

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COLLIER COUNTY
DOMESTIC ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Naples, Florida, April 20, 2010

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, that the Collier County Domestic Animal Services Advisory Committee in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 6:30 PM in REGULAR SESSION at Domestic Animal Services Training Room, Davis Blvd., East Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Michele Antonia
VICE CHAIRMAN: Marcia Breithaupt
Dr. Ruth Eisele
Sgt. David Estes
Tom Kepp, Jr.
Dan Martin
Jim Rich

ALSO PRESENT: Amanda Townsend, Interim, Director, DAS
Nan Gerhardt, Shelter Operations Mgr.
Kathlene Drew, Volunteer Coordinator, DAS
Hailey Alonso, Administrative Assistant, DAS

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Michele Antonia called the meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.
Dan Martin, newly appointed Advisory Board Member was introduced.

II. Attendance:

Attendance was taken and a quorum established.
In attendance were several members of the public and volunteers in celebration of Volunteer Day.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Add: Under New Business item A. Licensing Enforcement Discussion (handout-2)

Sgt. David Estes moved to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Marcia Breithaupt. Carried unanimously, 7-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes: March 16, 2010

Change spelling: Page 2 Item I Call to Order – the word, meeting

Jim Rich moved to approve the minutes of March 16, 2010, as amended. Second by Dr. Ruth Eisele. Carried unanimously, 7-0.

V. Old Business

A. Directors Report

Amanda Townsend extended a welcome to Dan Martin and explained that he was appointed by the BCC following Larry Kenner's hiring to serve as Animal Control Officer for DAS.

She noted the following activities at DAS:

- Round one of the Budget preparation was under way. She thanked Jim Rich for his valuable input and cost-savings suggestions in shelter operations to help meet the 5% budget cut.
- Staff has changed from using mop heads to using towels –more sanitary and more easily laundered.
- County Manager visited DAS and was provided a familiarization tour of the facility.
- Preliminary budget had been submitted to Marla Ramsey and the OMB. Department heads will be meeting with them and the County Manager on May 21, with presentation to DASAB at their June meeting. The BCC will give final approval at June 24th and 25th meetings.
- DAS hosted Compassion Fatigue Training. The program helps staff to deal with their challenging work environment.
- Volunteer Appreciation Day –recognition was given to all those who help care for the animals and get them ready for adoption.
- Plans for better utilization of Collier TV by partnering with the Humane Society of the U.S. and the AD Council are underway. Samples of various animated ads were shown on the overhead projector.
- Postcards and brochures have been sent out for license renewals.

Chairman Michele Antonia suggested showing the clips in school and condo association presentations.

Amanda also mentioned Senate Bill 2372 had passed out of committee. The Bill would allow an additional \$10 to be collected on any citation (\$1 to the Clerk's office and \$9 to fund low cost spay and neuter clinic). Updates on this legislation, should it pass, will be reported to DASAB.

Nan Gerhardt spoke about the implementation of catch nets. With the change to individual cages, transporting the cats will be easier and safer by shuttling injured or agitated cats into the nets to facilitate treating them.

Kathlene Drew reported on the following volunteer activities:

- Towels for Tails, the event at Sun and Fun Park, at which donated towels were exchanged for half price tickets to the water park, brought in 250 towels. Two dogs were brought to the event; one was adopted, providing another venue for adoption exposure.
- Disney's Give-a-Day, Get-a-Day program – 456 volunteers participated; 1,662 hours were given at DAS
- Volunteer were recognized for their dedication and number of donated hours-- 6,936 hours in 2009 and 5,517 hours already in 2010.

Noted was:

1. The various age spans of the volunteers (from high schoolers to retirees) who have donated over 500 hours.
2. Those who have worked tirelessly to place 78 animals with other rescue or shelter groups.
3. Those who devote care in getting animals bathed and dressed up for the *Happy Tails* show.

She commented that everyone attending the DASAB meetings had one thing in common -- a strong love for animals.

B. DAS Second Quarter Statistical Report

Amanda Townsend reviewed the various statistical reports with the DASAB Members, noting:

- Higher intake from Animal Control Officers (ACO) in the field rather than those brought in to the shelter.
- The increase in volunteer hours
- An explanation of the number of ACO, their schedules, duties and staffing issues with two permanently frozen positions
- Greater working relationship with the Sheriff's Office
- Workload of incoming calls greatly increased
- Thank you to Humane Society Naples, who took in 158 animals from DAS last quarter.
- Medical fostering information upcoming at next meeting.
- Explanation and discussion on drop-off boxes

Lengthy discussion was conducted on various aspects of the quarterly statistics.

C. Clarification of Microchip Checking (handout)

Chairman Michele Antonia had requested the clarification. A handout of the policy on Microchip Research was provided and read from by Amanda. The policy referred to and addressed Microchip procedures for “reasonable attempts to re-unite impounded *stray* animals with their owners”. It did not refer to *surrendered* animals.

