

September 20, 2016 Meeting of the Animal Services Advisory Commission

After a month off in August, the Animal Services Advisory Commission held its September meeting on September 20th at the Drumcastle Building at 6401 York Rd.

Here's a summary of what was covered:

AGENDA

- 1) Call to Order
 - 2) Determination of a Quorum-In attendance were Deborah Stone Hess, Leslie Kaminski, Roy Plummer, Dr. Jean Townsend, Ann Gearhart, Lavinia Ringgold, Julianne Zimmer
 - 3) Approval of minutes-One change was made adding Michelle Guarino to those in attendance via telephone at the July meeting
- Here are the minutes of the July meeting as approved:

Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission Baltimore County Public Library – Randallstown Branch July 19, 2016

The twelfth regular meeting of the Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission was held on Tuesday, July 19, 2016 in the Main Conference Room of the Baltimore County Department of Health. This meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m., by the Chair, Deborah Stone Hess. Members in attendance were Deborah Stone Hess, Roy Plummer, Jean Townsend, VMD, James O'Neill, Leslie Kaminski, Janice Vincent, Joy Freedman and Michelle Guarino.

Minutes

Minutes from the June 21, 2016 meeting were motioned and approved.

New Business

a) Change in Stray Hold Policy

County Council passed bill 43-16, which changes the stray hold from 4 to 3 days.

b) Statistics for Adoption, Rescue and Euthanasia

The commission reviewed the 2nd quarter statistics for adoption, rescue and euthanasia. Overall Commission members are pleased with improvement in all three categories.

Old Business

Commission Report

The Commission Report has been submitted to the County Council. There was a mistake in the name of the Commission within the document. This was corrected before submission.

Deborah, Joy and Leslie will be meeting the County Council on September 19, 2016 to discuss the report.

Liaison Committee Meeting

Baltimore County Animal Shelter will be hiring a Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) Coordinator. The focus of this position will be to expand the county's TNR pilot by dramatically increasing spay and neuter surgeries of community and feral cats. The coordinator formerly ran the TNR program out of BARCS that was paid for by grants from Best Friends and Petsmart Charities. Her name is Rebecca Sass-Crews.

Information about Joy's Class

Joy will be hosting a Question and Answer session for pet owners at BCAS. The objective is to help new pet owners with questions and issues they may have with their new pets to improve the chance for success. . The classes will be held on the first or second Saturday of every month. The first class is scheduled in September. This class is for people, not pets. There are plans to possibly hold classes for the Correctional staff to train them in ways to work with the animals on basic obedience.

TargetZero Recommendations

Target Zero recommended a shelter specific software program, however, the County uses Accella. Accella is a government based software system. Shelter specific software is quite expensive. The commission feels that using shelter specific software with real time updates would improve shelter operations. The shelter is working with Rescue Well to decrease surrenders.

Cage Cards for Pets

Dr. Jones reported this is being worked on.

Trapped Cats

Additional information is needed during the intake of trapped cats. This would assist Community Cats of Maryland, Inc. in reuniting the cats with their colonies. When the new TNR Coordinator comes on board this is something that she will be focusing on.

Spay/Neuter Clinic

Baltimore County has tried very hard to include CCMD in the process of increasing the spay/neuter efforts put it has not been as successful as the County would like.

New Ordinance

Animals coming into the shelter are now required to be spayed/neutered upon first intake. This would include strays, surrendered animals.

Nomination of New Chairperson

Deborah Stone-Hess was nominated for a second term. This was motioned by Roy Plummer and seconded by Michelle Guarino.

Discussion of a Vice Chairperson

To be discussed at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The August 16, 2016 meeting has been canceled, however,

the Commission will convene on September 20, 2016 at the Drumcastle Government Center.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

4) Welcome New Commission Member-Julianne Zimmer

Julianne has been appointed by County Executive Kevin Kamenetz to replace Dr. Jocelyn Spiga on the Commission. Julianne is the founder and President of ReLove Animals, a 501 c3. The name of the organization came from the environmental concept of Recycle Repurpose Reuse. Add ReLove because animals are not disposable.

Julianne is also on the board of MD Votes for Animals and is on the Mayor's Animal Abuse Advisory Commission in Baltimore City.

Julianne explained how she came to found ReLove. In 2010 she adopted a pit bull that had been set on fire. It opened her eyes to the need for humane education. Education has been a major focus of ReLove.

