

Hampton Animal Control Advisory Committee

-Lawson Conference Room-

July 20, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

Voting Members Present: Sharon Bilyj, Pamela Christiansen, Kristin Schultz, Victoria Wineland (6:13pm)

Ex-Officio Members Present: Angela Taylor

Staff Present: Annette Oakley, Rebecca Spurrier (City Manager's Office), Olivia Alexander (City Attorney's Office)

Guest: Melanie Paul (Citizen), Deborah North (Interpreter)

Welcome

Vice Chair Bilyj welcomed everyone at 5:36 p.m. It was determined that a quorum was not present as this time and therefore general notes were taken.

General Meeting Notes

Vice Chair Bilyj mentioned that in April, Norfolk added a code section to allow the general public to do TNR. She provided the ordinance for Olivia Alexander to review and see if it is something we can also allow. Ms. Alexander will look into the legality of it and noted the Attorney General had an opinion on TNR and what we can/cannot do, which is how we operate on interpreting the law. Ms. Spurrier clarified that it appears Norfolk just further defined in their code that the caregiver can manage the TNR, which is what we already do. Ms. Taylor clarified that anyone can do TNR, but according to Section 5-43, a citizen has to register colonies or individual cats. Ms. Alexander stated if a cat is feral, citizens could not feed, water or care for it unless they are a registered cat colony. She also noted if someone keeps/cares for an animal more than seventy-two hours, it becomes their legal responsibility. She further noted if animals come onto someone's property, they are allowed to trap them, but if they start to provide care, the animal becomes their responsibility. She noted localities could not be involved.

Member of the public, Melanie Paul, mentioned cats are coming into her yard and she wanted to trap them, but Animal Control will not allow trapping if temperatures are too high. Ms. Taylor stated if someone needs a trap, Animal Control could provide one, if a call is early in the day and temperatures are not too high. She also mentioned, as information, there are free clinics held for spay and neuter. Ms. Christiansen feels there should be another way that citizens can trap, spay or neuter without having responsibility and inquired if Hampton or other localities have gone against the state? Ms. Alexander stated each year there is an attempt to do so -- to change the law -- but it always fails. Vice Chair Bilyj inquired how to make a change? Ms. Alexander stated people could talk to their local delegation.

Ms. Christiansen provided some information and mentioned in the first of the year, she called Animal Control regarding neglected dogs. Animal Control went to the property to check, but the owner was in compliance. As of yesterday, the dogs were still in the same condition (with no cover) and now have puppies. She was curious how many other circumstances are there like this? She mentioned the owner is breeding and she would like to know if they have a business license. Ms. Alexander stated neither she, nor Ms. Taylor can comment on it or any ongoing investigations. She noted, committee members could do a FOIA request or look up information on the court website. Vice Chair Bilyj inquired about a situation where there was a state violation. Ms. Alexander

stated, again, that she cannot comment on specific situations and that determinations are case-specific and sometimes citizens get warnings. Ms. Alexander explained that generally gives the owner time to fix a problem and if in timeframe, they will probably not charge them. However, if there are multiple scenarios, they may be charged.

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Call to Order

At 6:13pm there was a quorum established, as Victoria Wineland joined the meeting. Vice Chair Bilyj called the official meeting to order and asked for introductions. She noted guests Melanie Paul and Deborah North were also in attendance.

Review Agenda & Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Bilyj stated the draft minutes from the March 16, 2023 meeting were distributed for review and if there are no changes, called for a motion to approve.

ACTION: Pam Christiansen made the motion to approve the March 16, 2023 minutes as written and Kristin Schultz seconded the motion. A vote was taken and motion passed.

City Manager's Report

Steven Bond was not in attendance, due to another meeting. Rebecca Spurrier had no items to report at this time.

Animal Control Report

Ms. Taylor gave an update on staffing, stating all officer positions are filled, but will be one less soon and she will be posting that position. She reported they still need an Office Specialist and Deputy Manager position filled. Ms. Taylor reported their summer programs included animal safety for children ages 7-18 and their parents, which consisted of reviewing proper care and reporting, as well as individual safety. She reported that Animal Control participated in a Career Fair with Hampton City Schools in June, where they provided information regarding Animal Control and becoming an officer. Ms. Taylor also reported PRAS employees did ride-alongs with Animal Control.

Current Issues/Trends

Per the previous discussion under general meeting notes, Ms. Taylor and Ms. Alexander will look into the items brought up by committee members.

Old Business

Bylaws: There was no super majority present to take action on the bylaws, regarding the name change.

Paws, Claws & Tails: There was no discussion on this item; the item was deferred until the next meeting.

New Business

No Report

Public Comment

Vice Chair Bilyj read the protocol for audience granted to the public (copy of file).

Melanie Paul shared she cares about cats, and is concerned about them. She would like to trap the cats. Ms. Taylor stated she could trap the cats. Ms. Alexander noted for her to call Ms. Taylor if she needed assistance.

Closed Session

Vice Chair Bilyj entertained a motion to convene a closed meeting pursuant to the exemption from open meetings allowed by Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, to discuss recommendations for appointments to the Animal Control Advisory Committee.

ACTION: A motion was made by Victoria Wineland and seconded by Pam Christiansen. A vote was taken and motion passes. The meeting room doors were closed.

Certify Closed Session

Vice Chair Bilyj entertained a motion to certify that, to the best of each member's knowledge: (1) Only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Virginia law were discussed, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Animal Control Advisory Committee.

ACTION: A motion was made by Victoria Wineland to certify the closed session and seconded by Pam Christiansen. A vote was taken and motion passes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Vice Chair Bilyj adjourned the meeting.