

ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)

MEETING MINUTES Thursday, June 1, 2023

Office of Animal Services
7315 Muncaster Mill Road, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Derwood, MD 20855

I. **Call to Order** **6:59 p.m.** Meeting called to order by Melissa Rubin, Chair

Present In-Person: Melissa Rubin, Chair; Jennifer Hughes, Parliamentarian; Jan Armstrong; Dr. Roxanne Borrok; Kim Haden; Linda McMakin; Elizabeth Mullen; Vicki Thomas; Sandy Yuen; Dr. Gregory Lawrence; and Bonnie White.

Present Virtually via Microsoft Teams: Stephanie Arrington, Vice Chair; Maureen Smith.

Absent: Thomas J. Koenig.

Present In-Person Staff: Trish Ranshaw.

Handouts: June 1, 2023, Agenda and May 4, 2023, Meeting Minutes.

II. **Review and Approve April 12, 2023, Meeting Minutes** **7:00 p.m.** Review May 4, 2023, meeting minutes. Motion by Jan Armstrong to approve minutes, 2nd by Kim Haden. Vote was Unanimous – Approved.

III. **Updates from Chair – Melissa Rubin, Chair** **7:04 p.m.** Stephanie Arrington will remain a member of ASAC until a new member comes onboard. Maria Anselmo, Outreach Community Manager at OAS, is present and will speak later during the meeting.

Motion by Elizabeth Mullen, 2nd by Jennifer Hughes at 7:08 p.m.: Vicki Thomas for Vice Chair position of ASAC. Vote was Unanimous – Approved.

For follow-up: Melissa Rubin's goal is to write a progress report/letter summarizing ASAC's priorities and updates for the last 6 months to the Montgomery County Council and Montgomery County Executive. Melissa asked that updates and summaries regarding priorities be sent to her by Friday, June 9, 2023.

IV. **Shelter – Animal Care Update – Maria Anselmo, Staff** **7:10 p.m.** Maria Anselmo provided an update regarding animal care and the morning cleaning/feeding/going out routine and protocol. Work is continuing in these areas. Currently, all dogs go on walks two-three times per day, in addition to the run.

Elizabeth Mullen expressed concern that some dogs do not like eliminating on concrete and wondered whether putting down some astroturf would be useful. Some members and Maria Anselmo expressed concerns that astroturf could be difficult to disinfect. Dr. Gregory Lawrence will look into astroturf.

Jennifer Hughes expressed that it would be useful to get the daily statistics/number of animals in the shelter on the day of ASAC's monthly meetings.

V. Priority Group Report Out: Foster Programs – Maria Anselmo Staff 7:36 p.m.

Maria Anselmo explained the foster process and where it is now and strategies for moving forward. OAS took down many of the barriers to fostering, in hopes that more people can foster. OAS probably sees the most drop offs at the “Application Review & License Check” step, when potential fosters are alerted that they need to get their current pet(s) licensed in order to foster. A suggestion was to waive the application/license fee or a sponsorship program. Since the fee is only \$12.00, Maria Anselmo did not think the fee was an issue. However, it was suggested that someone look into the possibility of waiving the license fee for fosters. The license fee is set by executive regulation.

OAS also sees some drop offs at the “Driver’s Form” step. Maria Anselmo has reached out to Risk Management, and they have not responded to her when she asked if this was something that OAS needed fosters to fill out. Maria Anselmo will reach out to Risk Management again regarding this.

Maria Anselmo stated that getting new fosters enrolled in the program is not a big problem. The biggest challenge faced by OAS is enrolling fosters who are willing to take on big dogs and the fosters deciding to and going through with fostering a big dog. Most fosters like non-bully breeds and small dogs. Some fosters are also very specific about the kind of dog they are willing to foster, for example a hypoallergenic dog under 15 lbs. One of the issues is a lack of pet friendly housing that would enable fosters to take on these dogs. If the Committee could help advocate for affordable pet friendly housing in the community that would help remove some of the limitations that fosters have in fostering big dogs. These are the biggest challenges.

OAS is now working on the development of a short-term dog foster program. People are much more willing to commit and follow through with fostering when fostering is not open-ended. Lots of shelters also have great success with short term programs (i.e., overnights, 3-5 days, over the weekend, etc.), and this is OAS’s next step in foster expansion.

OAS’s push is for big dog fosters only. Signing up and enrolling other fosters (i.e., for small dogs) is a drain on staff and a waste of resources, since small dog fosters are not a problem. A suggestion was made to contact the County regarding putting information about OAS needing/wanting big dog fosters in one of their banners on their website.

VI. Priority Group Report Out: Spay/Neuter Initiative Update – Jennifer Hughes 8:15 p.m.

Dr. Roxanne Borrok asked whether the line item for the Spay and Neuter Program for low-income community outreach of \$235,000 is a no or whether we were waiting for an appeal. Jennifer Hughes has continued speaking to various County personnel and County officials about the \$235,000. Jennifer Hughes also stated that ASAC needed to keep the pressure on and should resend the letter to the Montgomery County Council and Montgomery County Executive. She also stated that we wouldn’t need the entire \$235,000, given that the earliest we could get it up and running is October. **For follow-up:** Jennifer Hughes asked Elizabeth Mullen to write up four bullets for another letter to Marc Elrich, County Executive of Montgomery County and to Evan Glass, President of the Montgomery County Council and to send them to her.

Priority Group Report Out: Community Cat Issue – Kim Haden 8:20 p.m.

Kim Haden sent a message to Director Thomas Koenig but did not realize he was out on vacation. She then sent her questions to Spencer Kelly, Staff, who was on leave also. Spencer Kelly sent over whole feline program handbook. Kim Haden stated she learned a lot, but that she still had questions regarding timeframes.

VII. Priority Group Report Out: Behavior Training as a Bridge to Adoption/Reduce Loss – Melissa Rubin **8:22 p.m.**

Melissa Rubin stated that there was no time left in the meeting to discuss topic and that perhaps ASAC will discuss adoption/adoption policies the next time. There are no barriers to adopting. Maria Anselmo stated that for the period from March – May, adoptions were the highest ever and stated that numbers were high because OAS is good at what they do. Jennifer Hughes stated it would be important to look at length of stay as well.

VIII. Other Updates – Melissa Rubin **8:27 p.m.**

Melissa Rubin would like feedback on the agenda and encouraged ASAC members to send feedback to her.

IX. Public Comment By

Allan Cohen

8:27 p.m.

Susan Rich

8:34 p.m.

For follow-up: Linda McMakin suggested that the Committee draft a letter to the CE regarding issues with OAS' facility after hearing public comment from Allan Cohen. After some discussion, Linda McMakin offered to write the letter.

X. Meeting Adjourned

8:37 p.m.

Motion by Jan Armstrong.

2nd by Dr. Roxanne Borrok.

Unanimous - Approved.