

## **Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission Minutes**

The fifteenth regular meeting of the Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission was held on Tuesday, January 17, 2017 in the Executive Conference Room on the second floor of the Drumcastle Government Center, 6401 York Road, Baltimore, MD 21212. The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair, Deborah Stone-Hess, Jamie DeRita-Rodriguez, Ann Gearhart, Roy Plummer (by phone), Lavinia Ringgold, Jean Townsend, VMD, and Julianne Zimmer.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jon Christiana, Joy Freedman, Janice Vincent

### **I. Reading and Approval of the Minutes**

Motion: To approve the minutes of November 15, 2016, as presented.

Motion by: Ann Gearhart

Second by: Jean Townsend, VMD

Decision: Unanimous Approval

### **II. Old Business**

#### Adopt Till You Drop

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 181 adoptions occurred at the mega adoption event that was held at White Marsh Mall. The event was very organized and the BCAS volunteer coordinator, Heidi Griswold, did an amazing job. This was the second mega adoption event and a third is scheduled for June 10, 2017, at the Timonium Fairgrounds. BARCS has applied for a grant through PETCO, which will help with the cost of having the event at Timonium Fairgrounds.

### **III. New Business**

#### Commission Member Changes

As of December 31, 2017, Leslie Kaminski's commission term expired and Michelle Guarino resigned.

The County Executive appointed Jamie DeRita-Rodriguez to complete Leslie Kaminski's term.

#### Fourth Quarter Statistics

Fourth Quarter Statistics were distributed. Intake was substantially higher than during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2015, and the number of dogs that went to rescue were up for the fourth quarter over the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and euthanasia numbers were down for cats. (See attached)

#### Summary of Liaison Committee Meeting

Currently there are 70 active volunteers at the Baltimore County Animal Shelter (BCAS). There is a comradery between the volunteers and employees. Heidi Griswold, volunteer coordinator, sends information on a regular basis to the volunteers. The Facebook page for BCAS Volunteers is on point. The training class with Will Webster went well and more training classes will be offered in the future.

As discussed at a previous Commission meeting, Baltimore County is working with a group called Foxy G, which is a horse rescue organization in Carroll County, to build a facility with an arena to work with veterans that have PTSD. Now, the expected State funding is not going to happen but the project is expected to move forward without it.

When there are space issues for animals that are rescue only, even if there is room in the adoptable area, they will not be moved there. All animals in the adoptable area must be those that can be walked by volunteers and introduced to possible adopters. That said, even after final rescue pleas go out, the shelter does not euthanize right away. The goal is to avoid euthanasia whenever possible.

The West Side Spay/Neuter Clinic is open. The County is trying to reach out to people about the services through community associations. There was recently a large flyer distribution in the zip code areas that are offered free services through a state grant.

BCAS performed 177 Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR) procedures in the last quarter of 2016. There are some difficulties with colonies on

business property. Unless the property owner agrees to the cats being returned, BCAS is unable to put traps out.

- 1) Baltimore County is moving forward with re-writing the county code dealing with dangerous and menacing dogs. This is an issue of semantics...and very often there's little or no distinction between whether a dog is categorized as menacing or dangerous. If it's determined to be menacing, there is just a \$500 fine, and the county cannot take any other action to prevent another incident. Once a dog is deemed dangerous, the county has ability to seize the animal or take it to BCAS until the owner takes corrective action.  
The wording change would eliminate the "menacing" category to give the county more ability to prevent aggressive dogs from harming other dogs or people.

There is a bill being introduced to the General Assembly that would require veterinarians to provide rabies vaccination data to their local jurisdiction. Jean mentioned that animal owners would object to this because it would cause owners to reveal the number of animals they have. The state believes that veterinarians would object to this because more paperwork and record keeping is involved.

A technical writer has finished writing the shelter's Standard Operating Procedures (S.O.P.'s). They are still in review. The county has asked the Liaison Committee to review them and provide feedback.

### Opening of General Assembly – Upcoming Legislation – Statewide Oversight Bill

During the upcoming session of the General Assembly, the ASPCA will be supporting several different bills, one of which would provide for state oversight of all shelters in MD.

### How You Can Make a Difference in Legislation

Your voice matters...call and write your legislators.

Miscellaneous

New commission member Jamie DeRita-Rodriguez was introduced. She formerly worked at the Baltimore County Animal Shelter and now works at Johns Hopkins.

Ann plans on speaking with the new police chief about the possibility of having the Baltimore County Police Department trained with animals. Ann also spoke with Dr. Jones about posters that she has for people to sign saying that they take animal abuse seriously. She would like to have them put up at the fairgrounds for the June 10<sup>th</sup> event.

**IV. Announcement of Next Meeting Date and Location**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at Drumcastle Government Center, 6401 York Road, on the Third Floor in the Main Conference Room at 6:30 pm.

**V. Adjournment**

Motion to Adjourn: Ann Gearhart  
Second motion: Lavinia Ringgold  
Decision: Unanimous Approval

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.