

Animal Control Commission

April 11, 2022 at 5:30pm

**Bloomington Animal Shelter – Hybrid Zoom and In Person Meeting
3410 South Walnut Street, Bloomington, IN 47401**

MEMBERS

Sue Allmon –present in person
Sita Cohen -present in person
Chris Hazel - present in person
Valerie Pena – not present
Nancy Riggert - present in person
Laura Soto – present in person

GUESTS

STAFF

Lisa Ritchel – present via zoom
Virgil Sauder – present in person

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Nancy moved to approve the March 14, 2022 minutes as written.
Chris seconded. Motion passes 4-0-1, with Sue abstaining.

II. NEW BUSINESS

i. Wildlife Management Proposal

Virgil introduced the topic and said that he hoped that everyone had an opportunity to look over the draft. He indicated that after the ACC reviews it and recommends it, he will send it to Adam Wason to review and then to the Mayor to review. Finally it would go to Council. Virgil asked the members for any suggestions or edits to the draft.

Nancy asked for an explanation on the “Bow Hunting” paragraph as it was worrisome to her. He answered that bow hunting has actually been happening in the City for years. It has been allowed not intentionally, but as a “gap.” He explained that the City ordinance states that one is not allowed to discharge a firearm in the City, and since a bow is not a firearm, it is not banned. This has allowed bow hunting as long as State rules are followed, so it has already been happening, but not in an organized way. Virgil then referred to CHAP hunts that are occurring in other parts of the State such as Griffy. These Community Hunting Access Programs are sponsored by the DNR and are organized and controlled with training involved for the hunters. Typically, members of a neighborhood or home owners’ association can get together and agree that there are too many deer in their area and can petition the State to have their area hunted through the program. Nancy asked for confirmation that this would happen during deer hunting season and asked if this would mean someone could go into their backyard in Elm Heights, for example, and shoot a deer with a bow. Virgil explained that currently, during bow hunting season, one can go onto their own property and hunt deer. One could also hunt on someone else’s property with the permission of the home owner and the home owners of any possible neighboring properties that the deer could wander onto. Sita asked if a license is required. Virgil answered that one has to be licensed in the State of Indiana and has to be registered. Sue confirmed that it would have to be during bow hunting season which is fairly short window of time. She explained that her brother is a bow hunter. Virgil offered the example that during the past bow hunting season, a woman hired someone to

come onto her parcel of land in town to hunt deer and was successful. Nancy expressed concern that an arrow could go a long distance and if in a neighborhood like Elm Heights that has small yards, the hunter could miss the deer and hit a child or a dog. Virgil agreed that this is a downside and there are definitely positives and negatives. He explained that if it is a small property, both the bow hunter and deer would be on the same plot and the distance between would be small, leaving less chance for overshooting. Sita added if they are licensed and responsible, one has to hope the hunter knows what they are doing. Virgil stated that he feels the regulation of hunters would be under the Council's purview and is a separate discussion. Chris shared that she lives in an area with a lot of deer, but doesn't think a lot of neighborhoods would be enthused to take advantage of this. Sue added that her brother wouldn't do a controlled hunt because the deer are tame, unless the meat is going to a food pantry.

Sita then referred to the "Education" section which mostly utilizes social media. She asked if the City could do a mailing as well, since not everyone is on social media, as part of a water bill that was already being sent to not incur additional costs. Virgil stated that this is an interesting and excellent idea.

Sita referred to a line in the "Feeding Ban" section that states that the City does not currently have a feeding ban and asked if the City could institute one. Virgil agreed that a ban is part of what needs to happen. Sita added that it is important to educate the public about the consequences of feeding deer. Nancy asked if this would affect bird feeders. Virgil shared that the Deer Task Force proposal for a feeding ban was specific to deer. However, if there is a conflict, the ACOs might ask people to stop feeding birds.

Sita referred to the "Deer Management Options" section and asked why the recommendations from the Deer Task Force document from 2012 were not enacted. Virgil stated that at that time no one took the initiative to make these things happen. He explained that this section in the draft is to encourage the Council to look back at the document. Sita asked how the ACC can get someone on the Council to enact these good ideas. He answered that there are a few Council members interested including the following: Isabel Piedmont-Smith whose district includes an intense deer population, Dave Rollo who was originally on the Deer Task Force, and Jim Sims.

Sita stated that the map is very helpful to get an understanding of the deer conflict areas. Virgil explained that the Deer Task Force proposal, which looked at overall numbers and management, was a City-wide approach, whereas if looking at incidents rather than overall numbers, it becomes a neighborhood issue. Sue added that the deer issue has been a problem and it continues to get worse.

