

Baltimore County
Animal Services Advisory Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2017

The nineteenth regular meeting of the Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission was held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 in the Main Conference Room of the Drumcastle Government Center. This meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by the Chair Deborah Stone-Hess. Members in attendance were Deborah Stone-Hess, Jon Christiana (by phone), Joy Freedman, Roy Plummer, Lavinia Ringgold, Jean Townsend, VMD, Janice Vincent and Julianne Zimmer.

Minutes

Minutes from the February 21, 2017 meeting were motioned and approved as submitted.

Motioned by: Joy Freedman

Second by: Roy Plummer

Decision: Approved

Old business

Puppy Mill Bill

The U.S. Department of Agriculture purged many documents from its website including inspection reports for dog breeding facilities around the country. The removal of those documents effectively hobbled a Maryland law passed last year requiring stores that sell puppies to ensure that they do not receive them from the worst puppy mills. The law says stores cannot get their animals from any facility that is not licensed by the USDA, or from one that has been cited by the USDA for egregious violations. Without the documents online, pet stores have no way to check on the breeders from which they buy puppies. Delegate Kramer introduced a bill in Annapolis that would require pet stores to get those inspection reports directly from the breeder. House Bill 781 will likely pass.

Deborah Hess will be blogging about this.

New business

Circus Legislation

Maryanne Bailey attended the Commission meeting to make a presentation about circuses and their treatment of animals. While Ringling Brothers has closed, there are many smaller circuses still in existence that are cruel to their animals. Ms. Bailey would like Baltimore County to ban the use of wild or exotic animals for circuses that perform in Baltimore County. Deb thinks it would take a lot to get this passed. She doesn't think this is a high priority for the county. It's also not in the scope of the commission to be able to take a stand on this issue as it does not involve the animal shelter. Deb suggested that Maryanne try to get more council persons onboard.

Liaison Committee Meeting Summary

West Side Spay/Neuter Clinic

The west side clinic is not getting nearly the amount of traffic as the clinic on the east side of the county. The county expects this will improve with the weather, as it did for the east side clinic. Information about the spay/neuter clinic is being shared via social media, flyers to PTA's in schools and flyers to apartment complexes that allow pets, in the area of the Southwest Area Park where the west side clinic is located.

TNR – Trap/Neuter/Return

Four hundred cats have been trapped, neutered and returned since the county began its own TNR program being led by Becky Sass-Crews. BCAS is starting to lend cat traps to caretakers of stray cats. Julianne would like a packet with signed policies in reference to trap use included with the lending of each trap. Caretakers will be doing the trapping. Animal Services will pick up the cats, neuter or spay and return them to where they were picked up.

County Ordinance Changes

The Commission has talked before about the county's work to revise its ordinances regarding dangerous and menacing dogs. Currently if a dog is found to be menacing, a fine is levied but there is no mechanism to enforce it or force people to come before the Animal Control Board. The county has completed a rough draft of the new ordinances that would allow the county to

impound a dog that is found to be menacing or dangerous until the owner takes corrective action.

The rewritten ordinances go to the law office. Ultimately the changes will have to be approved by the county council.

As part of the revision, the county would suspend the \$500 fine if citizens make the changes the county requires to fix the problem they have been cited for.

Rabies Bill

Baltimore County supports a bill that is before the MD General Assembly that would require veterinarians to report all rabies vaccinations they administer. That way there would be a database containing this information. And if a bite should occur, it could quickly be ascertained whether the animal had been vaccinated for rabies.

There has been some opposition to the bill from the MD Veterinary Medical Association. The reason given is a fear that if you require veterinarians to report all rabies vaccinations that fewer people will want to vaccinate their pet.

The Montgomery County Director of Animal Services has evidence to show otherwise as he was involved with a similar program in a Virginia jurisdiction and found that there was actually an increase in the number of vaccinated pets. In any case, if the bill continues to struggle, it is possible that there might be support for a pilot program. Montgomery County, Prince Georges County and Baltimore County have all agreed to participate.

Valentino Award

Two Animal Control Officers rescued a dog out of a sewage drain about a month ago. Julianne's organization, ReLove Animals, presents a Valentino Award and would be giving this award to them.

Department of Corrections Inmates

Deborah is waiting for approval and permission to do a blog and video on this program. Julianne would like to give the shelter a plaque to hang in the lobby of the shelter recognizing the work of the inmates.

Ann Gearhart Report on Volunteer Program

Ann was not present.

Second Annual Commission Report

What needs to be in the commission report? Joy volunteered to write the report, but is asking for a committee. Julianne believes this should come from the Liaison Committee. Lavinia will work with Joy. Everyone is tasked to bring what they think should be in the report to the next meeting. The report will be discussed at the April meeting.

Meeting Frequency

After the second commission report is complete, the Commission may want to consider meeting every other month or every six weeks instead of meeting monthly.

Announcement of Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting will be held on April 18, 2017, at the Drumcastle Government Center located at 6401 York Road, Third floor, Main Conference Room, Baltimore, Maryland 21212.

Motion to adjourn

Motion by: Joy Freedman

Second by: Julianne Zimmer

Adjourned at 7:55 p.m.