ReLove helped develop a Humane Education program with formal lesson plans for Baltimore City school students from pre K to 5th grade that is taught by teachers in the classroom. The program is in its third year in Baltimore schools. The MD SPCA is now also involved in the program offering an out-of-classroom component where students can come to the shelter for tours and read to the animals.

5) Welcome LaTonya's replacement, Ellen Blake will now be taking our minutes

6) Volunteer Firings/Letter from Fred Homan

There has been a lot of talk on Facebook about the dismissal of two BCAS volunteers. The Commission's position is that this is a personnel matter. The bill that created the Commission does not authorize the Commission to be involved in personnel matters.

7) New Business

a) Summary of Liaison Committee meeting

The Commission's Liaison Committee meets regularly with

representatives of the county and BCAS. The latest meeting was held September 19, 2016. It was attended by Deborah Stone and Leslie Kaminski. Joy Freedman and Jim O'Neill were unable to attend. Others in attendance were Dr. Melissa Jones, Gary Klunk, and Fred Homan. Here's a summary of what was discussed:

1) Joy's first class-For the last several weeks, the shelter has been including a flyer in adopters packets and promoting a class that Commission member joy Freedman planned to hold at BCAS on September 17th. It was designed to be a forum to ask questions and get advice from Joy who is a trainer and animal behaviorist. No one attended the class. Dr. Jones says they are looking at some options for increasing interest. Ann Gearhart suggested the possibility that the shelter is difficult for many people to get to and maybe it would be a good idea to hold classes at county libraries in different neighborhoods. Deborah promised to pass along that suggestion.

2) West Side spay/neuter clinic-still planning for it to open in November. There are job postings for veterinarians and vet techs. Once it opens, it will be operational 6 days a week and then plans are that in December the East Side clinic in Dundalk will also be operational 6 days a week.

3) TNR-the county's new TNR coordinator Rebecca Sass-Crews is getting the program up and running. The county conducted its first trapping. There will be specific days set aside for TNR surgeries. There is a new TNR hotline for anyone with questions, concerns, tips, etc. The number is 410-887-2727. You can leave a message and your call will be returned within 2-3 business days.

4) Shelter specific software- Target Zero had recommended the use of shelter specific computer software. The county has determined it's too expensive and will continue using the current computer software known as Accela.

5) Lunch with County Council-The County Council invited

Deborah and two Commission members to discuss the Commission's first annual report on BCAS. Deborah attended the lunch with Leslie Kaminski and Joy Freedman and discussed a number of suggestions made in the report, stressing two in particular:

The need for the shelter to be open on Sundays and the need for expansion of the volunteer program.

6) Volunteer program- as of the end of August there were 71 active volunteers. They worked 404.5 hours during the month of August. There has been continual growth in the number of volunteers and the hours they dedicate to the shelter.

7) Concerns over delays in getting stray animal pictures posted online-I have been receiving complaints from the animal community about delays in getting these pictures up on the site so that owners can quickly find their missing pets. I have brought this up before at liaison committee meetings and brought it up again at this meeting. We were told that management is not aware of this happening. In fact, Dr. Jones said that management allows for overtime to allow staff to stay after hours if necessary to put the pictures on the site. I promised to send along every specific complaint that I receive so that they can investigate. In addition, the county is working on creating a way for animal control officers to put an initial photo on the site from the field as soon as an animal is picked up.

b) Discussion of way to answer questions from the public-A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept questions in writing from the public so that the Commission can attempt to answer these questions. Those questions can be sent to debstone01@comcast.net and will be shared with other Commission members.

c) Discussion of Vice Chair position-this will be postponed until the next meeting.

8) Emergency Preparedness for your Pets-Ann Gearhart-Ann discussed previous work she did at BCAS to work to educate

the public about what options will be available for pets in the event of emergencies and disasters. Deborah promised to look into doing this once again and to find out where the county is storing equipment it previously had for such situations.

9) JMORE-Deborah will be writing animal-related articles for a blog for a new publication called Jmore. The blog is the online component of the written publication. It launches on Friday, September 23rd. Jmore will be available for free in stands around town and its online component can also be accessed for free. The web address for the blog is . There you'll be able to find everything that's in the printed version as well as Jmore's blog. Deborah will be contributing articles weekly.

10) Date of Next Meeting- The next Commission meeting will be held on Oct. 18, 2016 at the Drumcastle Building at 6401 York Rd. Meetings are open to the public.

11) Adjournment