

**Animal Control Board
Thursday, July 9, 2015
Animal Rescue League**

Members Attending: L. Smith, H. Brown, A. Rudy, D. Straub
Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, L. McCauley, M. Ebersole, W. Heim

Ms. McCauley called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

A quorum was present.

Ms. McCauley welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that she will be facilitating the meeting, along with Ms. Katzenmoyer.

All present introduced themselves.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Straub, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve the March 25, 2009 minutes as written.

Chief Heim questioned what a serval was. Mr. Brown explained that they are large cats.

Mr. Straub questioned if the Board would be electing officers. Ms. Katzenmoyer expressed the belief that an election would occur at the next meeting when members are more familiar with one another.

Motion carried unanimously.

Animal Control Regulation Review

Ms. Katzenmoyer distributed the Animal Chapter of the City's Code of Ordinances along with the recently enacted Pet Code Red/Code Blue. She reviewed the powers of the Board and briefly described the recent amendments made to the Chapter through the work of the Board of Health and the Animal Control Agency.

Ms. McCauley questioned if the Animal Control Agency called the Code Red/Code Blue. Ms. Rudy stated that it does.

Ms. McCauley stated that Code Red has not yet been needed this summer.

Mr. Straub requested a full review of the Animal Chapter.

Mr. Straub stated that the definition of wild feline is too broad and would refer to feral cats. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that this would be a judgment call on the part of the Animal Control Agency. She also explained that legal definitions need to have some ambiguity for enforcement purposes.

Ms. Rudy stated that she would not view all feral cats as wild feline. She determines this on a case by case basis.

Mr. Straub noted his concern that the Animal Control Board was not consulted during the amendment process. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that the Board did not have enough members to constitute a quorum. She explained that the amendment was thorough and was performed by the City's Board of Health, the Animal Control Agency and the City's legal staff.

Mr. Straub questioned the number of exotic animal permits. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that in the absence of the Animal Control Board, the City's Property Maintenance Division has been overseeing exotic animal permits. She stated that at this time there is one active permit for the ostriches at First Energy Stadium.

Mr. Straub expressed the belief that there are many others. Mr. Brown stated that the City cannot determine this unless the animals are reported by concerned neighbors.

Mr. Straub expressed the belief that there are also many unlicensed dogs in the City. He stated that he reports them to the County and noted the need for stricter enforcement. Mr. Brown explained that this is the duty of the Dog Warden. He stated that Ms. Rudy is in the City every day following up on complaints and that there is no way she and City staff could walk the entire City going door to door checking on pets. Ms. McCauley stated that she will contact the Dog Warden to follow up on this issue.

Mr. Straub questioned if the Dog Warden was independent of the Animal Control Agency and the City. Mr. Brown stated that it is. He explained that the Dog Warden program is through the State Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Straub stated that he makes many complaints to the County about unlicensed dogs and there is no follow up. Mr. Brown stated that the County licenses the dogs but does not follow up on complaints. He noted the need to report this to the City for follow up.

Chief Heim questioned what the funds for dog licenses is used for. Mr. Brown stated that it is to process the paperwork required.

Ms. Rudy explained that when she receives a complaint she checks County records for property ownership and dog licenses before she visits the property.

Mr. Straub expressed the belief that the Animal Control Board complete a detailed review of the Chapter.

There was discussion about the six dog/cat limitation. Mr. Straub stated that the Animal Control Board was not consulted. Ms. Katzenmoyer again explained that the Chapter was reviewed by the Board of Health, the Animal Control Agency and the City's legal staff. She stated that the Animal Control Board did not have enough members to constitute a quorum during the time the Chapter was amended.

Ms. McCauley stated that she is committed to keeping the Board active. She stated that the Animal Rescue League has taken in 487 cats in June.

Other Matters

Ms. Smith expressed the belief that the City should have mandatory spay/neuter regulations. She proposed the City also begin a trap, neuter, release program. She stated that there is a very successful program in West Reading. She described the program and stated that residents pay \$15 and the borough \$20 (per animal) for vouchers to participate in the program. She stated that No Nonsense Neutering performs the spay/neuter for \$35.

Ms. McCauley stated that she has spoken with the administrator of the program. She questioned the number of animals spayed/neutered. Ms. Smith stated that she did not have the number. She stated that traps can be picked up at Borough Hall and the vouchers are available there as well.

Ms. Rudy stated that she would support this program in Reading but that many residents are transient and there would be no follow up by new residents. Mr. Brown stated that there would need to be a large number of traps available.

Ms. McCauley stated that the Animal Rescue League is having all of its information and publications translated into Spanish. She noted the need to communicate with the wider community.

Mr. Straub noted the need to hold landlords accountable for their tenants. He expressed the belief that the City's largest problem is that there are too many rental properties. He stated that many owners who have multiple properties claim to live in multiple places to try to circumvent the City's rental property process.

Mr. Straub described a situation he had with his neighbor.

Next Meeting

Mr. Straub expressed the belief that as a City board, meetings should be held in City Hall. Ms. Smith expressed the belief that parking is easier at this location and it is not far from the City.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that meetings are held at the call of the Board President. She noted the need to elect officers.

Chief Heim suggested waiting until the three members whose applications are pending can get through the appointment process.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 1 at 6 pm in the Penn Room of City Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 pm.

*Respectfully submitted
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk*