

MINUTES – FERAL CAT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING; June 14, 2024

Meeting took place in-person and via zoom

Quorum - in attendance were 2 council members:

- Council President Angel Fuentes
- Councilwoman Jannette Ramos

Others included:

- Director Gabriel Camacho
- Attorney Howard McCoach, Esq.
- City Council Intern, Tayla Ball
- Public in attendance via zoom: Kathy McGuire

Council President Fuentes read meeting notice

Mr. McCoach read the Statement of Compliance

Previous Minutes approved via motion; 2-0.

Discussion involved the following topics:

- Parvo vaccine – Pennsauken Animal Hospital charging \$6.00 for this vaccine
- Rabies vaccine – Pennsauken Animal Hospital does not charge for this vaccine
- In contrast, Delaware Valley Hospital charges:
 - \$77.00 for initial visit
 - \$35.00 for rabies vaccine
 - \$35.00 for parvo vaccine

Council President Fuentes:

- Discusses first resolution with public members and then subsequent resolution with Council Members
- Discusses the current City budget for animal care which is approximately \$750,000 but could approach \$1 million.
- Discussion focuses on Homeward Bound and recent visit there and meeting with Director Ken Sieranski providing important information to the attendees, including Homeward Bound working with the City to implement an appropriate TNR program.

Group discussion

- Discussion focuses on the Mobile Animal Clinic
 - Would allow City to make use of it
 - Insurance issues would still need to be resolved.

- Looking to have the mobile animal clinic in Camden approximately 3-4 times a month
- Perhaps handling 4-5 feral cats or more per day for TNR
- Mobile Animal Clinic has not been used for over 2 years but ready for use
- Discussion focuses on highlights that can be recommended to address feral cat population
 - Make TNR more viable and available
 - Seeks volunteers to assist with TNR program
 - Parents
 - Other volunteers
 - Training is essential as trapping and handling a feral cat requires expertise
 - Education Component
 - Critical Piece
 - Pamphlet/Flyer needed to educate public – Municipal Clerk to maintain and hand out, if requested. Can also be sent to schools for dissemination
 - Hotline number would greatly assist with the TNR program
 - Training needed for TNR
 - Consider maintaining and handing out traps to catch feral cats
 - Would need to train people on how to use traps to protect themselves and the feral cats
 - Trapping involves more than catching feral cat – process of getting the feral cat through the TNR process requires expertise and also holding the cat overnight
- Kathy McGuire
 - Other resources to tap into for information
 - Pennsauken Trap Library – Amy would be of great assistance
 - City should consider hiring someone to oversee the TNR Program
 - Needs to be monitored so that proper procedures are utilized
 - Other animals – raccoons, etc. are not trapped by Volunteers
 - Animal Control must be involved
 - Can assist and hand out pamphlets
 - Talk to Gloucester Township Mayor Mayer and staff
 - Used several acres for feral cats that are not adopted
 - Has quality monitoring done by staff; including reducing budget by \$180,000 through appropriate monitoring
- Council President Fuentes
 - City should make a video on the proper usage of a trap
- Councilwoman Ramos
 - Trapping requires extensive training on trapping feral cats
 - Traps, alone, require training for unsophisticated tappers
 - Discusses Denise Goodnow who has a great deal of expertise on TNR and trapping and would be a useful resource

- Director Gabriel Camacho
 - Discusses most recent contact data involving cats and dogs under City authority
 - Discusses the need for a temporary location to shelter hold feral cats to ensure an appropriate TNR process going forward

Council President Fuentes

- At this point, Council President Fuentes entertained a motion to end the Feral Cat Ad Hoc Committee meeting
- Meeting then ends

MINUTES – FERAL CAT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING; MARCH 5, 2024

Meeting took place via zoom

Quorum - in attendance were 3 council members:

- Council President Angel Fuentes
- Councilwoman Jannette Ramos
- Councilwoman Nohemi Soria-Perez
- Director Gabriel Camacho
- Attorney Howard McCoach, Esq.
- Public in attendance: Kathy McGuire

Council President Fuentes read meeting notice

Mr. McCoach read the Statement of Compliance

Council President Fuentes began by asking questions of Director Camacho

- Any ideas from other municipalities on how to handle feral cat management
- Do we generally find chips in many of the animals that are retained to tell us where they came from

Miss Ramos to Director Camacho:

- Are all cats that are captured being TNR'ed
- Miss Ramos believes that it TNR issue should be tackled now and not down the road
- Catching feral cats and using TNR will lower City's costs over time
- Need to check on data right now as a comparison
- TNR'ed cats – Director Camacho advised that the Animal Control Officer is not picking up ear-tipped cats
- TNR- key tool to be used but initial cost will be higher
- Using volunteers will save money as compared to using contract services including Homeward Bound
- Question to Director Camacho - Can the City open up services to other vets that the City is not currently using to get better pricing?
- What about using other clinics or shelters to save costs?
- If other options are available, can the City terminate some of its current contracts as cost savings - Mr. McCoach responded that, while he was not familiar with the contracts at issue, most City contracts allow for some form of termination

Soria Perez to Director Camacho

- Is Homeward Bound the only shelter in our area that can to cover the City?

- Would like to ask Ms. McGuire on how best to use our efforts going forward
- Question to Director Camacho - TNR should help with costs – could the City possibly use free clinics or clinics which charge less?
- Vet Center in Fairview – doe City have a relationship with it?
- Answer – no; the City only has a relationship with Pennsauken and Mount Laurel

Council President Fuentes to Director Camacho

- You advised that 166 animals – 89 dogs and 87 cats were taken to Homeward Bound
- Of those, how many were spayed or neutered - Director Camacho not sure
- Director Camacho pointed out there are three distinct parts to animal control
 1. Animal Control Officer
 2. Animal Hospital where immediate care is provided
 3. Shelter services - Homeward Bound

Public Comment

Council President Fuentes opens up the public comment period; Kathy McGuire in attendance

- Ms. McGuire advises that 91 cats were TNR'ed in the City on January 15th
- TNR costs came from a bequeath
- The City needs to utilize concentrated city areas for TNR
- Community Gardens and Crestbury apartments were used in this case
- Homeward Bound – TNR can do about 53 cats a month which averages out to about 12 cats per week
- There is a facility in Delaware called “Forgotten Cats” which charges approximately \$45 per cat
- Forgotten cats would keep the cats overnight for \$45 per cat which includes a rabies shot
- However, the city would need to find a way to get these cats to Forgotten Cats
- In comparison, Pennsauken hospital charges approximately \$180 per cat
- The idea of TNR is pay now or pay to later but the City still needs trappers
 - Who is going to pay for these services?
 - Who is going to set the trap
 - Put the food in the trap
 - Hold it overnight
 - Take it to a facility
 - Pay tolls
 - Go back and get then release them
 - Gloucester Township recently performed an intake-disposition report review of invoices from Homeward Bound and found approximately \$80,000 in savings
 - Gloucester Township pays a person to perform its animal services from licensing fees
 - City needs to focus on one primary area- finding a similar type person

- Petty's Island - all cats were fixed and had ears tipped
- TNR- is a lot of work
- City will need to find funding
- Cheapest in area for Spaying of male cats is approximately \$150.00
- For Director Camacho – A question – have you checked with Gloucester Township as to how they perform TNR
- Forgotten Cats mentioned and Ms. McGuire advised who the owner is
- Ms. McGuire mentions that 5 vaccine clinics are being scheduled for the City - leash/collar/education programs for Camden
 - Clinics will provide veterinarian who will also provide distemper/parvo vaccine for only \$6
- Ms. McGuire mentions that there is a spay/neuter van located at a school which is not being used and is already set up for surgery
- The City could use the van if the City can find a vet
- Ms. McGuire mentions that Forgotten Cats is aware of the City of Camden and its needs but cannot subsidize the City
- Ms. McGuire mentions that the City of Camden should model itself after Gloucester Township or Pennsauken
- It is mentioned that after approximately 2000 animals are serviced, the cost to the City will rise to approximately \$300.00

