- 3) Volunteers in the Shelter

Stallings stated AC has made good progress and have some really good, committed, volunteers thanks to the help of the Humane Society. AC and Estep have put together a presentation that will appear in area newspapers to aid in volunteer recruitment.

Simmons stated the HS is recruiting and interviewing potential volunteers at the adopt-a-thons; handing out information; applications can be mailed back to AC.

Goldman revisited speaking to Maureen Jones with Franklin County Schools regarding high school students wanting to pursue careers in animal related fields as volunteers at the shelter.

Estep stated she would speak to County Attorney Darnell Batton about changing the underage provision and allowing parental approval for volunteers under eighteen years of age.

4) Revisit Spay/Neuter

Simmons stated the Task Force did extensive research and made recommendations to the Commissioners. She handed out material from the National Animal Welfare Legislation model, stressing the serious animal overpopulation problem.

The News and Observer solution has three components: public awareness about the need to spay/neuter; accessible and affordable sterilization options for low-income pet owners and municipal revenue from a county license fee on a sliding scale for altered versus unaltered animals. In communities where this integrated model has been implemented the number of adoptable animals euthanized has declined by as much as 60 percent.

In seven years, New Hampshire, through spay/neuter programs targeting shelter animals and low income owners, reduced its euthanasia rate by 70%. Estimated cost reduction for impounding and sheltering was \$3.2 million with a program cost of just over \$1 million, netting the state a savings of \$2.2 million

Maine charges a sliding scale licensing fee and requires proof of rabies vaccination. The license fee goes to the Animal Welfare Fund/Animal Control Department.

Simmons stated statistics need to be prepared for the Commissioners; Franklin County can be a model, a leader for the state, NC general statute allows individual counties to decide on this taxation. Fines need to be enforced on animals not licensed.

Simmons stated Safe Haven Cat Rescue has agreed to help with low cost spay/neuter for cats and small dogs. This, in addition to veterinarians, the SNIF program and SNAP mobile allow more options for owners to spay/neuter pets.

Broughton stated the AAB needs to create an exact model to present to the Commissioners.

Stallings stated the shelter is requiring a \$50 spay/neuter deposit from adopters. Adoption statistics will be emailed to the AAB members.

5) Dog Fighting and Puppy Mills within the County

Broughton stated a Humane Society of the United States dog fighting representative and information obtained during the Task Force made it apparent several years ago that dog

fighting was a common occurrence in Franklin County. The question was raised if a dog fighting ring were broken up, where would the dogs be kept; they may have to be housed for a long period of time awaiting trial. Dog fighting is a felony; usually combined with drugs, guns and gambling, which makes it worth pursuing for the Sheriff's department.

Stallings stated AC doesn't have the staff to enforce dog fighting statutes nor can it invade/interfere in any territory which may be under surveillance. AC can only gather information and pass it on to the Sheriff's department.

Broughton will invite Sheriff Green to the next meeting to discuss this issue; if he is unable to attend, Broughton will schedule a meeting at his convenience to discuss what the Sheriff's department can do about dog fighting in the county.

Stallings stated when licensing of dogs/cats is put in place, you will find the puppy/kitten mills.

Simmons stated when the breeders have to start paying, when it starts costing them, that's when it will put them out of business.

6) Adoption of a Mission Statement

Stallings read the Resolution Adopting the Franklin County Animal Advisory Bylaws, Item K.

Broughton's proposed mission statement, "To be a guiding hand and a watchful eye over a forward thinking animal welfare department" was reviewed.

Broughton made a motion to approve the mission statement, seconded by Simmons. The motion was duly carried with all present voting "AYE".

7) The next meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Shelter.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by Paulette Woods, Secretary to the Board