

ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Office of Animal Services

7315 Muncaster Mill Road, 2nd Floor Conference Room

Derwood, MD 20855

I. Call to Order

6:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order by Jennifer Hughes.

Present In-Person: Jennifer Hughes, Interim Acting Chair; Vicki Thomas, Vice Chair; Jan Armstrong; Katie Bante; Elizabeth Mullen; Judith Vaughan-Prather; Caroline Hairfield, OAS Director; Dr. Gregory Lawrence, Chief Vet; and, Bonnie White, Business Operations Manager.

Present Virtually via Microsoft Teams: Georgia Dodson, Maureen Smith, and Sandy Yuen.

Staff Present In-Person: Trish Ranshaw

Handouts: 1/2/2025 Draft Meeting Minutes

II. Review and Approve January 2, 2025, Meeting Minutes

6:30 p.m.

Motion by Jan Armstrong to approve minutes, 2nd by Vicki Thomas. Vote – Approved by all. Abstentions by Katie Bante and Georgia Dodson.

III. Introduction of New ASAC Members Katie Bante and Georgia Dodson

6:31 p.m.

Katie Bante and Georgia Dodson introduced themselves, and they are excited for the opportunity to serve on ASAC. The rest of the meeting participants introduced themselves and welcomed themselves to Katie Bante and Georgia Dodson.

IV. Updates from Dir. Caroline Hairfield

6:40 p.m.

Dir. Hairfield stated that compared to this same time in 2024 (Jan-Mar), there are approximately 1013 animals, this is down 6-18%. Length of stay is up by 41%, 9 days, however, things are getting better. A soft launch of the spay/neuter clinic has been put into action and five animals were spayed and/or neutered. Still ironing out forms and procedures before a hard launch is in effect. As of April 1st, the shelter will be closed on Wednesdays. Wednesdays will be the day the shelter will hold the rabies clinic and vaccinations. The spay/neuter clinic will also be on Wednesdays but every other Wednesday to start. Once everything is running smoothly the S/N clinics will occur every Wednesday. A press release will be issued pertaining to these changes. Staff will be working eight-hour days five days a week instead of ten-hour days four days a week. This will give more coverage and have more staff on duty every day.

FY26 Budget Discussion

6:50 p.m.

Public hearing before the Council on 3/10/25 regarding Bill 27-24 to change the length of stay from 5 to 3 days. The CE's FY26 Budget will be announced to the public on 3/14/25 and will go before Council on 4/10/25 for public hearing. Jennifer Hughes will sign up to testify again this year. ASAC will be meeting again prior to the budget hearings and can work on drafting the testimony.

Other

Shoutout to Elizabeth Mullen for coming to the shelter. She provided trainings for volunteers and staff, and they loved it! Beth has agreed to come back and give training on cats to staff and volunteers as well. Thank you, Beth!

V. ASAC Members Georgia Dodson and Maureen Smith Departs Meeting 7:08 p.m.

VI. ASAC Membership Update 7:09 p.m.

Katie Bante and Georgia Dodson are new ASAC members.

ASAC member Kim Haden resigned. Kim represented Friends of Montgomery County Animals (FMCA). If anyone knows of anyone who would be good fit for this position or a similar organization like FMCA operating in the County, please let Dir. Hairfield know.

Elizabeth Mullen, Jennifer Hughes, and Dir. Hairfield are the nominating committee, and there is one candidate that they would like to interview for the licensed vet ASAC vacancy.

VII. ASAC Goals and Objectives Discussion 7:12 p.m.

ASAC discussed how to move forward regarding the below goals and objectives. Since there are eleven voting members, it was decided to break into smaller groups to discuss and work on goals and objectives. The small groups cannot make policy, however, can make recommendations and bring them to the entire group.

1. Identify ways to develop MCASAC and OAS as community resources and develop an action plan to achieve this goal:
 - a. Identify improvements in communication strategies, including events. In particular, outreach and communication strategies to under-served communications should be a focus;
 - b. Empower and engage partner organizations to communicate OAS issues and strategies;
 - c. Provide input on Application/Outreach for OAS community spay/neuter clinic; and,
 - d. Reach out to the community to get input on the role of OAS
2. Develop policies around community/outside cats.

Motion by Jennifer Hughes to break into small subgroups to discuss and decide priorities 7:21 p.m. and lump some of the above goals and objectives together, 2nd by Elizabeth Mullen.

Motion amended by Jennifer Hughes to group the above goals and objectives into the following three groups. Friendly amendment accepted by Elizabeth Mullen. Approved by all.

1. **Group 1: Goal and Objectives #1.a. and 1.b.**
2. **Group 2: Goal and Objectives #1.c. and 1.d.**
3. **Group 3: Goal and Objective #2**

ASAC members chose to be in the following groups. Selections confirmed. Jennifer Hughes will contact Georgia Dodson for her group selection.

1. Group 1: Goal and Objectives #1.a. and 1.b.

Katie Bante
Elizabeth Mullen
Maureen Smith
Judith Vaughan-Prather

2. Group 2: Goal and Objectives #1.c. and 1.d.

Jan Armstrong
Jennifer Hughes
Vicki Thomas
Sandy Yuen

3. Group 3: Goal and Objective #2

Vicki Thomas
Judith Vaughan-Prather

The groups broke up, held discussions, groups reconvened.

7:34 p.m.

Post group discussion bullet points include:

- Group 1: Beth Mullen and Katie Bante to reach out to Maureen Smith and identify media contacts to put together media reports from organizations and obtain monthly updates;
- Group 2: Jennifer Hughes Meet with subject experts, OAS staff for information/documents, then will meet and discuss with expert Public Information Officer and go from there; and,
- Group 3: Vicki Thomas and Judith Vaughan-Prather to meet with Best Friends and will do research on the Fairfax folks and other experts.

VIII. Public Comment - Steve Roznowski

7:55 p.m.

IX. Additional Notes

8:00 p.m.

After the public comment, ASAC discussed the following:

- Next meeting is Thursday, April 3, 2025.
- Jennifer Hughes will draft budget testimony.
- Form will be revised with everyone's name and email addresses added.
- At the next meeting, discuss process of electing new ASAC officers, and may hold elections.

X. Adjournment

8:03 p.m.

Motion by Judith Vaughan-Prather, 2nd by Vicki Thomas. Unanimous vote: All in favor. Approved.