

## Animal Control Commission

March 8, 2021 at 5:30pm

Bloomington Animal Shelter – Zoom Meeting  
3410 South Walnut Street, Bloomington, IN 47401

### **MEMBERS**

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

### **STAFF**

Jacquelyn Moore  
Lisa Ritchel  
Virgil Sauder

### **PUBLIC**

Elizabeth Gallman

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Sita moved to approve the February 8, 2021 minutes as written.  
Nancy seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **i. Wildlife**

Virgil began the discussion by sharing that there is a feeling in the community that the current wildlife plan is not proactive enough with urban wildlife concerns. He then referred to the memorandum that he sent to the Commission and explained that the shelter does currently respond to injured wildlife but does not take animal counts or do management. The first time the city endeavored to work on this issue was ten years ago with the deer task force, which did produce several recommendations that did not come to fruition. Virgil then asked if the Commission would consider pursuing this issue. He inquired if members would be willing to help as a group or in a subcommittee to put together an urban wildlife management plan for the city. Nancy asked if Virgil was involved in the aforementioned task force. He answered that he was not involved. Valerie interjected and stated that the task force was part of City Council and public works but not the shelter. Sita then asked if this includes City chickens. Virgil explained that he is referring to just wildlife and that chickens are considered livestock. He stated that most concerns revolve around large wildlife like coyote and deer, and not birds, raccoons or rats.

Valerie then explained that in the past she steered away from this issue for the Commission and left it to public works. But now since bow and arrow is permitted in City limits, she has heard multiple stories of deer being shot with bow and arrow, but not trapped, and then dying in a public area like an apartment complex. Valerie also referenced a deer that had gotten caught in barbed wire fencing near an apartment complex that was badly injured and then shot. She was unsure who responded to this since the ACOs do not carry fire arms. Virgil explained that when we receive these calls, we go out and then depending on the situation, we contact the Bloomington Police Department and they dispatch the deer. He described another situation that we responded to where a deer was hit by car, but due to the location, BPD was not able to dispatch the deer. The deer was alert enough that ACOs were not comfortable in sedating it so DNR was contacted and they assisted. Virgil explained that the ACOs do not carry fire arms but do have tranquilizer darts if needed. The darts are not instantaneous, so tracking is involved.

Virgil continued and shared that there were four deer with arrow calls in 2020 which was up from two calls in 2019. He isn't sure if this is due to people being home more or it is a response to people feeling the deer are a nuisance and they are hiring people to help. Virgil then clarified that it not that bow hunting is allowed in the city, but there is a lack of prevention. It then falls under the DNR to regulate and if the person has a permit to hunt and has the permission of the land owner, theoretically they can hunt with a bow. But, again tracking is the issue, because one doesn't always get a clean shot. Nancy then referenced an article about this in the Herald Times and stated that she was shocked to learn that the deer was found just blocks from her house. She was dismayed that someone was shooting a bow and arrow in the Bryan Park area where the homes are very close together. She feels that the City should regulate this. Virgil stated that an ordinance would need to be passed by the City Council.

Hearing all of this, and learning that the ACOs are dispatched to these calls, Valerie concluded that it may now be time to be involved in the formation and writing of the urban wildlife management plan to help protect the shelter. Virgil referred to the deer task force again and explained that he believes the research has not changed. Some people want the numbers curtailed and some want deer in the city. Virgil summarized that the main question is discerning what good urban wildlife management looks like and then the shelter's responsibility would be providing the education component and how to live responsibly with wildlife

The Commission then discussed options to either get involved or not and whether to have the full group or a partial group work on this. Nancy then asked Virgil if he would prefer for the Commission look into this issue or does he prefer that the shelter not get involved. Virgil explained that the shelter is already involved with wildlife and deals with rabies vectors, animals in homes, raccoons with distemper or disease spread, injured wildlife, and hit by car wildlife. The shelter is also called when people have conflicts or concerns with wildlife. He stated that having the Commission involved would definitely help and give more credence to the plan. Valerie reminded everyone that the Commission is set up to help support Virgil and the shelter.

Sita said was undecided but stated that if we do agree, everyone should be involved since often there are no new agenda items, the more heads the better, and it would give the members a common goal. Nancy added that she would like to be able to read the shelter's current policy and also a list of common wildlife questions that the shelter receives. Sita and Valerie both agreed with Nancy's statement. Sita then asked Virgil for clarification on the deer task force and if that would be a good place to start. Virgil said that is an excellent starting point and it is one of the better documents on this issue that received a lot of accolades. He explained that this document is both on the city's website and there is a link to it from the shelter's website.

Nancy moved that the Commission take this issue on as a task and participate in revising or restructuring the response to give to the city to discuss and decide.

Sita seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

Valerie asked the members to read the deer task force information and the information provided by Virgil so that a discussion can be held at the next meeting. Valerie added that we won't try to solve it in one meeting, but will have a thirty minute discussion about the issue. Virgil added that he will provide some additional statistics and data as well.

## **REPORTS**

### **i. Animal Care and Control Report**

Virgil reported that intake continues to be lower than in the previous year, although numbers do seem to be rising. Dog intake in February was close to last February's intake which was before the pandemic. Virgil reported that the shelter received a \$5000 Lil Bub grant to showcase special needs animals and to support them going into foster then into forever homes. Virgil added that there may be an adoption event over spring break, but it is to be determined. Virgil then shared that there is a dog in the community with a bite history owned by a homeless person that may be coming to the Commission in the future. There have been reports of multiple minor bites to humans on the trail, but only one is confirmed. The 40lb hound mix is now neutered, up to date on vaccinations, and should be muzzled. Virgil continued and stated that there have been a few cases of parvovirus, but luckily it didn't spread. Virgil explained that at this time the shelter is not able to treat parvo due to how full the isolation room is, how crowded the shelter is with long term dogs, and due to the length of recovery and isolation needed. He did add though that the shelter is good at containing parvo and three positive dogs were actually caught before they came in the door. He is however troubled by how many cases there have been so early in the year. Nancy asked about the symptoms and Virgil answered that they are diarrhea with deep colored blood, since it is in the digestive track, lethargy and signs of fever. If a dog tests positive for parvo it is euthanized. For young dogs it is quick and very fatal, for adults with good body weight and in good shape, recovery is more likely. Virgil added that these dogs testing positive tend to be either owner surrenders of adults with no vaccines or stray 2 month old puppies. Valerie asked if there was a system for survival and Virgil answered that foster homes with no dogs or with a way to isolate would be needed.

### **ii. MCHA Update**

Sue explained that the MCHA mobile clinics have started. There is a new location each month through September. The clinic will continue to operate with curbside service through March and then will reevaluate. The education program is being revamped for better attendance. The website has also been revamped and after two years in the making, it is very sharp and even has a live chat feature! Spay/neuter is happening every other Friday and appointments are booked full into May. They have experienced 57% growth over 2019 during COVID.

### **iii. AMC Update**

Virgil explained that the AMC is working on an ordinance update. This had been worked on last year, but the pandemic put it on hold. Now they are starting up again. Valerie added that they continue to be challenged by habitual offenders and compliance. Virgil stated that he will add the ordinance changes in the packet so that the ACC can discuss them as well.

## **ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

No further discussion.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.