

Minutes for the Meeting of the Mayor's Task Force for the Stamford

Animal Control Center, October 9, 2014, noon

Democratic Caucus Room, Government Center

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM. In attendance were Co-chairs Eileen Heaphy and Art Layton (arrived after first item finished); Dr. Steve Zeide, Bull's Head Pet Hospital, Annie Selkovitz Taylor, Mary Ann Kleinschmitt, New Canaan Animal Control Officer and Attorney Brenden Leydon. Also in attendance were Director of Public Safety Ted Jankowski, Corporation Counsel Kathryn Emmett, SACC acting chief Tilford Cobb, SACC Volunteer Coordinator Katina Wargo, Assistant Police Chief Tim Shaw, and SPD Lt Nick Montagnese. Members of the public were also in attendance.

Co-chair Heaphy began the meeting with a Skype session with Nathan Winograd, head of the No Kill Equation. She said that the Task Force had received a lot of information on his campaign, and he confirmed that he was aware of the problems that had occurred at the SACC. Winograd gave an overview of the No Kill Equation and then answered a number of questions from members of the Task Force and from city officials. There was a useful discussion on Trap-Neuter-Release programs for feral cats based on a study that showed the cats had greater longevity when finding homes on their own than by being taken in by a shelter. The session concluded at 12:50.

The next speaker was Chris Onthank, a specialist in training dogs and their owners to solve behavior problems. He discussed the problem of dealing with behavior problems while the animal is in a shelter because of how the shelter is set up and the animals caged. With more aggressive dogs, training in the shelter may be the only option. It is preferable to have the training in the owners' homes or in foster care. He also offered to talk to the SACC staff if they desired.

Interim SACC Manager Cobb introduced the new Volunteer Coordinator to the Task Force. He then provided updates on the animals in the shelter. He said that adoptions were ongoing and he looked forward to the new adoption policy and other forms to be approved. Since the new versions had not been circulated by Co-chair Heaphy, she said she would send them and asked that TF members review them quickly so the papers can be approved and put into operation.

Cobb reported that August had 7 adoptions, September has 9, and there were several in the first week of October. Euthanasias were as follows:

May—3 cats, June—0, July—1 cat, August—2 cats, September--2 cats, and Oct—none so far. The cats euthanized were severely injured or ill and the veterinarian made the decision to end the lives.

Progress in other areas included a new evaluation of all the dogs in the SACC, development of relationships with new rescue groups and animal welfare groups, and the volunteer program up

and running. He was asked about extending the hours that the volunteers can be at the shelter, including the weekends and said they were looking to adjust employee shifts to accomplish that. He gave an update on getting a new Petfinder account and a Facebook page. He noted that all calls are being responded to and addressed other points that merited a response to critics.

Task Force members also asked about the status of filling the vacant Animal Control Manager position. Corp. Counsel Emmett reported that former manager Laurie Hollywood had officially resigned, thus ending her grievance process. Therefore, the city could now post the opening as available.

TF members Zeide and Taylor also raised their concern about not getting enough information to all the Task Force members. Emmett explained that investigations are still on-going and as such cannot be shared broadly. Co-chair Layton said that the co-chairs would look to improve our communications with the TF members.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Heaphy, Co-chair