Amanda Townsend stated, however, DAS would trace chips to known rescue groups DAS had a relationship with, but not individual owners. The issue was –legal property ownership. DAS must accept the person who signed the surrender form as the owner; once surrendered, DAS was the owner.

VI. New Business:

A. License Fee for Non-altered Pets (handout –Letter)

Susan Heckel, who had contacted DAS with a complaint regarding increased fees for unaltered pets, was not able to be present. An e-mail to Amanda Townsend was shared with DASAB. Her issue was a pet was too old to be altered, did not create a nuisance and she just did not choose to own an altered animal. County policy does not allow exemptions to fee policy.

Discussion followed on the following points:

- Too many laws infringing on pet owners’ rights
- Reward those who do the right thing
- Punish those who do not.
- Provide incentives to comply
- Payment plans

Amanda Townsend cited a study that found unaltered pets created the overpopulation problem in that births of 52% of dogs and 53% cats were accidental – the owners never intended to have a litter.

B. Protocol for Determining Behavior Problems

Chairman Michele Antonia questioned the high statistic of euthanasia for behavior problems and what constituted so many of them.

Nan Gerhardt explained determination was based upon both behavior history and behavior observed. She explained both categories, stating biting was the most prominent problem. Animals with aggressive behavior, age or medical issues were un-adoptable. Time and space was another problem cited. Adoption increase would help decrease euthanasia statistics as well as enforcement issues, citation collections and spay and neuter.

C. Pet Friendly Condos

Jim Rich read from a “Letter to the Editors” article which promoted changes to bylaws permitting pet ownership by condo associations. The benefits were:

- More sales as retirees move to condos with their pets, both from homes and from northern states. 63% of the population own pets.
- Proven health benefits to pet owners

He offered to undertake the project by speaking to associations. He asked for feedback from DAS and the Advisory Board and support from other organizations such as the Humane Society and the Collier Cat Coalition. It was deemed a great idea by DASAB and staff. Dr. Ruth Eisele will assist Jim. **Amanda Townsend** noted Commissioner Halas holds a monthly meeting She will bring the article to his attention.

VII. Public Comment

Kelly Fox distributed a list of 11 questions on issues to be put on a future agenda. A review of the questions by the DASAB determined that all could be answered by Amanda and would not need DASAB consideration. She reported the Bed drive resulted in the delivery of 100 kongs, 7 “boom boxes” and some CDs to provide music for the animals. She commented on citation fine collections and a media blast for laws going into effect in May.

Stephen Wright commended Jim Rich for his effort to speak to condo associations as a way to increase adoptions. He offered ideas to draw more exposure to DAS to encourage adoptions:

- Increase parking. Plan and put in budget next year.
- Solicit donations for gravel and materials
- Have more events at DAS to bring people to the animals
- Outreach/volunteers, ACOs, animals and flyers go to various venues

Kathlene Drew responded that brochures and compliance flyer have been distributed by volunteers in various locations and private schools.

Amanda Townsend noted the new brochures will have English on one side and be divided on the other side with Spanish and Creole. She will look into permitting issues regarding parking expansion.

Terri Licastro spoke regarding enforcement.

- Ways to enforce the laws and how to go about collecting fines need to be figured out and utilized.
- Laws and enforcement are not strong enough. Follow ups are necessary.
- Tying fines to drivers license or some other means should be pursued

Dr. Ruth Eisele encouraged groups to bring ideas to DASAB for discussion.

Amanda Townsend responded there were three basic issues over and above questions of an operational nature- how enforcement operations currently work: From the list of priority projects cited for this year two pertain to enforcement.

1. Work to improve licensing enforcement policies
2. Create a new updated policies and procedures manual
3. Identifying new projects for the future, what was not on this year's list

She stated DASAB reviews policies and makes recommendations but does not **make** policies.

Gisela Rowley shared a “Good News” story of the little dog, Chappy, who had been brought to DAS with serious behavioral problems, was rehabilitated, adopted and now “living in luxury” in Germany.

VIII. Advisory Board Members Comments

Jim Rich stated Assisted Living facilities encourage pets. He suggested residents could plan trips to DAS to visit animals and may adopt one. Also, field trips for school children could result in adoption.

Dan Martin stated he was interested in researching the citation figures on the Quarterly Reports. He will research and report to the DASAB.

Marcia Breithaupt requested the corrected press release on the anti-tethering. She also inquired about information mentioned in Kathlene's newsletter regarding owner training.

Kathlene Drew responded it was in the process of being approved for implementation and will include training with each adoption and for volunteers.

The next meeting of the DAS Advisory Board is scheduled for May 18, 2010.

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by the order of the Chair at 8:53 PM.

COLLIER COUNTY DOMESTIC ANIMAL SERVICES

Chairman, Michele Antonia

These minutes approved by Board/Committee on _____ as presented _____ or as amended _____.