**Prince William County Animal Advisory Committee (AAC) Minutes**

**August 20, 2024**

1. **Member Attendance**
   * 1. Patti Bright, Chair Present
     2. Ron Crigger Not Present
     3. Kelly Easterly Present
     4. Melissa Korzuch Not Present
     5. Eric Fagerholm Present
     6. Anthony Cleveland, Bureau Chief Not Present
     7. Laura Haufler Not Present
     8. Emine Rowe Present
     9. Noelle Shott Present
     10. Jen Cole Not Present
     11. Olivia LoBalbo Present

1. **Citizens’ Time**

* No Citizen Time

1. **Call to Order** – at 6:53 pm by Chair Bright

1. **Approval of Previous *Minutes***

* Minutes from July meeting are not approved this evening.

1. **Guest Speaker: Attorney Michelle Welch, Senior Asst. Attorney General and Director of the Animal Law Unit, Virginia Attorney General’s Office**
   * Ms. Welch’s team in the fall when leaves are off the tree, will use VA state planes to search for animal fighting rings. This is good way to corroborate dog fighting operations.
   * Ms. Welch provides training to Judges that ask for her team to provide guidance on animal cruelty cases
   * Ms. Welch’s team does provide training to police departments. Send email to Ms. Welch to request.
   * Commonwealth Attorney could be requesting cost of care in the sentencing.
   * This November in Richmond Association of Commonwealth of Attorneys will have special segment on animal crimes
   * Disposition of Cases, it is hard to bring convictions. Plea deals are common, to drop the Felony to reach the misdemeanor guilty verdict.
   * The General Assembly sets fines
   * Clerk of the Supreme Court sets Court Costs.
   * Restitution (i.e. cost of care) can be recommended by the Prosecution and assigned by the judge.
   * How can localities improve enforcement of animal welfare laws: by providing more education on animal abuse, being forceful that the localities will be held responsible if they do not enforce laws and an animal is injured or killed.
   * Advice on how we might influence legislature changes for animal welfare: do your homework and be strategic, because the General Assembly moves very fast. Choose wisely what you bring forward.
2. **Old Business**

* Animal Welfare
  + Two animal welfare cases received disposition. Both were closed as a plea deal where the Felonies were not prosecuted, but the Misdemeanor cases were found guilty and received jail time.
  + See Enclosure (1) for details.
* Veterinary Science Program, PWC Career and Technical Education
  + Ms. Shott spoke to Mr Jessie, Occoquan District School Board representative. He recommended that Ms Bright contact the CTE Program Director to get information on the status of the program. If we do not get an answer, then he will follow-up. He mentioned that if they do not have a school available for the program, then that could be the reason for the delay.
* Dog Licensing
  + Ms. Fagerholm, Ms. Bright, and Ms. Easterly will be meeting on status.
* Zoning Pet Store Directive
  + The AAC voted on the Pet Store Resolution as follows,
    1. Ms Haufler mad a motion to approve, seconded by Ms, Easterly. Resolution passed unanimously.

1. **New Business**

* Next Meeting Sep 4 at 6pm at the Police Station on Davis Ford
* Police Chief Meeting Talking Points:
  + Ms. Bright and Ms. LoBalbo will discuss Non-lead shot
  + Pet Store Code Changes to allow ACO to perform inspections
  + Does he meeting with School Board, could he recommend CTE program?
  + Training
    - Ms. Haufler mentioned Throw Away Dogs provided: Law and Order Seminars
    - Commonwealth Attorney Office
    - Ms. Welch
    - Current training provided at Academy
      * Mr. Fagerholm mentioned a Forensic Course
* Shelter Updates-
  + Live Domestic Intake: 316,
  + Adopted: 226
  + Redemptions: 43
  + Adjusted Domestic Euthanized: 25
  + Transferred to Rescue: 8
  + Wildlife Intake: 6

1. **Adjournment**
   * Ms. LoBalbo made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Easterly seconded the motion.

Drafted by: Noelle Shott

Next Meeting: **Sept 4th**

Enclosure 1: Animal Welfare

The following sites are scanned monthly:

* + Track and report PWC Animal Abuse/ Cruelty Cases:
    - <https://www.pwcva.gov/department/police/arrests>
  + Track Virginia judicial system cases
    - [Virginia Judiciary Online Case Information System (state.va.us)](https://eapps.courts.state.va.us/ocis/search)

