



Public Safety Department
Animal Services Division
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Manatee Animal Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes 03-29-2017

In attendance: Gerald Thomas, Jana Dunson-Martin, Jean Peelen, Lisa Williams, Lisa Barnott, David Doyens, Bob Smith

Meeting called to order.

Approval of minutes from 02-22-2017 meeting.

Public comments.

Division Chief Update, as presented by Bob Smith, MCAS staff liaison (see attached). The Board, led by Jean Peelen, engaged in a discussion of the specifics of MCASAB's report and recommendations in regards to 1) funding for spay/neuter programs, 2) mandatory spay/neuter requirements, 3) an animal abuser registry and the issue of 4) pet stores selling puppies.

In regards to funding for spay/neuter programs, the emphasis was made that said funding – an *increase* in funding over current levels -- was specific for spaying and neutering proper and not AS in general.

[In rebuttal, the AS liaison commented that AS does not wholly approve of such a proposal as any additional monies garnered would be better applied to staffing needs and other essential services. The Board Chairperson reiterated that the funding in question is specific for the spay/neuter program and is not a request for an increase in general funding for Animal Services.]

In regards to implementation of a mandatory spay/neuter program for the canine species of Manatee County, the board has agreed that such is not a viable approach in light of the costs involved for the owners (resulting in surrenders) and that the program may 'incentivize' neighbors to overly report at-large, intact animals.

In regards to the animal abuse registry, an objection was made to the fact that farm animals were not included in said report (per sections 5E and 6D); said exclusions were to be addressed and eliminated.

[The AS liaison commented that AS cannot be the 'owner' and/or manager of said list in that such would be both legally and logistically challenging. The Board Chairperson acknowledged the legitimacy of the comment.]

In regards to the moratorium on pet stores that sell puppies, the five addendums supporting the reasoning for such a program were addressed in detail.

[The AS liaison commented that, while potentially true, there is no formal documentation to support the theory that animals sold through retail pet sales in Bradenton, FL add to and burden the MCAS system.]

The Board then engaged in a discussion of the merits of submitting the report, as a whole, to the Board of County Commissioners. Concern was raised that the entire report would be 'too much, too soon' and overwhelm the Commissioners, thereby compromising the report's impact. Similar material presented to the BOCC in recent years was not well accepted and may yet serve as a driving force to reject the newer presentation/material.

Proponents argued that the report is in keeping with our mission as an advisory board; it is our role to present recommendations and this report is in keeping with that role.

Gerald Thomas proposed the following solution: the report, in whole, would not be submitted to the BOCC until their May 2017 meeting; but the BOCC – and its respective staff members – would be notified of its existence and its proposed presentation for that particular meeting, thereby paving the way and allowing those who pursue lobbying the BOCC the necessary time to exert their influence upon the BOCC. The public was asked for comments. A vote was taken. All Board members favored the proposal and voted yes.

The Board then addressed the language contained in the AS' R-15-128 and the proposed R-16-165 in reference to the physical requirements of dogs and cats to be qualified for county funded spays and neuters, as the BOCC was looking for recommendations from the MCASAB on the subject. The old requirements preclude the normal period in which many such animals are spayed and neutered; the newer requirements allow a much greater leeway for addressing the needs of the targeted animal population. Public comments were invited. The entire Board voted in favor of supporting the new requirements.

Public comments in general were invited.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next MCASAB meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 26 at 5:45 pm.