Councilwoman Ramos

- Thinks it is a great idea to have photos of cats taken that are retained
- Also supports the use of the van, possibly to take animals to Delaware

Council President Fuentes

- At this point, Council President Fuentes entertained a motion to end the zoom Feral Cat Ad Hoc Committee meeting at 4:00 PM
- Meeting then ends

MINUTES – FERAL CAT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING; December 15, 2023

Meeting took place via zoom

Meeting minutes were recorded on zoom.com

FERAL CAT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- Virtual meeting begins via Zoom.com – October 17, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.
- Ad Hoc Committee members attending:
 - Council President Angel Fuentes
 - Councilwoman Nohemi Soria-Perez
 - Councilwoman Jannette Ramos
- OPMA Statement of Compliance read into record by Counsel, Howard McCoach, Esq.
- Members of Public in attendance
 - Brooke Stigben
 - Kathy McGuire
 - Kathi Liszewski
- Council President Fuentes opens meeting by asking for comments from the public. Each is to be given 5 minutes.
- **Ms. Stigben**
 - Ms. Stigben begins by indicating that she was happy that the Committee has begun its work
 - Ms. Stigben raised the issue of how to address feral cats in and around the Ablett Village area when she attends to cats.
 - Ms. Stigben also indicated that the Committee should also address stray dogs in the community.
- **Ms. McGuire** – was initially given 5 minutes by the Committee extended that time by 2 minutes during her discussion by Council President Fuentes.
 - Ms. McGuire spoke next
 - Ms. McGuire focused on the role of law enforcement officers and the need for advocacy.
 - She indicated she had attended the Camden County Freeholders meeting to advocate for changes to the Camden County shelter contract currently being handled by Homeward Bound.
 - She noted the following:
 1. Camden County residents are to receive feral cat spay/neuter services for free
 2. However, there are limited appointments available for such services
 3. Microchipping of feral cats is not occurring in some cases.
 4. Some people are making use of TNR services available in Pennsylvania
 - She indicated that she had reviewed the Homeward Bound Newsletter and noted the following: There were only 524 feral cat spay/neuter surgeries that occurred from January – September 2023 which averages out to approximately 14 cats per week.
 - The City of Camden should verify services provided by Homeward Bound by reviewing the underlying documents supporting the invoice submitted. Such underlying documents should include intake and disposition records.
 - Ms. McGuire indicated she had documents to be shared with the Committee. Counsel provided his e-mail address to send any documents.

*** After the meeting, Ms. McGuire provided the Homeward Bound newsletter for Committee review.

- **Ms. Liszewski**
 - Ms. Liszewski spoke about Gloucester Township having its own system to address feral cats.
 - She indicated that sheltering feral cats is not the most ideal way to address the feral cat population.
 - She indicated that some trappers are not happy with the current TNR process.
 - She indicated that there were instances of overcharging which ultimately required a credit to be issued to the municipality.
 - She indicated that she was aware of an instance where a cat was brought to the shelter, released to a person for adoption, that person turns it in to another municipality which is then returned to the shelter and may have led to double-charging for this cat.
- **Brooke Stigben**
 - While Ms. Stigben had previously utilized her comment period, Council President Fuentes gave her the ability to make a short comment.
 - Ms. Stigben indicated that she wanted to thank and support the Committee in its work.
- **Councilwoman Perez**
 - Councilwoman Perez spoke about how important the work of the Committee was and looked forward to further discussions.
- **Councilwoman Ramos**
 - Councilwoman Ramos also spoke about the importance of addressing this significant concern.
- **Council President Fuentes**
 - Council President Fuentes then thanked everyone who attended the virtual meeting and adjourned the Committee meeting.