Sita next referred to the section, "Do We Need Less Deer?" and asked if the Environmental Commission and the Parks Department are indeed promoting interconnected habitats and implementing native plantings. Virgil answered that this is ongoing.

Sita referred to the "Sterilization of Deer" section and asked if sterilization through immunocontraception is an option. Virgil answered that it would be an option if it becomes available, but it is currently not licensed with the DNR.

Sita concluded that everything else looks good and that she is in favor of the draft.

Chris moved to pass as is for the Council to review.

Sue seconded.

Nancy expressed her hope that the “Bow Hunting” section will be looked at again and made more rigid, but she is otherwise comfortable with everything else. Sita then asked if there were any statistics for how many deer were killed by individuals bow hunting in their own yard. Virgil answered in the negative. Nancy reiterated her concern and shared that she is worried that someone who doesn’t know what they are doing, but is frustrated with the deer, will turn to bow hunting. Virgil then stated that he could add a sentence that includes information regarding inexperienced hunters. Sita suggested removing the part allowing individuals to shoot a deer in their own back yard and adding additional oversight similar to the guidelines of the CHAP program. Virgil offered adding something like, “Due to the possibility that an increase in hunting by individuals could occur, the Council should consider limiting hunting to organized events.” Nancy approved of this solution and said she would now support the draft. Virgil continued and stated he could also add, “Since bow hunting is currently not regulated, and increased knowledge could lead to more use, which could lead to more conflict, regulating further would be prudent.”

Chris made a friendly amendment to include the new wording in the “Bow Hunting” section. Nancy seconded. Motion passes 5-0-0.

III. REPORTS

i. Animal Care and Control Report

Virgil explained that the shelter’s intake is very close to the intake from 2020. The only difference is that in 2020, the shelter was moving a lot of animals to prepare for the pandemic closure. Current adoptions are going well. Virgil stated that the shelter is preparing for kitten season and that several new neo-natal fosters have been added to the program. Virgil also reported that Pets Alive has stopped spaying and neutering rabbits. The shelter is currently looking for another veterinarian to do this service because per ordinance, all dogs, cats, rabbits and ferrets have to be altered before adoption. Sita asked if there was a reason Pets Alive stopped. He answered that there were multiple reasons including the following: a need to decrease numbers in general due to staffing issues, wanting to refocus on cats and dogs which is core to their mission, the fact that rabbits are very sensitive to anesthesia and some are lost due to complications of surgery, and lastly the procedure is more lengthy which limits the number of cats and dogs they can alter. Virgil added that typically one in twenty rabbits is lost to complications of surgery. Laura asked if he has reached out to Dr. Funk or the Pipsqueakery. He answered in the negative. He added that the Pipsqueakery is in the midst of some permitting issues with the County and until that is resolved the shelter may not be able to use them, but otherwise he stated that Dr. Funk would be an excellent resource.

ii. MCHA Update

Sue reported that the MCHA is concentrating on the Tails on the Town event which will be on April 30 at the Convention Center. There will be some amazing live auction items and 40-50 silent auction items. The community has been very helpful in providing this items. Seats are still available and there are now single ticket sales as well as table sales. Sue shared that there has been enough sponsorship that the event is completely covered and money made at the auctions will be all profit. Little Bub’s fund kicked off the sponsorship which in turn encouraged other organizations to sponsor. A table of six is \$600 and as of last week there are four tables left. The Fund-an-Item, which was initially the Memorial Garden, is now for veterinarian equipment for the Clinic and in turn the community. Some members recently have

had to go to the Indianapolis Emergency Vet and on one occasion it was due to Bloomington not having a specific piece of equipment which is fairly expensive. MCHA is looking to buy this particular piece of equipment and having it available for area veterinarians to use. Sue was unsure of the specifics of the equipment, but explained that it is a type of intensive MRI machine. She added that MCHA moved away from the initial Memorial Garden idea, to have something more tangible for the community.

iii. AMC Update

Virgil stated that the AMC had another short meeting, that was only six minutes long, but that started twenty minutes late. The one appeal did not show.

IV. ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION DISCUSSION

At the start of the meeting Virgil updated the members on the status of the dog, Kaiser. He explained that Kaiser is still at the shelter. The signed order was signed fairly late, just last week. Now there is a waiting process and the owner has ten days to appeal. Virgil has had a few conversations with the owner and she has been indecisive, but he has also spoken with the case worker who understands the situation. Nancy then inquired as to what would happen if she does appeal. Virgil explained that there would then be a trial and Jackie would represent the Commission.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Sue moved to adjourn.

Nancy seconded. Motion passes 5-0-0.