

ANIMAL COMMISSION MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023

Chairman Collier called the meeting to order at 5:19pm.

A. ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Scott Ellingson, Colby Collier, Anna Accetta, Cherie Aronson, Karen Dorney, Cathy Kamen, Susan Stanek, Lt. Luke Holder, Capt. Garon Delmonte. Staff: Susan LaFond, Recording Secretary
Not Present: none

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS –

- 1) **Kristen Shultz, Orange resident** – Ms. Shultz could not appear this evening, but sent an email to Capt. Delmonte and would like to appear at a later date.
- 2) **Gina Amenta, VCA Baybrook** – Ms. Amenta wanted to touch base on a date for our collaboration event. A Saturday in June suggested. Ms. Stanek said we were waiting to have an influx of kittens for the adoption part of the event. Mr. Ellingson said there are currently five cats and five kittens in Animal Control care; the kittens are just 2 weeks old and will be adoptable in early May. Ms. Amenta said we could still have a collaboration with someone from Milford Animal Control at Baybrook, speaking and educating the community about what Milford Animal Control does. Baybrook has cat cages to help the community if Animal Control need any. Baybrook is willing to take some kittens and put them in their reception area for adoption when the time comes. Their Saturday office hours are 8am to 2pm for scheduling purposes. Royal Canin, Hills, and Zoetis will sponsor the event. Baybrook is in the process of obtaining their Cat Friendly Practice certification. Their feline specialist can be there on the Saturday we select. Board will discuss June Saturday options and select two for Ms. Amenta and her team to choose from.
- 3) **Brad Macdowall, Jennifer Ornelli, and Monica from Team Animal Rescue Inc., a CT nonprofit, attended.** Mr. Macdowall spoke to inform the commission on both the organization, and what they propose. He said the sanctuary is situated on private property in Bethlehem and specializes in rehabilitating dogs and cats with behavioral and medical issues. Mr. Macdowall is a Hamden activist and advocate for limits on euthanasia and better treatment of animals in control facilities. He responds to emergency calls across the eastern United States to save large and aggressive dogs who would otherwise be euthanized. The organization believes enrichment is critical for these animals. Mr. Macdowall provided updates on former Milford Animal Control dogs: Bat Dog (now Frankie), is extremely high energy and has been determined to dislike confined spaces, and is a dog for someone without small children. Brownie (now Princess) was snappy when acquired, initially requiring a muzzle. While she is not good with other animals, she is a friendly couch dog. She will need an experienced adopter. Bear, (now Bear Hugs) is slow to warm to new people, but excited to see familiar faces. He will be neutered in mid-April. Team Animal Rescue believes no one should be interacting with the animals without first signing a liability release. They can provide one of theirs for review by our City Attorney. Their interaction with dogs at the Milford Animal Shelter would be approximately 30 minutes with each dog, consisting of walking, commands, focus, and photos for marketing. All volunteers should be mindful of the public, and stay on the facility grounds with the dogs when interacting. Team Animal Rescue requests feedback on handling and behavior be shared after each visit for the benefit of each animal. Further, they commit to taking in any unsafe dog for 28 days, free of charge or liability, from Milford Animal Control. They will determine the dogs' triggers and best type of owner. They have volunteers for dog walking, who can be used once they sign a liability waiver. They would require individuals to provide identification and sign the waiver form

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upon arrival, before interacting with the animals. He said it is important for volunteers to understand and respect that there may be days or times during which volunteer services cannot be delivered. Mr. Macdowall asked that all participating dogs wear a Maritngale collar, without plastic buckle, to allow confident control. Team Animal Rescue can provide these collars. Ms. Dorney commended them on the work they have done with dogs taken in from Animal Control previously. The sanctuary is currently home to forty dogs and twenty-four cats. Dr. Melissa Moore is one of their primary veterinarians. It is the plan of Team Animal Rescue to obtain regular feedback from the staff of Milford Animal Control regarding their performance, and to start working at the shelter with their most experienced staff, then network in others. Currently, they have 10-12 people willing to volunteer. They complimented Milford Animal Control on their facility and animal care. Ms. Stanek also suggested putting specific collars or harnesses on the shelter's Amazon wish list.

- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES 2/9/23** - Ms. Kamen motioned to approve; Ms. Stanek seconded. Approved unanimously.
- D. WARDEN'S REPORT** - Mr. Ellingson provided the State report for review. Motion to approve by Ms. Stanek, seconded by Ms. Dorney. Approved unanimously.
- E. DEPARTMENT REPORT** – Mr. Ellingson reported Milford is currently housing four dogs. There are currently five cats and five kittens in ACO care.

Individual updates – dogs:

Barney is still awaiting adoption.

Chloe is still awaiting adoption.

Spice is still available for adoption. Advertised in Milford/Orange Times.

Elijah is still awaiting adoption.

Petite Husky – found roaming has been adopted.

