

Animal Care and Control Oversight Commission  
Meeting Minutes April 22, 2014  
7:00 p.m.

ACCOC MEMBERS PRESENT: Veronica Dougherty, Kerrienne Hanlin, JoAnn Kricker, Ricky Lewis, and Lyn Yelton (Chair)

ACCA STAFF: Jen Callahan, Eddie Crick, Crystal Literal

COUNTY STAFF: Al Wein (Administrator), Jason Allison (Attorney)

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

The meeting began with the approval of minutes from 9/17/13, 9/26/13, 10/3/13, 10/22/13, and 11/8/13. The minutes from 1/28/14 were approved with one name correction. These minutes will be revised and presented to the Commission for approval.

Al Wein, County Administrator, reviewed questions that were asked during public comment at the meeting on 1/28/14. The questions and answers were as follows:

1. Question: What defines an animal control incident?  
Answer: Anytime an animal control officer responds to a call or patrol observation that deals with an animal.
2. What happened to the dog involved in the bite incident at the Pollard residence? Answer: The dog was placed in foster care.
3. Question: How many catteries are in Cecil County?  
Answer: Actual number not known. None have registered with Cecil County.
4. Question: How many dog kennels are in Cecil County?  
Answer: Actual number not known. A total of 3 have registered with Cecil County.
5. Question: Does A Buddy for Life get inspected?  
Answer: Yes, Cecil County has a group of qualified individuals, including a veterinarian, who inspect the shelter several times a year.
6. Question: Does A Buddy for Life have a Maryland Veterinary License?  
Answer: Yes.
7. Question: Can a vicious dog be moved across state lines?  
Answer: Jason Allison, County Attorney, answered this question by stating that there are no current restrictions on transporting vicious dogs across state lines in Maryland.
8. Question: Why can A Buddy for Life house dogs in cages? Do they come out?  
Answer: A Buddy for Life has several outside kennels and large runs for the dogs during the day. The dogs have a scheduled exercise routine that they do every day. This is in addition to volunteer visits from stop-in volunteers and prospective adopters.
9. Question: Is Cecil County paying an additional cost to A Buddy for Life for their lawyer?  
Answer: No

10. Question: Is Cecil County paying an additional cost to supply an auditor for the annual audit?

Answer: No. The audit is required by contract.

Al Wein then announced that Cecil County had recently acquired a disaster relief trailer for the county. The ribbon cutting ceremony will be held on May 6, 2014.

The Commission then reviewed A Buddy for Life's quarterly report for the second quarter of 2014. The report was presented by Jen Callahan of A Buddy for Life. The Commission found the report to be complete and was satisfied with A Buddy for Life's work for the second quarter.

The Commission then set the dates for the next quarterly meetings, which will be held on July 30, 2014 and November 5, 2014. Both meetings will be held at 7:00 pm.

#### Old Business

1. Rick Lewis reported that A Buddy for Life has begun working with emergency services to come up with an evacuation route for emergency situations.
2. The Commission discussed Cecil County's need for a list of pet-friendly housing communities and businesses to which residents may refer when looking for new housing. Veronica Dougherty expressed that this is especially important for seniors looking for new homes because a lot of senior housing does not allow pets. In addition, there was great interest among commission members to establish a reference site for low-cost spay and neuter clinics within Cecil County. Rick Lewis volunteered to work with the community and A Buddy for Life to generate these reference sites and to make them available to the public via the internet.
3. Lyn Yelton suggested that feral cat colonies be registered. This idea was discussed briefly; however, began to run over on time. Rick Lewis made a motion to table the issue until it could be discussed in more detail at a later date. The motion was seconded by Lyn Yelton and then voted on unanimously by the Commission. A date will be set to discuss this issue further.
4. Lyn Yelton asked that the Commission again consider for review the fees and fines within the Animal Care and Control Ordinance. In addition, Ms. Yelton suggested further review of Chapter 142, Section 209 and its associated appendices for the purposes of reopening the law and making changes. Mr. Lewis expressed that the law had just been revisited by the Commission and county commissioners two months prior. In addition, the Commission had spent the later part of 2013 reviewing the law. Mr. Lewis again suggested that it was a conflict of interest for Ms. Yelton to recommend any changes to the laws and fines as they apply to kennel owners because she is herself a kennel owner.

Ricky Lewis then made a motion for the Commission to refrain from any further review or recommendations to change Chapter 142, Section 209 (Cecil County Animal Care and Control Laws) for the remainder of this years term. This motion was second by JoAnn Kricker. The Commission then voted 3 to 2 in favor of not proceeding with further review of the ordinance with the purpose of recommending changes. Those in favor of refraining from additional review were Kerriane Hanlin, JoAnn Kricker, and Ricky Lewis. Those in favor of further review were Veronica Dougherty and Lyn Yelton. The majority of commission members felt that their time

would be better spent working on other items like education efforts for Cecil County.

