

We met at Duplin County Animal Care, Control and Adoption facility at 5:30pm for a tour. We were able to use the conference room in the new facility for the first time, to conduct our meeting.

DUPLIN COUNTY ANIMAL ADVISORY BOARD - MEETING

October 3, 2023

Members: Cathi Hale, Chris Jarman, David Phillips, Chris Alphin, Haley Cooper, Margie Hunter, Jason McGuirt, Michelle Blanchard, Kebby Schweinsberg and Bobbie Kennedy

Present: Cathi Hale, Margie Hunter, Chris Jarman, Chris Alphin, David Phillips and Bobbie Kennedy

Excused: Jason McGuirt, Michelle Blanchard, Kebby Schweinsberg, and Haley Cooper

Meeting called to order by Cathi Hale at 6:05pm, 2nd by Margie Hunter

Meeting as follows:

> Grand Opening Celebration - Joe Newburn, Mattie Lane

- Date: A date is to be decided as we can't be sure when the power will be in working order in the new shelter.
- Elementary School Art Project: Nicole Murray is on board per Chris Jarman. Participants will consist of 8 Duplin County Schools, ranging somewhere between the 3rd to 5th grade. Each school will choose the top 5 of their choice to submit into the contest. The schools will present a total of 40, 8x11 drawings to Duplin County Animal Advisory Board.
- Bricks: Each brick will be sold online only. They will be able to be viewed and purchased on a link that will be provided by Joe Newburn. There will be a total of 400 bricks available to be sold (space availability). All the bricks will be set at once following the sell of most or all available bricks. Chris Alphin made a motion to set a \$100 minimum donation limit for each brick, this was 2nd by Chris Jarman.

> Review/Results of presentation to DC Commissioners regarding request for additional shelter attendants - Chris Jarman

- The DC Commissioners permitted 2 full time positions for Animal Shelter Attendants in addition to the current part-time position.
- Joe Newburn justly moved the current part-time Animal Shelter Attendant into one of the granted available full time positions. The remaining full time Animal Shelter Attendant and present part-time Animal Shelter Attendant are currently vacant. Applications will be accepted until both positions are filled.
- Next year's budget is expected to allocate an additional Animal Control Officer according to DC Commissioners.

o Develop plan for pet-friendly hurricane shelters

- DC Emergency Management suggested the new facility should house owned pets as an emergency shelter during disasters.
- Duplin County Animal Advisory Board is strictly against the idea of the new facility being accessed for such placements.

Purposes:

> Disaster events during floods always need additional animal friendly emergency shelters, specifically for the known flooding locations. Several members and staff are well experienced and seasoned from previous disasters.

> The new facility is space insufficient for such situations. Animals are always going to be in the facility (stray, adoptable, non adoptable- still on state required holds, sick and bite quarantined animals) requiring their occupied space. Necessary space must be available for those needing to be rescued from rising water and scared stray animals. Scared animals can become aggressive which leads to more calls and pick ups for citizen protection.

> Lastly, there is not room for the owners to be housed with their pet(s) in this facility, which leads to the liabilities that will be thrust upon the county. Many animals become ill due to stress, already have health issues, or will be expectedly exposed to illnesses in the animal shelter. While some expense can be reimbursed by government assistance, the county cannot comfortably supply enough hands alone, to help with the upkeep this demands. These animals are considered pets as they have owners. When an animal is in the care of the county it must be maintained by the county to meet state standards, even medically. Potentially leading to deaths of pets and lawsuits by the owners.

- An animal friendly emergency shelter needs to be large enough for the owner(s) and the pet(s) to be together so the responsibility is to the owner(s), supplying the care necessary for every animal.
- Suggesting the Shelter in Place/ Emergency Shelter, the event center is the most reasonable place to supply the necessary space and accommodations. Also, having the livestock arena nearby for owners that have those type pets, would be confident that their pet is safe. This will also be helpful for the owners in caring for their pet(s) as they try to have some type of stability and normalcy during a difficult period. This helps decrease as much stress as possible on the owner(s) and the animal(s).
 - In addition, the event center will not be needed for disaster supply storage, until after the emergency shelter/ shelter in place is closed: As the storm moves out of the area.
- Providing pets and service animals with emergency shelter is necessary to qualify for FEMA assistance as follows the PETS Act.

** The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS) was a bi-partisan initiative in the United States House of Representatives to require states seeking Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance to accommodate pets and service animals in their plans for evacuating residents facing disasters.

> Final Conclusion: Emergency Management and County Manager need to come together to decide on participating in this service to continue having FEMA Assistance by supplying a large enough place to do so or to forfeit the FEMA Assistance by not providing this service as needed.

Meeting adjourned by Margie Hunter at 7:00pm (2nd by Chris Jarman)