

Minutes for the meeting of the Mayor's Task Force for the Stamford  
Animal Control Center, August 5, 2014  
Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives

In attendance were Co-Chairs Eileen Heaphy and Art Layton; Director of Operations Theresa Geary, Ct Humane Society (CHS); Dr. Steve Zeide, Bull's Head Pet Hospital; Mary Ann Kleinschmitt, New Canaan Animal Control Officer; Brenden Leydon, Attorney, and Annie Selkowits Taylor, Stamford resident and dog owner. Kathryn Emmett, Legal Advisor, and SPD Lt. Nick Montagnese were also present. Co-chair Heaphy called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

The Task Force reviewed pending issues about the status of the interim volunteer agreement and waiver of liability, which the committee is expected to approve before September. Adoption issues were also reviewed. Teresa Geary spoke about experts for the no-kill concept and whom we might be able to invite to discuss the issues surrounding the concept. Dr. Zeide commented on initial screening and evaluation and rehabilitation of animals to assure they were adoptable. He also asked if we charged a fee for surrenders. He asked that we not forget exotics and cats. We should keep in mind the "Animal caring and compassion" concept.

The task force also reviewed job status for kennel maintenance person, which has been approved and will be filled shortly; the seasonal part-time position for a volunteer coordinator is being worked on and a candidate list prepared.

Art Layton reviewed his trip to the Massachusetts SPCA facility in Methuen, MA. It is a huge facility with capability of housing a large number of animals, including farm animals. It is an ideal facility to emulate, but it is run by the MSPCA, not by a government animal control center.

Surrender policies were discussed. Attorney Leydon explained that state law does not restrict ACC's from accepting surrenders and fees are allowed under the law. Ms. Kleinschmitt. said that surrender means you have to care for them. There is perhaps a need for a city ordinance to covers surrenders and the appropriate fees. The question of managing a surrender program needs more study.

It was suggested that Sandy Montrose of the SPCA CT be invited to speak to the group.

The public hearing started at 7:35 pm. Approximately 30 people addressed the task force in the public hearing. Co-chair Layton laid out the ground rules for the public meeting and asked that speakers limit their comments to three minutes. He also asked speakers who wanted to speak on topics already covered by previous speakers to simply state that they agreed with a previous speaker, all in the interest of time. General themes that emerged from the public hearing were:

1. Many speakers were former volunteers who insisted that the Stamford ACC remain a no-kill shelter.
2. Is fostering something we should consider?
3. "Pitter Patter Feline Rescue" and "Friends of Felines" have trap neuter and release (TNR) programs that provides a valuable service, especially for feral cats. They are over capacity and would welcome police/animal control visits to houses where owners are feeding stray cats but not caring for those cats.
4. Senior animals are very adoptable and shouldn't be overlooked.
5. There were many sad stories about dogs and cats euthanized before 2005 (no way to verify the conditions of those animals that led to their being euthanized).
6. Allowing owner surrenders is important. If not done, those pets will just end up released on the streets.
7. Social media is invaluable in the recovery/adoption process. Pictures and basic information should be posted ASAP. This is a good task for volunteers.
8. Our animal shelter should be a "model to every other city" in CT.
10. There is a definite cost benefit to adoption versus euthanasia as explained in the No-Kill Equation.
11. The importance and value of volunteers and volunteer organizations like Friends of Felines and the rabbit rescue org must be recognized.
12. We shouldn't forget rabbits (third most popular household pet after dogs and cats) and other exotics like gerbils, birds, lizards, etc.

The public hearing adjourned at 9:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Eileen Heaphy, Co-chair