Each commission member will give some thought to various educational topics and ideas they would like to address during the next meeting.

#### Elections of officers for 2014.

A motion was made by Ricky Lewis to nominate JoAnn Kricker as Chairperson. Ms. Kricker turned down the nomination due to personal time constraints. Mr. Lewis then nominated Kerriane Hanlin as chairperson. Dr. Hanlin also turned down the nomination due to time constraints. Veronica Dougherty made a motion to leave the current officers as they are. The Commission then voted unanimously to keep all officer positions the same.

#### Public Comment

Rebecca Palmer, a Cecil County resident and volunteer for A Buddy for Life, expressed that she believes A Buddy for Life is doing a good job in the community. She stated that the facility and the animals are well cared for and that she enjoys the work she is doing with the rescue. She indicated that she has become a foster home for the shelter and that she has learned a great deal from her experiences with the rescue.

Tammy Pollard of Elkton asked the following questions:

- a. Can A Buddy for Life deny a volunteer application? Does it have to have a basis for denial?
- b. Can county trucks be used for transportation to and from work like a police car or are they for county use during on-call hours only?
- c. Has the upstairs and facility ever been inspected for fire code?
- d. Is there wheel chair access?

Dawn George [residence unknown], expressed that she felt that the cost of cremation in the quarterly report is inaccurate. She also wanted to know why dog bite cases do not always result in euthanasia of the animal.

Mary Fabulic of Elkton and president of the Chesapeake Feline Association conveyed that her organization cooperates with other organizations to provide low-cost clinics, cat colony maintenance through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), and food assistance to low-income families and their pets. She explained that these services are provided by these organizations to hundreds of county residents with no cost to the Cecil County government. Ms. Fabulic said she feels it is not proper to undermine these efforts and programs with improper legislation.

Christie Dolusso of Cecil County expressed her concern about recent claims of cats being dangerous due to toxoplasmosis. Ms. Dolusso stated that she has worked with cats and their fecal matter for most of her life and that she handled hundreds of cats during her three pregnancies. Each pregnancy involved screenings for toxoplasmosis and she never tested positive. She suggested that most people contract toxoplasmosis from under-cooked meat. Ms. Dolusso indicated that she feels that A Buddy for Life is "doing a great job" as the new animal care and control entity for Cecil County.

Anke Masters of Cecil County requested that the Commission change the meeting format. She expressed that she does not believe she should have to wait until the next meeting to get answers about animal control, but rather that questions should be answered "right then and there". She

noted that dispositions are being left out of the animal control reports and that she believes they should be included. Ms. Masters noted that not all bite cases are handled in the same way, with some resulting in fines and others not. She is looking for more detail in the disposition section of the reports. Ms. Masters inquired about the procedure for a person who finds a stray dog and wanted to know why there are not laws governing the surrender of stray dogs? She also expressed that she had gone to the Citizens Corner meeting and complained about toxoplasmosis in cats.

Alice Murdock of Cecil County stated that she has worked with A Buddy for Life for a while and is confident that the work they are doing truly benefits the animals and the people of Cecil County. She also felt that the Commission has wasted too much time reviewing the approved legislation. She also said that the Commission was being "too picky" when it comes to review of A Buddy for Life. She felt the Commission should work more with A Buddy for Life and not against the organization.

Vanessa Hubard stated that she believes there are personal issues at hand between members of the Cecil County administration and members of the Animal Care and Control Authority. She said she feels that all personal issues should be put aside and she asked for the county to support A Buddy for Life in their efforts. She also expressed her support for TNR in Cecil County.

Deb McQuate of Elkton told the Commission that she had attended many of the meetings concerning Chapter 142, Section 209 in the past and that she was under the impression that the legislation was decided on and supported by the community. She said she was expecting to attend this meeting to see what progress had been made in supporting the new animal control authority. Ms. McQuate expressed that she is disappointed to see the Commission still talking about revising the new law. She also said she had visited A Buddy for Life's facility and found it to be cleaner than other county shelters she works with. She saw the dog runs and the constant rotating of dogs to the outside exercise play areas. As someone who does a lot of TNR she expressed that if the county attempted to register each colony it would be too difficult and suggested that it would be easier if registration of feral cats was done by region. She stressed that the majority of the people in Cecil County are not well-off and that many need assistance with low-cost spay and neuter. She believes funds should be made available for low-income families to utilize if needed. Ms. McQuate, who helps run a low-cost clinic every month at the Perryville Outlet Center, said the key to reducing the cat population in the future is making the resources available for those in need of spay and neuter now.

Valarie Refner of Port Deposit inquired about who is feeding feral colonies and when.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Secretary:

