

# Hampton Animal Control Advisory Committee

## -Community Development Conference Room-

### Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2021

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Voting Members Present: Tiffany Young, Shelly Keller, Victoria Wineland, Katherine Omo, Sharon Bilyj

Ex-Officio Members Present: Steven Bond (Assistant City Manager), Angela Taylor (Animal Control Manager)

Staff Present: Annette Oakley (City Manager's Office), Olivia Wiggins (City Attorney's Office)

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#### **Call to Order & Welcome**

Chair Young called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. She welcomed new members Katherine Omo and Sharon Bilyj and asked everyone for introductions.

#### **Review Agenda & Approval of Minutes**

Chair Young stated the draft minutes from September 17, 2020, and December 10, 2020, were distributed for review in advance of the meeting and asked if there were any changes. There being none, she called for a motion to approve.

**ACTION:** Shelly Keller made a motion to approve both sets of minutes as written and Victoria Wineland seconded. A vote was taken and motion passed.

#### **City Manager's Report**

Steve Bond stated we are in the process of the Police Chief search and Animal Control falls under the Hampton Police Division (HPD). There are several good applicants and if all goes well, we should have a selection by the end of April. In the interim, Assistant Chief Ferguson will be the Interim Chief during the search process. Mr. Bond explained the process, which includes community stakeholders and is a 3-tiered process. Mr. Bond stated the City is also in the middle of budget season, which has been somewhat of a challenge, in part due to COVID and we are working through it. The City Manager will present the proposed budget to City Council in a few months for their consideration.

#### **Animal Control Report**

Angela Taylor gave a brief update, highlighting the following items:

- ❖ Animal Control is preparing things for the new Chief; working on a Powerpoint presentation. She hopes the division can stay under the HPD, as they have a great system that works for Animal Control.
- ❖ Regarding staffing levels, on March 24<sup>th</sup> they will be down to two officers; currently have three. The officers are on call and she is also helping out with calls.

- ❖ Working on recruitment – she has done several assembly sessions on Animal Control (HART), with a PowerPoint presentation. She interviews on the same day, but unfortunately every person had been disqualified. She is reaching out to local colleges to get more people interested.
- ❖ Held several law enforcement classes for HPD Academy – some topics covered: Animal Cruelty and Dog fighting.

### **Current Issues/Trends**

Chair Young mentioned feral cat colonies and ideas on educating people regarding registering the colonies. She did some online research on possible resources for registering a cat colony. She stated the City’s website does not have a link to get a copy of the registration, and suggested adding it to the website. She also mentioned the information on trapping and inquired if citizens can borrow the traps. Ms. Wiggins explained local government cannot be actively involved in TNR – which is a loophole. She can look into it further, as well as look at the legislation passed to see if there is anything new. Ms. Wiggins stated if the committee decides they want to recommend the City be involved in TNR, it will be a lot of work but it is doable. Ms. Wiggins stated she had sent TNR information from the General Assembly on specific requirements and she will re-send for the new members to review.

Ms. Taylor mentioned she meets monthly with The Peninsula Community Cat Coalition and they have discussed regionalizing an ordinance. Ms. Wiggins stated as far as local code amendments, there is not a lot we can do until the General Assembly does something.

Chair Young inquired about trapping. Ms. Taylor stated citizens can trap, spay and neuter, and establish colonies; the application form is for citizens to get the trap. Ms. Wiggins stated she and Ms. Taylor will meet and put together something on the website regarding cat colonies. After some discussion, Ms. Young also suggested including the following:

- ❖ Updates
- ❖ Document from neighbors
- ❖ Free registration
- ❖ Vaccinations for rabies
- ❖ Eartip

Ms. Taylor thanked Chair Young for the suggestions and stated they will look into the information to be sure its updated. Ms. Wiggins asked the committee to please let them know if anything else needs updating.

Chair Young mentioned some people are hesitant to register a cat colony and inquired what could be done to relieve some of the stress. Ms. Taylor stated the Cat Coalition has reached out to Ms. Armus, Director of the U.S. Humane Society, with some ideas in this regard, as well as other animal related matters.

Ms. Bilyj suggested a way to revisit how to market barn cats, such as ‘working cat program’ for pest control. She mentioned, for example, breweries and fishing docks have cats they use for pest control. Ms. Taylor said she would discuss it with the regional shelter. Ms. Keller mentioned she read an article about several Virginia breweries using feral cats to catch rodents.

### **Old Business**

No report

## **New Business**

### Animal Control Code Amendments:

Ms. Wiggins gave a brief background and stated there had been issues with birds/chickens/turkeys and that the City Code is a little confusing, therefore she has been working to update the statute. She explained some of the requirements, which fall under Codes/Zoning. She has drafted an ordinance so that Animal Control can deal with animal welfare issues and codes issues would fall under zoning. She explained this would need to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals and City Council for approval/adoption. Ms. Wiggins stated each year she reviews the state code amendments in regards to animal issues and she can let the committee know at the next meeting if anything applies to Animal Control. She can also let the committee know when the item goes to City Council and mentioned members are welcome to attend, and speak if they wish.

### Dogs Running at Large:

Ms. Wiggins gave a brief overview of animals running at large and explained the statute. She provided a draft proposal 'Proposed Dog at Large Amendment' (copy of file) and reviewed the document with the committee. She mentioned committee members can email her. Mr. Bond reminded the committee not to reply to all when emailing, as discussion can constitute a meeting. Ms. Wiggins asked if there were any comments/feedback. Some comments/suggestions:

- ❖ In general the proposal sounds good
- ❖ There was clarification on misdemeanor charges
- ❖ Likes #2 – regarding it being unlawful for a dog to be placed in another person's custody, not capable of maintain control
- ❖ There was an inquiry regarding voice control – 'leash law'
- ❖ Suggestion that a requirement after third violation is to have to get animal spay/neuter
- ❖ Suggestion to include a discount on the fee if animal is micro-chipped

Ms. Wiggins stated if anyone thinks of additional comments/suggestion to please email her.

## **Public Comment**

No one from the public was in attendance.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Young adjourned the meeting.