



Forsyth County
Animal Control Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2008

Julie Magness, Chair
Lori Sears, Vice-Chair
Joe Redman
Mitch Cromer
Dr. Tim Strickland
Jennifer Tierney
Thurman Dillon
Jerry Canady
Sandy Mayberry
Larry Bunn
D. Ritchie Brooks

Members Present:

Larry Bunn
Mitch Cromer
Jennifer Tierney
Thurman Dillon
Dr. Strickland
Sandy Mayberry
Joe Redman
Lori Sears
Julie Magness
D. Ritchie Brooks

Staff Present:

Tim Jennings
Matt Smith
Lt. John Day
Kelly Nash

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Magness at 6:25 P.M.

- *Minutes*

Jennifer Tierney requested a minor change in language of the October's minutes. She asked at the meeting that her name be removed from the ballot for Election of Chair and Vice Chair positions. A motion was made by Julie Magness and seconded by Jerry Canady to accept the minutes of October 18, 2007.

Presentation

The presentation by the Animal Adoption & Rescue Foundation (AARF) - will be rescheduled to a future date

Dangerous Dog- Breed Specific Legislation

- *Overview Summary*

FCAC staff provided a summary and review of the sample codes, reports, handouts and presentations provided to the advisory board members by staff and the public, as well as how the advisory board was requested to review the issue of certain breeds of animal impacting the public safety. Background was provided regarding breed bans as compared to Dangerous Dog codes. Tim Jennings advised that the department of Animal Control does not utilize breed specific policies, but that the County's Preventive Measures ordinance (FCC 6-18) establishes that the department may consider just the breed of an animal when determining measures to ensure future problems affecting public safety do not occur. Staff pointed out the issue does not necessarily mean banning breeds, but can involve higher fees and penalties because of the greater impact upon resources by bringing larger breeds into the community, mandating specific conditions such as kennels, fences, liability insurance, or mandatory spay/neuter. The CDC, Humane Society of the United States, insurance companies and other respected organizations have determined public safety concern does exist with the larger breeds of dogs. Eleven-(11) dog breeds are often identified as having public safety concern. Tim Jennings explained that FCAC and County Attorney staffs have just completed the draft of an extensive Dangerous Dog ordinance. In 2007 the Advisory Board recommended several amendments to the code. One included a specific definition of a Dangerous Dog. It was noted that the license ordinance set a \$100 license fee for a Dangerous Dog, but there was no definition, hence it could not be applied. Once review of this one issue ensued it was determined an extensive code

section would be required rather than just a definition. A copy will be provided to the Advisory Board for discussion at the next meeting.

- *Local Impacts*

Shelter Manager Matt Smith advised that 780 Pit Bull mixes had entered the shelter in the last year, of that 641 were euthanized. These animals made up 18% of the dogs sheltered last year. Matt provided an example of one six week period in which 173 pit bull and pit bull mix dogs had entered the shelter. Lt. Day stated that approximately 42% of the calls that come to Animal Control are regarding dogs running at large and acting aggressive. Dog bites and attacks also result in investigative follow-up contacts so the actual demand of officer time constitutes a much higher percentage of officer time than this figure indicates.

- *Board Discussion*

Chair Julie Magness stated that she did not favor breed banning, but thought there are other code areas that can be looked at to address fundamental areas leading to dog aggression. She then polled each advisory board member for their thoughts on the information they had received. None of the members supported the banning of certain breeds of dogs. Generally, members indicated support for tougher penalties to hold owners accountable for the actions of their animals.

Public Comment

Approximately 60 citizens indicated they were interested in providing public comment. At staff request, 12 people offered public comment as representatives of other citizens with similar comment. All comment was unanimous not in support of breed specific legislation. Six of the speakers were in favor of holding the owner more responsible. Three mentioned Dangerous Dog laws vs. breed specific code. Three speakers were in favor of higher penalties to the owners. There were general suggestions about obedience classes for Dangerous Dog violations.

Old Business

- *Breed Specific Legislation: Discussion*

In summary, the Advisory Board does not favor breed specific banning, however, it does recognize the need for owner accountability, stiffer codes and the ability to enforce them, and would like to explore options that may include mandatory behavior training, revisit tethering laws and mandatory spay/neuter, and other innovative programs. Jennifer Tierney made a motion stating the Advisory Board does not support breed specific legislation as studies have shown it does not work, but the board would like other opportunities made available to hold owners accountable and responsible for the actions of their animals. The motion was seconded by Dr. Timothy Strickland. All members were in favor. They have asked for the department staff for suggestions and guidance on this issue.

- *Feral Cat Program - TNR*

Tim Jennings updated the board regarding the on-going discussions with Forgotten Felines of Forsyth regarding establishing guidelines for development of a Trap, Neuter, Re-home feral cat control program. He advised the department intends to propose in this year's budget request an alternative request to support a volunteer based TNR program through funding for microchips and humane traps dedicated to TNR.

New Business

- *2007 Year End Statistics*

Tim Jennings gave a brief overview of the 2007 statistics pointing out the total number of animals received were down 4%. Hopefully this is a reflection of the increased licensing. Tim reported the percent of licensed altered animals has changed since the initial licensing year of 2004 as follows:

	% Altered Dogs	% Altered Cats
2004	75%	94%
2007	82%	97%

Animal redemptions increased 15% continuing a strong two year trend. Pet adoptions are also up in numbers by 2% despite a reduction in transfer to CCP partner organizations. Lt. Day referenced the

30% staff turnover in Animal Control Officers in 2007 as the reason citation issuance was down 13%. Tim Jennings stated the officers are also working on efficiencies, and such discussions have included when citing violations, 2 violations, 1 for licensing and a 2nd for rabies with a penalty for each offense will increase the chances of an appeal, while citing just unlicensed will automatically incorporate the need for a rabies shot and gain the compliance they are seeking with reduced chance of appeal.

- *Annual Report - Draft*

Tim Jennings submitted a draft Annual Report handout asking the board to look it over and think of issues, concerns, and recommendation they would like to have included.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM. The next meeting will be held March 20, 2008.