

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ANIMAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 22ND DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2024

The Caddo Parish Animal Services Committee met in legal session on the above date at 1:00 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mr. Thomas, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (3). ABSENT: Commissioners Blake and Giles (2).

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given in a previous committee meeting. There being no Agenda Additions or Citizens Comments, the Committee moved to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discuss and review the mandatory spay/neuter ordinances*

Director Clark gave a brief summary of the Pilot Spay/Neuter Ordinance that will sunset July 1, 2024. Mr. Clark said that dogs who are 52 weeks or older or cats that are 6 months or older have to be spayed or neutered. He explained that the City of Shreveport adopted this ordinance, but other municipalities have not. Over the course of the past three years, puppies account for nearly 30% of the shelter population; kittens account for 50%-57%.

In 2023, the basic care expenses for the puppies was about \$40,000; and the kittens' basic care expenses was about \$28,000. The basic care costs does not include any additional costs associated with the puppies or kittens who come in with other medical needs.

Robinson's Rescue has played a vital role in reducing the number of animals that come into the shelter.

Mr. Clark provided a three year comparison of intake, euthanasia, and positive outcomes.

Mr. Clark talked about ways to strengthen the ordinance. He said that once an animal is found at large after the second time, it is fixed with the exception of the honest escape. Mr. Clark said that there are pet owners who will not come and pick up their animals after they've been spayed/neutered.

He then went into detail about the Honest Escaped Exception. He said that this clause makes it difficult to hold everyone to the same standards if they are in violation.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know if anyone has asked for the exception. Mr. Clark said that he has not witnessed anyone using this exception. Mr. Samuel agreed with Mr. Clark. He also mentioned that several people do not want their animals back after they have to get them spayed/neutered. Mr. J. Young understood.

Mr. Clark continued and explained that the CPAS vet will not touch the animal, unless the owner signs an owner surrender form. Mr. J. Young wanted to know if CPAS has ever seized an animal from an owner and given it back. Mr. Clark said that they have. Mr. J. Young then wanted to know if those owners consented to the surgeries. Mr. Clark said that they did. Mr. J. Young also asked if CPAS performed a spay/neuter without an owner signing a consent form. Mr. Clark explained that CPAS has seized animals due to violations, but they always inform the owners that the animals will be spayed/neutered. He also pointed out that after seven days, the animals become the property of CPAS. Mr. Clark suggested that fines be in place in lieu of CPAS seizing the animal. Mr. Clark is hopeful that this would alleviate some of the issues with space and result in more spay/neuters for the animals.

Mr. J. Young asked Administrator Bryant what her feelings were on this topic. Mrs. Bryant said that they are in support of Mr. Clark's suggestions, but would like some time, maybe the latter part of April, to inform the public of this change.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know if the State of Louisiana has regime that governs animal control. Mr. Clark said that the State has statutes in place for animal control. Attorney Frazier said that there is a state regulatory board that deals with the health and safety of the shelters, but it is left up to local municipalities and parishes to have their own animal ordinances.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know the legal definition of a stray. Attorney Frazier said that any animal that is at-large is considered a stray. Mr. G. Young then wanted to know if there are definitions laid out for the public. Mr. J. Young said that there is.

Mr. G. Young said that the Animal Control Officers put themselves in harms way day in and day out. Mr. J. Young wanted to know if you could shoot a dog within the city limits to protect themselves. Attorney Frazier said that if you could shoot a person, then you could shoot a dog.

Mr. J. Young requested a copy of the animal ordinances for the committee members.

Mr. Clark also said that the breeding fee for intact males was not put on the fees schedule. The Clerk of the Commission explained that Municode has had some movement within its organization, so it could have been an oversight. Mr. G. Young wanted to know if it is illegal to breed animals. Mr. Clark said that it is without a permit. Mr. G. Young asked if the Commission can restrict the location in which a person breeds animals. Attorney Frazier said that it would depend on whether or not they could operate as a breeder as well as the zoning of the property. Mr. G. Young wanted to know if the Commission has an impact on the zoning inside the City. Attorney Frazier said that the Parish would have authority in the five mile radius outside of the city.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know the qualifications for breeding animals. Mr. Clark said that they have to have an enclosure, access to food and water, etc. Mr. Samuel said that the person will not be granted a breeding permit if the animal has a history of their animals being at-large.

Answering another question from Mr. J. Young regarding the number of breeding permits the Parish has granted, Mr. Clark said that there are 57 breeding permits. He also said that the issues are coming from the unregulated breeders.

Mr. Clark said that annual licensing for their pets, along with microchips, have been successful in keeping animals out of the shelters, as well as, helps with funding for the shelters. Mr. J. Young agrees with pet licensing. Mr. Samuel and Mr. Clark are in support of pet licensing and will have conversations with Administrator Bryant regarding this. He also mentioned that the veterinarians would also have to get on board with this, or it would be ineffective.

Mr. Samuel explained that the cons of this are that more people will be avoiding vet clinics because they would need to comply to this ordinance. Mr. J. Young wanted to know if there was an increase in zoonic diseases in places that have pet licensing. Mr. Samuel said that they do not.

He also explained that Caddo Parish/ Northwest Louisiana, the breeding season for animals is year-round. In other places, the winter freezes the puppies and kittens.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know if the animals who are spayed/neutered are sexually active. Mr. Samuel said that they are sexually active, but they cannot reproduce. Mr. G. Young then wanted to know if there was another cost-effective way to spay/neuter an animal. Mr. Samuel and Mr. Clark would have to research it and get back to the Animal Services Committee.

Mr. G. Young then wanted to know how much it costs the Parish to fix an animal. Mr. Clark said that there are several costs associated with fixing an animal, such as sedation, suture kits, labor, etc. He stated that Robinson's Rescue has been a great supporter in reducing the pet population in this Parish.

- *Receive update regarding distemper*

Mr. Samuel said that distemper is rampant in raccoons within Caddo Parish. He said that there is no cure for it, similar to parvo. He said that the majority of these animals are in the Broadmoor/Highland area. There is a source of water that is contaminated, but they have not identified that source just yet. Mr. Samuel said that it is a stagnant body of water, and they are looking to try and identify it.

Mr. Thomas would like to schedule a tour of the facility.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. G. Young, *to draft a permanent spay/neuter ordinance for the Animal Services Committee to review in the first week of April. Motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (3). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Blake and Giles (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 1:54 p.m.


Assistant to the Commission Clerk