

Animal Services Advisory Board Meeting
Animal Services Conference Room
5920 W. Pioneer Parkway
Wednesday, January 28, 2004
Noon – 1:00 PM

Members:

Lisa Allen	Place 1
Jayne Cole	Place 2
Dr. Erin Miller	Place 3
Linda Yarbrough	Place 4
Lee Hitchcock	Place 5
John McDermott	Place 6(Absent)
Suzanne Berk	Place 7

Staff:

Mike Bass, Animal Services Manager
Trey Yelverton, Director of Neighborhood Services

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

(a) Minutes of December 3, 2003

III. Discussion of the Regular Session Agenda Items

(a) Bond update

Trey noted that Chairman Ogle for the Livable Neighborhoods Committee (LNC) asked the Council to list the Animal Services Center as an agenda item on Tuesday, Feb 10, 2004. Also on the 10th, there is a committee that will talk about capital improvements. In that committee meeting, the balance of the Animal Services improvements will be discussed. So, it is good timing. Full Council will talk about the full bond on work session 2/24. So, in February, we should get some clear direction and be able to make some progress.

Linda asked for clarification – is this a LNC initiative or full Council and how will it be different than what LNC has already seen. Trey noted it would be full Council and that staff would provide them any needed information. The feedback has been Council is considering either Public Hearing or Referendum.

Linda noted that is not much more progress. We are where we were last year. Trey agreed but noted there is at least a formal agenda item now.

(b) Rescue Group Holding Time

Suzanne asked about a holding time for Rescue Groups before allowing them to adopt small and 'more desirable dogs and what are the legalities. For example Fort Worth allows Rescue Groups to come in only during certain hours, allowing time for general public to adopt. When Rescue Groups take the dogs out the adoption fee is then very expensive. Lee and Trey suggested this might require an ordinance change. Lee clarified the suggestion: "After the 72 hour holding period is up, then an additional time would be required before Rescue could pull out." Linda noted that the counter argument is that municipal shelters do not perform adequate adoption

screening. Suzanne agreed and suggested that supervisor discretion might need to be exercised. Linda asked for clarification and Mike raised concern that supervisors may not always be available to intervene during an adoption process. Trey noted that there is a State Law that prevents discrimination against certain breeds but there may be opportunity to put in place a general policy for all Rescue Groups. Linda offered that this is a no-win situation. If we hold, then Rescue Groups don't have the opportunity to pull animals. If we don't hold, then animals may be adopted out into potentially bad situations. Mike noted that there could be some medical-need language built in. Linda asked for clarification of the problem. Suzanne noted it is because some Rescue Groups get to animals before the public can and the cost of adoption can be very high. Linda asked for Board's pleasure – should we have Lee go to legal and report back? Mike suggested that the return on effort might not be what we ultimately want. For example, if a rescue group can immediately take an animal out after the 72 hours, yet it sits there for another 3 or 4 days while other animals are coming in. Suzanne asked if we could identify how other shelters, e.g. Fort Worth has approached, administratively or through ordinance. Mike noted that City of FW has one person devoted solely to the Rescue program administration. Lisa asked if once these Rescue Groups take out an animal, do they get adopted? Suzanne verified yes, and they even fly them all over the country. Linda noted that to Mike's point there may be times when the animals cannot afford to wait the additional time. Lee suggested that we time stamp for a Rescue Group so we are not discriminating against general public. Suzanne noted that some residents think that just because they (or a rescue group) have 'looked' at a dog, it won't be put to sleep. Lee offered that an "Interest Form" be offered and those are time stamped. Those are then processed in order received. Mike agreed that this would eliminate the "fight or rush to the front door".

Action Items: Mike will pull information from other Cities to see what they are doing. Lee will check with Legal also.

(c) **UTA Feral Cat Initiative**

Lee verified that Legal Universities and Colleges that are State run and operating are under the jurisdiction of the State and local municipalities do not have any authority. Any emergency response is done thru contractual agreement. No agreement exists for Animal Services. The response back to UTA Feral Cat Initiative that the City will take no stance on the issue. Stephanie with UTA acknowledged they were pleased with the response. Lee made clear that any stray animals on city property would be subject to City ordinances

- (d) **In House Spay Neuter Program** – Mike updated the group, he has started pulling information together and suggests doing away with the coupon program and instead use local vets to perform S/N at cost of about 10 or 15 more and its done, but not in house. He is looking for fundraising opportunities for a Van to transport the animals back and forth from the shelter. Linda noted on S/N topic that Austin is in process of approving new ordinances and do S/N before the animal is released additionally on reclaim, the animal is S/N before released. They will build in a breeder permit too. This seems to validate our findings that the S/N coupon approach is really not working as well as intended. Municipalities are seeing a revolving door – animals going out, more coming back in. Mike noted that we are getting a lot of calls about our microchips. A happy story is a Mansfield boxer was lost 3 years ago. Arlington got the dog and scanned, found one piece of information still current for the owner. The owner was breathless and overjoyed to learn his dog had been found. Mike is going to Ft Worth to talk to them about the

microchip program success and Grand Prairie is real close. Linda asked if this came up at the last Metroplex Coalition meeting. Mike explained he has not been to a coalition meeting in some time due to so many things going on here. Dr. Miller asked when staff microchips, are they scanning to test to make sure they work. Her clinic had a dog from Arlington that the chip did not work. Mike noted the protocol is to scan before insert and scan after insert to make sure it is working. He noted that some other chips have been found and sometimes the chips travel in the body and they are hard to find. Suzanne noted that happened to two of the puppies Pet Rescue took out.

Action Steps: Mike finishes research and makes recommendation to Trey and Lee, then goes to Council to change ordinance, fees, etc.

- (e) **Fund Raising** – Suzanne noted that Pet Rescue is conducting a March 27 Softball tournament planned and 100% raised will go to Animal Services. She is looking for contacts from Parks Dept to donate the park and volunteers to work the event that day. The Adoption unit will be on site. Suzanne hopes it will also be an opportunity to build a bigger volunteer base. Raffles are also planned and Pet Rescue is asking for more money from sponsors to raise money “to raise money”. Some raffle items are restaurant packages, shopping sprees, etc.
- (f) **Shelter conditions/operating budget** – Linda mentioned again the concern that the operating budget for AAS does not seem to be sufficient for a city the size of Arlington. This could negatively impact the new shelter planning. She also provided Mike with three instances where suitable cleaning or euthanasia protocol did not seem to be followed by staff.

Action step/s: Trey asked Mike to provide board with protocols. Mike to follow up with Art.

IV. Announcements

Feb 10 – Council work session discussion of bond funds

Feb 24 – Tentative Council session for public hearing on new shelter

March 10- 13 Animal Expo in Dallas (Linda, Trey, Lee, Mike and several others will attend)

March 27 – Pet Rescue Softball Tournament benefiting Animal Services

V. Future agenda items

Shelter Planning

Fund Raising

Spay Neuter

VI. Discussion of Future Meeting Dates and Times

Wednesday February 25, 2004 at Noon

VII. Adjourn