Shiba Inu – found roaming has been adopted.

Individual updates – cats:

New female cat came in pregnant and has since delivered five kittens. Kittens are now 2 weeks old.

A black long haired male cat, unnamed, in MAC care may be picked up for rescue at a future point.

A male cat with a wound of unknown origin was acquired; this cat will need to remain at the shelter for 5 more months in quarantine because its vaccination status is unknown. The cat is overweight and was being fed by people in its neighborhood. It was initially thought the cat had a broken leg; examination proved that not to be the case. Not yet named. When he is released, an individual in the neighborhood where he was found would like to adopt him and bring him indoors.

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A second male cat picked up was also believed to have a broken leg; examination proved that was not the case. There may be ligament or other damage. Not yet named. Jennifer will try to get the cat to a specialist for further evaluation. This cat's sibling lives beneath a shed; the homeowners said they would like to adopt him when able to do so, and bring him indoors along with the sibling.

A female tortie, unnamed, was rescued, eating garbage at Taco Bell. She has not yet been advertised but appears not to be feral. She is scared and being evaluated.

Assistant ACO position (formerly Marc Ruby) has not yet been advertised.

- F. CORRESPONDENCE** – Valentines' Day cards from Calf Pen students were shared with the commission.
- G. DONATIONS** – Donations reported as follows:
 - February 2023 public donations: \$682.50
- H. COMMISSION REPORT** – Chairman Collier saved Shelly's request for a raise, but had questions regarding her hours and role for local volunteers. He is concerned with Shelly's irregular schedule. Mr. Ellingson said he will require Shelly to be in the office on Mondays and one other weekday. Chairman Collier again questioned what Gary is doing and whether he could coordinate the local volunteers. Per Mr. Ellingson, Shelly is valuable to answer phones and handle general office work. Commission to revisit this issue at the next meeting.
- I. NEW BUSINESS** – AED (defibrillator) for Animal Control building. Capt. Delmonte said every departmental building should have the device. He recommended Animal Control check with the Fire Department to see what they use, and get the same. Ms. Stanek suggested Mr. Farrar research that. Cost estimated between \$800 and \$3000. Chief Delmonte recalled Devon Rotary has donated units in the past; that is an avenue staff can pursue.

Ms. Kamen made a motion to accept Team Rescue Inc. offer of volunteer assistance to Milford Animal Control; second by Chairman Collier. Approved unanimously.

Mr. Ellingson to send a copy of Team Rescue's waiver form to City Attorney for review.

Ms. Stanek asked where the yellow bin of dog toys has gone. Mr. Ellingson said many were inappropriate for the dogs (children's stuffed animals, etc.) but that Animal Control purchased rugged toys and rawhide for the dogs. Chairman Collier offered to donate toys. Ms. Stanek requested a frisbee by Nylabone or Kong.

It was brought to the commission's attention that incorrect information is being provided to the public regarding hours of operation, and hours of volunteering. Mr. Ellingson will speak with staff to ensure the information they are disseminating is correct.

J. OLD BUSINESS –

- 1) Facebook account consolidation – Mr. Ellingson will speak with Mr. Farrar and ask him to delete his separate Facebook page. Discussion re: definition of a "no kill" shelter to be researched and a final

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definition accepted at next meeting. Mr. Ellingson indicated they have had success listing the adoptable animals on Petfinder; he will ask Gary to do this in lieu of the duplicate site.

- 2) Long-term shelter resident adoption plan – Ms. Stanek asked if Lt. Holder would be amenable to do videos for us similar to “Minute with the Mayor” but calling them “Minute with a Mutt.” The videos would be put on Milford Animal Control Facebook page, and we would like to see if the police department would do a posting to their social media pages as well. Suggestion for Animal Control Officers to take an adoptable dog along with them on rides, but per state regulations, the officers cannot have any animals in the front of the van.
- 3) Rabbit spay was performed February 17th at a reduced “shelter” rate; successful.
- 4) Dog walkers – addressed above; Team Animal Rescue to undertake.
- 5) Benches – the dog park benches have not been installed and we have no eta.
- 6) Mama cat, calico on the hill – Ms. Dorney to follow up with Mr. Ellingson regarding technology that might work. Mr. Ellingson said Marti was able to trap the Taco Bell cat, and it is important to capture Mama cat as she appears to be pregnant.
- 7) Wastewater TNR Project and Smudge – no changes; leave Smudge on location. No follow up needed.
- 8) Volunteers: Result of Mr. Ellingson’s conversation with Ms. Steeves and Mr. Farrar – who will be coordinating volunteers? Issue still under discussion. Chairman Collier does not want to pursue a raise for Ms. Steeves if she is not going to be able to manage volunteers; Ms. Steeves does not want to take on that responsibility without a pay increase. Question regarding Mr. Farrar’s job responsibilities as clerk and whether the volunteer coordination should rest with him. Tabled to next meeting.

J. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.