

Baltimore County Animal Services
Advisory Commission
October 16, 2018

The thirty-third regular meeting of the Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission was held on Thursday, October 16, 2018 in the Main Conference Room of the Drumcastle Government Center. This meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by the Chair Deborah Stone-Hess. Members in attendance were: Deborah Stone-Hess, Gerald Brooks, Jon Christiana, Joy Freedman, Ann Gearhart, Major Robert McCullough, Roy Plummer, Larry Townsend, Janice Vincent(phone) and Julianne Zimmer.

Minutes

Minutes from the September 20, 2018 meeting were motioned and approved with corrections.

Motion

Motioned by: Janice Vincent
Second by: Larry Townsend
Decision: Approved

County Council Appearances

October 1, Nina spoke to the County Council in reference to the 16 cats in her neighbor's house. There were a number of media reports, on various news media.

Several community members also attended the County Council. Joy, Julianne, Larry, and Deb, have been approached by people that were not happy with BCAS. The main complaint is about the affidavit requirement for complaints – no other agency does this. This discourages reporting. If there is a dangerous dog in the neighborhood, this affidavit prolongs Animal Services' response. The County Attorney advised this is not really true, an affidavit is not required. The community members spoke at the Council Meeting to show that the signed affidavit is necessary.

Ann suggested finding out the date that affidavits were mandated. Joy advised the affidavit has been enforced for the last 3 years, since 2015.

Deb spoke about an elderly woman's struggle with a loose great dane that attacked her dog and her. Animal Services advised an affidavit was needed, so she overnighted the affidavit. Animal Services sent the affidavit back to her because the second page needed to be notarized. The County Attorney advised at the Council Meeting that if an affidavit was completed and fines were issued and paid, the issue would end at that point.

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The owner was allowed to quarantine the great dane at home. According to a neighbor, this dog was out in its yard on a regular basis. This case never came up in front of the Animal Board.

Animal Services used to complete monthly statistics (by zip code) for retrievals, bites and euthanasia, until Ms. Crenson left Animal Services. These were vital statistics. The largest pick-ups were in the Essex and Dundalk areas. If they are still being done, they are not being shared.

There is a need for community outreach and education which used to be done with community associations and P.A.L. Centers.

The Animal Abuse Team went into the home that was discussed last month, where there are many cats and removed five cats. Animal Services then sent a truck to pick up the five cats. Animal Services assigned Christine Sandberg from Rescue Well to help with the indoor cats. Last Friday evening, October 12, Joy received a text message from Nina. When Joy was able to pull over, she called Nina, who proceeded to explain what was happening.

Christine Sandberg and Susan Reaver was at Nina's neighbor's house, the house with the cats. Joy was listening and texting Deb what she was hearing. They told Nina due to her speaking in front of the County Council, Animal Services will be investigating her. Christine said Nina was going to go to jail and the Health Department is going to investigate her for saying she had power of attorney, even though she didn't. These two women berated her for 20 minutes. No one advised her to call police.

Susan Reaver posted to her Facebook account that afternoon, that if you lie about a County agency you will be arrested and posted a picture of Nina in a hazmat suit in front of her neighbor's house.

Christine and Susan Reaver kept saying "we" and "us" as if they were representing Animal Services. Gerald Brooks said that Christine does not represent the county. Susan Reaver has cameras in the house and has posted photos of Nina in her neighbor's house in the hazmat suit on Facebook.

If you have a hoarding situation and call animal services, they should go.

There is no screening process for volunteers. Rescue Well is supposed to keep animals out of the shelter. Christine hired Susan Reaver to trap the remaining indoor cats. So Susan is technically being paid by the county. With her not being a county employee, she is not screened.

A constituent, Adam, had a deceased fawn deer in his yard and BCAS made him drag the deer to within 10 feet of the truck. He called Animal Services on Friday afternoon and someone came out on Monday. It was questioned as to whether it is documented that it is necessary for the deceased animal to be dragged to within 10 feet of the Animal Service's truck.

Gerald does not have the SOP. They just sent them out within the departments. Deb wants Major Robert McCullough to send her the new SOP. Some of the SOPs are online. Julianne wants SOPs for the police department, animal abuse team and animal services, to see what each department's responsibilities are. Right now we do not know who is responsible for responding to what situations.

Gerald said if it involves cruelty, neglect or abuse, it is covered by the Animal Abuse Team – everything else is covered by animal services.

Gerald also advised we need clarity on what Animal Service responsibilities are. Gerald advised that we need to know if it is policy for the affidavit or if it is in the code.

Shelter Concern

For the last three months, the BCAS shelter water temperature from the taps and hose, have been very hot.

This has been fixed.

Third Quarter Statistics

There is a concern that the number of animals being brought in to be euthanized by owners has doubled. Statistics were discussed. This is a provided service that is not advertised. There is a concern that numbers could possibly be being placed in the wrong category since the third quarter of last years' numbers are half of what they are this year.

Deb would like to send an email to Dr. Jones and asked for a vote. Gerald suggested asking BCAS about the numbers. Deb advised she would like to see the actual data. Major McCullough would like to give BCAS 30 days to respond.

Motion: Larry Townsend

Second by: Joy Freedman and Janice Vincent

Decision: Approved

Ann would like to ask BCAS first.

Janice would like an audit trail.

Jon via phone, wants to make sure that forms are redacting personal information.

Deb wants to see the form.

Jon wants to see all of the forms with the names on it to contact the person surrendering the animal to make sure they are aware of what they signed.- Not just the impound numbers. Jon wants to verify that the document is true. How do we know it is a valid form. Janice wants the forms with impound numbers to verify how many were actually surrenders and how many were actually requests for euthanasia.

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Ann concerned, we are asking for signed forms with information redacted. Major McCullough suggested asking for the third quarter data from 2017 and 2018 and give them a week or a week and a half to respond, then see what information is given.

Major McCullough and Ann advised to ask for only information for third quarter. Joy wants to see the forms and all pertinent information related, and keep it to compare with the third quarter of 2019.

Letter has been amended.

Motion: Gerald

Second: Ann

Try to meet on Tuesday December 4th. Here if possible.

Ann wanted to add in today's minutes. She is well aware that Christine's grant includes education. Ann has been turned down on help with community education. Gary said that the van is not to be used for education. This is something that this commission wanted and BCAS has shut the door to communication. No community outreach education.

Announcement of Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 4, 2018 at Drumcastle Government Center, 6401 York Road, Third floor, Boardroom at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Motion by: Joy Freedman

Second by: Julianne Zimmer

Motion approved.

Adjourned at 8:21 p.m.