

## **Animal Control Commission**

**April 5, 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 – present  
Valerie Pena – present  
Nancy Riggert - not present  
Laura Soto – partial attendance

### **STAFF**

Jacquelyn Moore  
Lisa Ritchel  
Virgil Sauder

### **PUBLIC**

Gregory Baker

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **i. Wildlife**

Valerie began the wildlife discussion and shared that Virgil had provided statistics on the wildlife calls received by the shelter. She remarked that she didn't have the opportunity to look in depth at the information he sent from the other communities, but agreed that due to the feeling in the community and the calls received by the shelter, it is time to begin a discussion on wildlife management.

Virgil explained that his statistics give a general idea of the types of calls received and the types of animals most frequently called about. He shared that there are people in Bloomington that love wildlife and there are people that do not. Some people are feeding the deer which leads to increased interaction with humans. In addition to the excellent Deer Task Force document, he also sent out examples of wildlife management plans from similar sized cities. Valerie agreed that the DTF document is appealing and specifically liked the question and answer portion. Valerie also mentioned that Longmont, Colorado has a nice in depth plan.

Sita stated that this is an overwhelming topic and asked about the data from the 2012 DTF document. She referred to the statement that Lake Griffy's deer population is 13 times greater than in a comparable sized forest. She pondered if this was still true, or if the situation has improved. Virgil answered that he was unsure if this statistic is current, but mentioned that plant growth has been successful, so there must be some improvement.

Sue then asked if there really is a problem, because looking at the data, it appears that only a small amount of wildlife is being a nuisance. She wonders if just a handful of people are complaining. Virgil then stated that Sue's question highlights why a plan and more statistics are needed. Valerie then pointed out the sick/injured column and stated that education is needed to direct people on who to call when they encounter a sick or injured animal. The ACOs do not carry weapons, so cannot end suffering. Sue continued and suggested a decision tree, including

first deciding how the department handles the issues, then creating an education platform, then educating public on who to go to with wildlife issues.

Chris then stated that this topic has a big scope and that a wildlife plan should have several people collaborating including a parks representative. She reminded the Commission that we took up the green space and have taken their habitat.

Jackie..... couldn't hear...

Valerie then asked Virgil to compile a list of City departments to consider for collaboration on the wildlife plan. He agreed to do so. Valerie also asked the members to look at the examples from the other cities and to get more familiar with the DTF document before the next meeting. Valerie added that she will reach out to Adam with Public Works to discuss the plan.

**ii. Ticket and neuter appeal – Baker**

Officer Eubank reviewed Mr. Baker's history of at large dogs:

1. On December 19, 2020, Officer Steury spoke to the owner of two pitbulls at 2107 S Rockport Rd. One had been reported at large at the gas station. When he arrived Officer Steury stated that Pluto was friendly. He informed the owner of the tethering laws, including bringing the dogs inside by 11pm, and the intact dog fines.
2. On February 14, 2020, Officer Eubank picked up an injured dog at a hotel north of town and brought it to the shelter. Its shelter name was Coltrane. Mr. Baker called the shelter thinking his dog Chop was stolen. He came to the shelter and redeemed him.
3. On March 19, 2020, Officer Eubank received a call about a pitbull chasing people and a child on Rockport Road. When she arrived Pluto was on the porch acting aggressively and guarding his territory. Officer Eubank spoke with Mr. Baker's sister, Eeshauna McMiller, who was there and didn't realize the dog was loose. Citations were issued.
4. On March 25, 2021, Officer Eubank was called to two at large dogs in the dog yard at Adams Village. She brought them to the shelter. Mr. Baker then came to the shelter and Officer Eubank informed him of the mandatory neuter. The dogs are still at the shelter.

Valerie then asked Officer Eubank about the welfare of the poodle mentioned in the case notes. She explained that is a different issue and that dog belongs to Mr. Baker's sister. Sita asked if the dogs are neutered and Officer Eubank stated that they are both intact.

Mr. Baker explained that he works construction seven days a week and his son takes care of the dogs. They were loose two times due to his son's carelessness. Since school has been online, his son has been lazy and has been playing video games. Another incident, Mr. Baker was on the porch with the dogs and when he went inside to answer a phone call, a dog ran after a deer. He stated that he is appealing because he paid a lot of money for the dogs and doesn't want to get them fixed because he wants puppies for family members.

