

Arlington Animal Services Advisory Board

MINUTES **April 21, 2004**

The City of Arlington Animal Services Advisory Board held a meeting at Noon on Wednesday, April 21, 2004 in the conference room of the Animal Services Center at 5920 West Pioneer Parkway, Arlington TX. The following members and City staff were present:

Board 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
Suzanne Berk	Place 7

Staff:

Mike Bass Animal Services Manager
Gordon Robertson, Parks Planning Manager, Parks & Recreation Dept

Public Comments: Donald D. Fear, P.C. with Wildflight Rescue Foundation;
Bonnie Bowman and Marc Stack with RUFF.

I. Call to Order

Linda Yarbrough, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:07 PM. Staff requested approval of the previous month's minutes moved to later in the agenda.

II. Discussion of the Regular Session Agenda Items

A. Off-Leash Dog Area at Richard Simpson Park

Gordon Robertson, Parks Planning Manager for PRD presented the board a poster view of the proposed off-leash/lake-access dog area at Lake Arlington/Richard Simpson Park. He told the board he has had more emails and correspondence about the dog park concept than any other and majority is in favor of the concept. Gordon added that the volunteer group RUFF has already held at least one very successful event where hundreds of dogs came and they raised thousands of dollars for this (City funded) concept. He also described the boundary of fenced and unfenced areas for the dog park and explained why it was important for the dogs to have free access to the Lake. Chair, Linda Yarbrough noted that after a little internet research of several established and accomplished dog parks, she found that many parks had extensive rules and regulations and only one or two allowed access to lakes and ponds, those having restrictions to marsh area or other rules, like no children under 12. She added that a few appear to require a gate pass like Apartment complex security gates have and photo dog Ids. Linda asked what precautions would be taken to ensure no protected wild life and especially the waterfowl, would be negatively impacted. Gordon explained there is no protection today and he does not think the dogs are likely to swim into those areas. Dr. Erin Miller, Place 3 inquired about rabies vaccination requirements and how would they be monitored. Gordon explained the dog park was still

just in the concept stage and that the rules and regulations still need to be finalized but that rabies vacs would be required. Mike Bass, AS Manager added that when and if time allowed, his staff would also do drive bys at the dog park. Lisa Allen, Place 1 asked whether or not spay and neuter would be a requirement for participants so accidental breeding would not be encouraged or occur. Gordon replied it could be a consideration. Jayme Cole, Place 2 noted that her Department (911) would need to be included in procedure and policy discussions because they will get the calls if someone needs help. Linda added that the (internet) rules and regulations she reviewed for other parks all seem to expect Animal Control officers to enforce animal codes. Gordon and Mike both confirmed their staff are empowered and trained to enforce Park as well as Animal codes should the need arise. Suzanne Berk, Place 7 asked Gordon Robertson why a temporary site for the dog park? Gordon stated the purpose was fundraising for the permanent site. Gordon added that he and his department have looked city-wide at other locations, and have not found anything better.

Chair Yarbrough then opened the discussion for Public comment. Ms. Bowman stated that her volunteer group RUFF will always be available to assist the Parks Dept with the Dog Park and that her group of 44 members is very much in favor of the proposed (lake-access) concept. She also stated that she has contacted the local Audubon Chapter and they do not consider the proposed site as an endangered or particularly good spot for bird watching. Bonnie stated that the dog owners that she talks with are very responsible and willing to help educate others at the dog park as needed.

Don Feare, P.C. a local attorney and animal law specialist explained his long history with the proposed site and the resident for which the Park was named. He noted that species protected by Federal law are very evident in the area in question and his concern is for the marsh area, even if fenced, and the ability of dogs to swim around to that area. Mr. Feare also asked whether or not the City's Legal department is being consulted on the potential position of liability, adding that other City's have been fined by the Federal government for damage to protected waterfowl in recent past.

Asking for any other comments and there were none, Chair Yarbrough closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes

Chair Yarbrough asked for approval of the Minutes of March 31, 2003. Lee Hitchcock, Place 5 requested two amendments to strike reference to staff member names not participating in the March 31 meeting. Amendments were accepted, Dr. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Cole seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion of the Regular Session Agenda Items Continued

B. Rescue Groups – 48 Hr Holding time for eligible small dogs and 'purebreds'

Suzanne Berk asked that the Board again consider holding adoption-eligible small dogs and purebreds for 48 hours instead of allowing Rescue Groups immediate access, at same time as public. She explained she often witnesses disappointed members of the public when they are 'too late' to adopt a small dog or purebred dog or cat because a rescue group has already marked them. Lee Hitchcock will contact Legal to determine what if any restrictions there may be with this type of policy and report back to the Board at the May meeting.

C. PAWS2005 Fund Raising Update and Events

Suzanne Berk noted that the PAWS2005 fundraising group is now meeting every Monday evening and she will have an update for the board at the next meeting. She added there are several things in the works like a Press Release to introduce PAWS2005 and a big event in October with a famous celebrity.

D. New Building Project

Lee Hitchcock thanked the board members who provided him feedback on the project program discussions, noting again that nothing official can be done until the Council-mandated \$200,000 is raised. Linda noted that the 'devil can be in the details' and not until the Building Committee can be formed and begin to meet will all of the requirements begin to appear. John McDermott, Place 6 inquired if specialized and perhaps even unrelated but accomplished A & E companies would be considered for this project by the City? He voiced the concern that a 'low bidder' situation could produce less than desired results for the project. Lee stated that several, in fact many A & E's specializing in animal care facilities were at the recent (HSUS) Expo and he, Mike and Linda have been collecting information on these companies in anticipation of the project moving ahead after the \$200,000 is raised. Lee added that individuals from local municipal and non-profit animal-related organizations have also volunteered to sit on the building committee. Linda noted that at least three of the individuals are very accomplished in humane shelter operations and building design. Lee asked the board members to send him as soon as possible, any recommendations of A & E companies and ideas for the project.

E. Shelter Conditions/Operations

No discussion required for this meeting.

V. Announcements

Mike Bass announced an AAS Mobile Adoption will take place on May 1, 2004, at 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., in the parking lot of Lowe's, 1000 W. Arbrook Blvd. He also noted the 'ANIMAL NEWS' on the City, Animal Services website is always updated with these types of events.

VI. Future agenda items

Linda requested that Ordinances get back on the radar screen, e.g. the maximum number of animals per household and spay/neuter enhancements. This along with the standing agenda items of New Building Project.

VII. Discussion of Future Meeting Dates and Times

Next meeting is at Noon on Wednesday, May 25, 2004 in the conference room of the Animal Services Center at 5920 West Pioneer Parkway, Arlington TX

VIII. Adjourn

The order of the meeting is subject to change per the Chair's Discretion. For more information, contact Mike Bass, Animal Services Manager, 817-451-3536 or Linda Yarbrough, Chair 817-274-4188.