



Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Minutes of September 25, 2008 Meeting

Present: Sheila Presby, Roni McCall, Joanne Bourbeau, Deb Simson, Jerilee Zezula, Mark Ellingwood, James Kennedy, Andy Shaguory, George Cook, Joyce Mattot, Mike Hughes, Steve Sprowl, Dick Wentzell and Lisa Hall

Approval of previous meetings minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting were approved with the amendments.

After a long discussion, the members voted not to have their email addresses used for any other purpose other than commission business. Any information that is not directly related to the commission should be sent to the secretary and the chair will be consulted as to whether the commission members should receive this information.

Many of the members present again stated that they do not want to receive email that is not commission related as they are deluged with email overload. The members present voted 12 to 1 in favor of this policy.

Another discussion began about the possibility of having a blog for the commission. The consensus was that a blog would be another form of information overload for the members and wouldn't be used on a regular basis.

Update on commission members

1. Mark Ellingwood returns as representative for the NH Fish and Game
2. Elin Phinizy resigned her position as Dog Breeders Association representative
3. Joyce Arivella is the newest member representing the Dog Breeders Association.

Update on cruelty case costs report

Jerilee Zezula reported that 23% of the cases listed for NH resulted in convictions; roughly 70% of the cases were not charged, dismissed or no prosecution was pursued.

Jeri gave a brief overview of the draft, stating it still has a ways to go with more information needed before it can be completed.

Mike Hughes reported he and Steve Sprowl have 11 or so cases that were convicted and will send that info to Jerilee.

George Cook suggested that the cruelty law to go into the appendix.

Jerilee stated that some flow charts of how cruelty cases are handled will also be included in the report.

Several members asked that some things get clarified or redefined. Jerilee will revise and have the draft resent with the revisions including that of Dr. Crawford's concerns/suggestions (listed below) for our next meeting.

Email summary from Dr. Crawford -page 2, chart - NH statute specifically discusses both hot and cold vehicle interiors. If the subcategories are not intended to be exhaustive, then that should be clearly stated to avoid confusion.

-page 3, chart - What is the definition of 'inhumane killing' (or 'humane killing') or 'inhumane training'?

-page 5, Case Intake, 'Animal cruelty is usually reported by a NH citizen who has witnessed an act of cruelty or who has seen an animal **who** appears neglected.' Green *who* should more appropriately be *that* or *which*. Who is primarily and secondarily defined as related to *person or persons*. Animals are not persons. *It / they* is appropriately used two paragraphs below in reference to animals.

NH Cost Analysis for Governor

-Number of cases decrease significantly from 2003 (19) / 2004 (21) through 2005 (8) / 2006 (7) / 2007 (4). Why?

Note for Cost Analysis Report to the Governor:

1. Cost analysis report should have a recommendation for funding to prosecute animal cruelty cases, education and have it directed to the dept of agriculture. If funding is to be given then a state agency has to be given the funding (i.e. Dept of Ag).

2. The CRS info will not be included in the cost analysis report to the Governor but should be mentioned in the annual report to the governor as the NH program is not yet up and running.

Update on <http://www.nh.gov/humane> website

- no current changes

Update on bio forms for website

- since the members submitted less than half of the bio forms, and after a brief discussion, the chair has tabled the bio's until and if there is further interest in doing this by a majority of the members.

Update from subcommittee regarding researching permanent Humane Commission

Dick Wentzell reported that the subcommittee will have the results by the next meeting in October.

Update on CRS Program

Joanne Bourbeau reported that the budget for VT was less than that of NH for one reason Jill lives in VT and doesn't have the travel expenses that are potential for NH and that the Vermont CRS project took 14 months NH is estimated to take 18 months to implement.

Dr. Crawford sent his concerns/suggestions via email to the members

- Generally a good idea. Thanks to Jill, I have surfed around the demo system a bit.
- Is the NHFHO seeking anything from the commission or just providing an informational update? **Answer: Nothing right now - only informational for now.**

-By now everyone knows my opinion on the value, and primary role, of education in preventing these problems. No one can argue that education, law, or any other activity will ever prevent all animal cruelty, but if the vast majority (to cite the Cruelty Cost Analysis) of cases are not intentional, wouldn't focus and funds (\$144k in 18 months) be better spent on reaching this 'negligent' or 'underinformed' population and preventing the vast majority of problems. Perhaps then the costs, reporting, etc. involved would be diminished to a manageable volume?

-page 2, last paragraph, 'With no clear process in place to assure an appropriate response...' I think that each entity involved in response has its own clear process in place. I believe that the concern / confusion is that cases can be and are legally handled in different manners (multiple processes in place) rather than no clear process. For example, this office typically investigates; identifies the problem(s) for the animal owner; identifies what needs to be done to address / rectify the problem; identifies a timeline for resolution; and performs rechecks. This method eliminates the very expensive boarding costs and puts the full burden squarely on the owner. As most cases are simple lack of awareness, this system leads to satisfactory resolution

in most cases. There are still many individuals that believe that each of the owners needs to be sanctioned. Money better spent by the owner on the animals than on court ultimately improves the situation for the animals which is a good end goal. Recidivism rate in these cases is not zero, but I would venture that it is lower than those cases that have gone to court - no facts or data, simply opinion.

-page 4, Objectives, '#2 Ensure that enforcement action is taken...' Is the goal to improve the situation for the animals or to prosecute (as stated at the end of the sentence)? The system that this office uses would not be acceptable in this description as improvement rather than prosecution has proven our most effective and cost-efficient mechanism.

Could be voluntary resolution and not necessarily go to trial

-page 5, how was it determined that 3000 animals will be helped?

Answer: These numbers came from the VT Federation and not NH and only an estimate of what NH will be dealing with.

New Business

There was a brief discussion to re-write executive order after November elections. The consensus is that it is premature to do this until we have the results from subcommittee.

SWOT continued

Deb Simpson began the exercise by getting us to work on the focus aspect of the commission and the discussion will continue with the next meeting in October.

There were no announcements.

Next Meeting Dates:

The chair has set the next 3 meeting dates - October 23rd, November 20th, and December 18th. All to be held in Senate Room 100 of the State House from 1-4pm unless otherwise notified.

Draft submitted by Roni McCall, Commission Secretary to the members on October 14, 2008.