The Commission then asked questions to Mr. Baker. Sita asked where the dogs are kept when he is at work. Mr. Baker explained that they are kept inside but his son does take them out to the yard. Valerie asked if he had puppies before. Mr. Baker explained that Chop had a litter and Pluto was one of the puppies. He got the pair together. Valerie explained to Mr. Baker that since

they are intact they are more drawn to get out and to potentially be aggressive. She stated that the shelter's goal is to keep the population down. She asked him what he has done to rectify the issue. He stated that he calls his 14 year old son to check on them. He added that his son's Mom is also there she looks after them. Sita asked if he has a fence and he stated that he does not. Sita added that intact males can act aggressively especially if there is a female. Mr. Baker then stated that he is in process of getting a gate built around his yard. He is now working five days a week instead of seven so could put it up in two days.

The Commission discussed the appeal. Virgil then update the Commission with previous incidents. He stated that Pluto was also at large in October of 2019. Sita stated that the dogs need to be neutered to keep the population down, for their own health, for their safety and the safety of others since they are being contained. Sue agreed due to the multiple at large incidents. She feels that the dogs are getting let out, but no one is staying with them and they are not tethered. Sue doubted that a fence could be put up in two days. Mr. Baker interjected and stated that he does construction every day at various places and a fence will not take him long now that he is working less. Laura then shared that she is wavering due to the fact that the dogs being intact is only part of the issue. The lack of containment is the biggest factor. The Commission continued to discuss options and Valerie suggested holding the ticket in abeyance so a fence could be built and inspected. Mr. Baker again stated that he paid a lot of money for the dogs and wants to breed Chop who is around four. Chris asked him if he would get him neutered afterwards and he stated that he would. He added that the female dog is not in Indiana and won't be ready for another 5-6 months and said that he would fix Pluto.

Sue moved to defer the citations and fines for 30 days to allow Mr. Baker time to build a fence and for an ACO to inspect the fence, additionally, Pluto will be neutered before going home, but if the dogs get out again, all tickets and mandatory neuter of Chop will be reinstated. Sita seconded. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Jackie.... Couldn't hear....

Valerie recommended Mr. Baker talk with his son about stepping up and taking his responsibility more seriously. Virgil stated that he will get in touch with Mr. Baker tomorrow morning to schedule a pick up time for Chop.

### **iii. Title 7 Ordinance updates**

This was postponed to the next meeting.

## **REPORTS**

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

Virgil reported that the shelter will be closed for adoptions April 21-23 so that the staff can attend the HSUS Animal Care Expo in shelter training. One of the benefits of COVID has been cheap and accessible training for shelter staff. Leading up to that there will be an adoption event with waived fees to lower the number of animals in the shelter so that staff has more time to take advantage of the training. Virgil added that the shelter is going to start offering a local microchip registry. This will be beneficial to animals control officers to look up chips and return animals to their owners in the field. Animals not adopted from the shelter can now have their chips

included in the registry. This will soon be advertised on the website. Virgil concluded by mentioning that the group that met with the Mayor last year on pet store bans, has taken a step back in that process, but is planning a local Adopt Don't Shop campaign.

**ii. MCHA Update**

Sue explained that the MCHA just reached 1000 appointments for the year! They have completed 27 surgeries and the demand for spay/neuter continues to be overwhelming. The MCHA has added hours for spay neuter while still maintaining a very active clinic. The updated website is live and has a chat option. She encouraged the members to check it out and provide feedback. Twenty patients were seen during the March 7 mobile clinic, 50% subsidized and 50% not. The future monthly mobile clinics will be as follows: April 11 at Crestmont Community Center, May 2 at Girls Inc., June 6 at Bean Blossom Fire Department, July 11 at the Dog House, August 1 at Benton Township Fire Department, and September 12 at Basswood. The MCHA was awarded funding for a Pets of the Homeless vaccine clinic. The lobby and exam rooms are now open for clients to come inside, although curbside is an option if the client chooses. Finally, there will be a community wide yard sale on June 12 and the Tails of the Town is scheduled for August 14.

**iii. AMC Update**

No update.

**ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

No further discussion.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:52pm.