

PACC Dog Task Force Meeting

August 7th, 2023, 5:30pm

Zoom

In attendance: Maria Karunungan, Ilona Blanchard, Lori Kettler, Tom Young, Kyle Tansley, Abbey Duke, Cindi Wight & Meghan O'Daniel

Agenda:

- Public Forum, 5:35pm (time certain)
- Next Meeting Confirmation
- Continue / Wrap up Ordinance Review
- Reporting / Enforcement Discussion
- Review Preliminary Plan / Timeline for Final Report
- Brief Subcommittee Updates

Karunungan opened the meeting with a public forum at 5:35pm. No one from the public was present.

She continued on with scheduling the next meeting to make sure that September 18th at 5:30pm still worked for everyone. No one had any conflicts. She continued by asking if people would be available to do the next one on October 16th. No one had any conflicts.

She continued with looking at the timeline for the final report. This meeting will cover finishing up with the ordinance review and then continuing on to reviewing the licensing, reporting and enforcement recommendations. September will be focused on continuing to review the task force's overall recommendations to City Council together and October will focus on reviewing the structure and organization of the draft together.

Everyone agreed that this sounded good and doable.

Karunungan continued by starting the continuation of the Ordinance review and began sharing her screen.

Kettler suggested they start with Article 3, section 5-25.

Duke asked about the background and if there was overall agreement on the stuff about cats. She shared that the controversial piece could be free range cats and collars/identification. She feels that there might be people who won't understand where it's coming from both politically and culturally.

Kettler agreed that she felt that there will most likely be pushback. She's going to include explanations as to why, including safety of the cats, neighbor relations and how free-range cats are not environmentally friendly. This will include citations to studies to back this information and these changes up. There are also a lot of local examples that can be included.

Duke shared that this sounded like a good plan and that she's ready to jump in on this.

Blanchard asked if it would be possible to not bundle the cat updates with the rest.

Karunungan shared that the plan is to pull the most controversial parts will be going into the appendix as additional options.

Wight chimed in that some of these may end up with the Ordinance Committee to make decisions on.

Karunungan moved on to looking at Article 3.

Kettler shared that in the first section, they made suggested revisions the penalty amounts were increased. There was also a discussion about having a restorative justice option so that was added in. The impoundment section was made relevant to more than just dogs. There were also some language changes, such as "pet" to "companion animal" among others. They removed the language around giving away animals and updated it for animals to be brought to shelters. They made updates to who would be on the animal control committee, like a veterinarian for example.

Young shared that whatever animal may need to be removed, it will be difficult to find a space for them. This has been a struggle for BPD.

Kettler continued that in the ordinance, the City is supposed to have some sort of a shelter or a contract with a shelter for these animals to be brought. This isn't a new suggestion, it's something that's already in the ordinance that is not being done. She continued that they updated the section on dogs in vehicles and added a section about the abandonment of injured animal.

Young asked if this would pertain to all animals, even non-pets.

Kettler answered yes, but that wild animals would go to Fish & Wildlife. But that this is really intended to cover domesticated pets.

Karunungan asked if anyone had any questions or suggestions. No one did.

She continued that there was one more section to cover – Appendix D – which includes updates about off-leash dogs.

Wight shared that Appendix D are rules of BPRW Department and we are suggesting that the details about off-leash would be in a policy which would be approved by the Parks Commission so that any small changes moving forward would not need to be approved by City Council. The off-leash dog section was updated in 2001 when the City first looked at off-leash dogs. Section 7, "Off Leash Dog Opportunities" is not valid because there was not a formal presentation back to Council, which is what Wight is hoping to avoid with this round.

Karunungan shared that there's just a slight revision to add cats to the list of animals allowed in parks (on a leash or in a carrier). They have established what the policy is, the areas that off-leash dogs are and are not allowed, that there will be outreach and education and general rules. It will also include that times for each location will be determined in the policy. She asked if everyone wanted to go through it together now or read it offline. Everyone agreed that offline would be better.

Wight said that she would connect with the City Attorney's Office for guidance on how best to move forward with Appendix D and the off-leash policy.

Karunungan asked if everyone would be open to starting to look at what recommendations we're actually going to make and shared the midterm presentation slides. She began by reviewing licensing. This process is now available online and in paper form. But it is believed to be severely under licensed which is an issue. When they did the progress report they shared what South Burlington does, but didn't recommend that Burlington does the same.

Blanchard suggested recommending that there is more outreach about this.

Wight brought up Kalisz's suggestion of sharing where the licensing fees will go and that it may help encourage people to follow through.

Duke suggested we implement strategies to increase the amount of licensing in the City and a percentage goal. We should also include who is responsible for implementing this.

Blanchard said that typically it would be the Clerk Treasurer's Office but that she thought more of the funds would be going back into infrastructure within the City for their animals.

Wight brought up the idea that if there was a continuation of this task force on a volunteer basis acting as a community group, that they could allocate some of these funds towards supporting and following through on this Task Force's suggestions such as education, events etc.

Karunungan circled back to the idea of the enforcement of the Ordinance changes.

Blanchard chimed in that people responding to calls about animals at large should be trained and have access to license data in real time, especially out in the field for when they may be responding to an incident or call. This will help with the documentation of these incidents. This is because it is hard for officers to enforce the rules because they don't have access to what animals are or are not licensed.

Karunungan brought up that there will need to be recommendations about how people report incidents. She continued by shifting gears to updates.

Kettler said that she will start putting together the documentations, resources and studies about the suggestions and updates to the Ordinance that the task force is making.

Duke offered Blanchard her help with outlining the structure of the recommendations for City Council.

Karunungan suggested to get as far as they can but that she was sure questions would come up that everyone could discuss at the next meeting.

Blanchard feels that the focus of the report should be the task force's recommendations but that everyone can discuss the format at the next meeting. Everyone agreed.

The group began discussing the data points and coding but Karunungan suggested they continue this at the next meeting. She adjourned the meeting at 7:05pm.