

ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 7, 2025

Office of Animal Services

7315 Muncaster Mill Road, 2nd Flr. Conf. Rm.

Derwood, MD 20855

I. Call to Order

6:30 p.m.

Meeting called order by Jennifer Hughes, Acting Chair

Present In-Person: Jennifer Hughes, Acting Chair, Vicki Thomas, Vice Chair, Dr. Amjad Chaudhry, Jan Armstrong, Beth Mullen, Georgia Dodson, Maureen Smith, Caroline Hairfield, OAS Director, Dr. Gregory Lawrence, Chief Vet, Bonnie White, Business Operations Manager, and Trish Ranshaw, Staff.

Virtual Attendees: Sandy Yuen and Judith Vaughan-Prather.

Absent: Katie Burbage

Handouts: Committee Member Objectives, Officer Response to Barking Dog Complaints (SOP Working Document) and Regulation of Dangerous and Potentially Dangerous Dogs proposed new legislation. All three documents are working documents. Copies upon request.

II. Approve June 5, 2025 Minutes

6:34 p.m.

Jennier Hughes made Motion to Approve 6-5-25 Minutes: 1st Vicki Thomas 1st, 2nd by Jan Armstrong. Approved by all.

III. Director's Report – Caroline Hairfield

6:38 p.m.

Shelter Operations & Animal Outcomes

- Intake Trends: The shelter continues to experience an increase of animal intakes compared to this time last year. Owner surrenders are up 38% largely due to housing instability and resource insecurity. The animals are primarily owner surrenders and stray animals.
- Live Release Rate: The live release rate remains strong, due to adoptions, transfers, and return-to-owner outcomes.
- Length of Stay (LOS): Targeted efforts to reduce LOS are yielding positive results, particularly for adult dogs and long-term residents. LOS has dropped a little bit, but it is still too long.
- The dog play for the dogs in the shelter is still happening and is going very well.
- OAS is having a *Clear the Shelter Adoption Event* on August 23 & 24, 2025.

Community Programs & Outreach

- Happy Pets, Happy Homes Program: OAS has rebranded the community outreach and support efforts under the *Happy Pets, Happy Homes Program*, which serves low-income families by providing low-cost vaccinations, spay/neuter services, and pet food assistance. OAS only offers the rabies vaccination but will extend to more vaccines in the future.
- Pet Pantry Expansion: OAS is working to increase community donations through enhanced communication and social media outreach. In addition, OAS is actively pursuing grant opportunities through the Rachael Ray Foundation, ASPCA, Walmart Foundation, and others to expand OAS' capacity and services.
- The County Council gave OAS an additional \$30K in its budget to assist with our pet food pantry, thanks to ASAC advocacy.

Policy & Legislative Work

- Barking & Nuisance Complaints: OAS is reviewing procedures and exploring potential updates to streamline complaint handling and improve enforcement.
- Permitting & Enforcement: Continued emphasis is being placed on proactive inspections and compliance outreach for unlicensed stables, grooming and boarding facilities.
- Dangerous Dog Regulations: Draft revisions are currently under legal review and will be shared with the Committee once finalized.

Facility and Infrastructure

- HVAC System: repairs were completed earlier this summer and there have been no further significant issues reported.
- Dish Room Redesign: the redesign is currently in the planning stages with implementation and completion timeliness still to be determined.
- Laundry Room Upgrades: Two new commercial-grade stackable washer/dryer units have been installed in the main laundry room to improve hygiene and support daily operations. A second laundry room is in the design phase and will include two additional washer/dryer units, with anticipated completion by Spring 2026.
- Fleet requests: We are still awaiting the delivery of four replacement vehicles. While aging fleet maintenance needs have increased, field coverage has remained largely unaffected.

Personnel & Training

- New Staff: Four new Animal Services Officer candidates are currently undergoing police background checks. Once cleared, they will begin the 12-week training program to prepare for their roles in the field.
- OAS has fourteen (14) Animal Care Attendants with one vacancy currently being held for a transfer candidate.
- Leadership Development: Plans are underway to design and implement a formal leadership training and development program for current and future supervisors and managers.

Strategic Initiatives

- Business Plan: A draft of the 2026-2028 Business Plan has been completed and will be shared with the Committee for input prior to finalization and public release.

IV. Committee Updates

7:18 p.m.

- Committee Member Objectives: Members are to choose what they would like to work on from the hand-out “Committee Member Objectives”, and members are to email to Jennifer Hughes, Vicki Thomas and Caroline Hairfield as to which objective you would like to work on and your opinion on the Committee Member Objectives. Members are to come and give their opinion on the handout and their chosen objective(s) at the next ASAC meeting on Sept. 4th. This is inclusive to the Action Plan – Groups, Goals, & Objectives.

V. Public Comment

7:37 p.m.

- Ken Ayres

VI. Additional Discussion Points

7:44 p.m.

- MCPAW to make a link for Wish List.
- Georgia - What items can she share for Wish List Needs.
- Focus on Pet Food Pantry on expanding the food bank.
- Maybe food bins could be placed in county office buildings.
- What specific organizations or connections could help with resources for expanding the food bank.

VII. Meeting Adjourn

8:16 p.m.

1st by Beth Mullen, 2nd by Vicki Thomas. **Approved unanimously**