

PACC Dog Task Force Meeting

October 16th, 2023

5:30pm – 7pm

Virtual

In attendance: Maria Karunungan, Tom Young, Jake Schumann, Lori Kettler, Kyle Tansley, Cindi Wight, Nina Hurley, Joanne Kalisz, Abbey Duke & Meghan O'Daniel

Public Forum was opened at 5:35pm. No members of the public were in attendance so it was closed at 5:37pm.

Karunungan then began the meeting by confirming the next meeting time for November 13th at 5:30pm. No one had any conflicts, so it was confirmed and shared that she is hopeful that that will be the last meeting but is open to more if needed.

She continued by opening up the conversation to go over the recommendations the task force is making. Everyone opened up the shared google doc and began discussing.

Kettler noted that her recommendations were duplicated and responded that some will be program and policy related and some will be ordinance related, so there will most likely be some overlap throughout.

Kettler asked if the policy/procedure section and the ordinance suggestions should be separate sections.

Karunungan suggested they wait to have Blanchard and Duke present for organizational questions and instead look at substantive parts of the review process.

She continued by opening Kettler's most recent document and wanted to review the overlap. The recommendations are: cats and dogs wear identification, that they be licensed, that license fees are increased and the fee structure is reviewed every 5 years, dedicate the license fees to education etc., and prohibit at large cats and assess the need for additional low cost spay/neuter options. She asked if everyone was in agreement with those recommendations.

The consensus was that everyone agreed.

Karunungan continued with the enforcement piece and shared that the recommendations are: provide a dedicated, certified animal control officer, increase fine for violations of chapter 5 and include restorative justice as a supplemental, optional approach, increase impoundment fee, require boarding fee to reflect actual expenses, increase fine for cruelty to animals, add a licensed veterinarian and a certified animal behavior professional to the animal control committee to be contracted as needed, prohibit any person from leaving the scene of an accident for which they have reason to believe that they have caused the injury or death of an animal.

Kettler shared that the City Attorney had suggestions for 2 of the points: "require impoundment of any animal suspected of being a stray" and "allow any person to use reasonable force to remove an animal

whose health or safety is at risk from a motor vehicle if designated officials are unavailable and that she would be sending updated versions of both of those soon”.

Hurley asked if there was already a State law about animals in cars, and said that she would look into it and share the exact wording with Kettler.

Schumann suggested changing the word from “animal” to “pet” or something of the like in the point about injuring an animal in a vehicle.

Kalisz suggested the word “domestic”.

Everyone agreed.

Kettler asked if everyone would be in favor of putting in educational information about what to do when wildlife is hit by a vehicle.

Everyone agreed.

Karunungan switched over to reviewing the final report document to look at the overlap. She said that she would combine the two and clean them up, using Kettler’s language. She continued by asking about clarifying consequences for not licensing and Kettler said that penalties for that are mentioned in Article 3.

Kalisz shared that it is helpful when someone is bitten by a dog for access to records.

Karunungan added this idea to the line about educating the community about licensing.

Kalisz shared that she feels that the negative consequences and highlighting the positives are both going to be key to get buy in from the community.

Wight reminded everyone that we want to make sure it is a readable report.

Karunungan said she would meet with Blanchard and Duke off-line to work on that.

She continued to go over the recommendations and spoke to information being handed out when dogs are licensed. She asked if everyone felt that everything the task force wanted to cover was included.

Schumann asked if adding ACOs being able to license animals out and about and have access to the database could be added, as well as the option to license your pet for 3 years to match how long the vaccine is viable for.

Karunungan noted that this may be tricky to time depending on when the vaccines are updated and asked if anyone knew why there was a specific time for licensing.

Wight looked it up and shared that the April 1st deadline is statewide.

Karunungan asked if anyone was in objection of these points. No one was.

She continued by looking at the Reporting/Enforcement section and said that some of these overlapped with Kettler’s list. She said she will make those adjustments and went over the ones that will be staying in there: expanding online incident reporting, increasing education on how to report incidents

effectively and adding licensed veterinarian and certified animal behavior professional to the animal control committee. She asked if everyone was in agreement on these recommendations.

Kalisz asked if it would be possible to make a suggestion about how reports are written up.

Schumann suggested “improve organization and categorization of data as it relates to incident reporting/tracking”. Karunungan added that into the draft.

Everyone was in agreement after that addition.

Karunungan continued on to the “Education Campaign” section and asked anything needed to be added.

Schumann suggested that it could be helpful to include something in this section about licensing.

Karunungan added a line about “Having a Dog in Burlington” literature being handed out.

Kalisz suggested having something like that in signage form in the Parks.

Duke suggested having a page on the City’s website all about dogs and cats – rules, how and why to license, off-leash rules, off leash areas etc., which can be referenced and linked for educational purposes.

Everyone really liked that idea.

Karunungan also added how to report issues to the educational section.

She continued by moving on to looking at Appendix D.

Wight shared how Appendix D is different than the rest of the ordinance. Technically it is no longer valid, so instead of doing strike-through and underlining of everything, we are just presenting it as a new document. The off-leash policy is different and would include more specific details that the Parks Commission makes decisions on.

Karunungan then shared the document – including the off-leash policy recommendation, different areas of town with off-leash areas and the distinct list where off-leash dogs are prohibited, information shared with the public, and general rules for all off-leash dog areas which is what Karunungan wanted to go over closely with everyone. She read through them, leaving room after each one for others to comment/ask questions.

Schumann asked for clarification about Appendix D vs. the OLDP.

Karunungan shared having some of these things in a place where they can’t be changed is important.

Wight shared that things like times, dates, locations are good to have in a place where they can be reviewed and changed as needed.

Schumann and Kalisz commented on the age of 12 being the minimum for entrance to dog parks, both sharing that they feel it should be older.

Wight shared that she has received feedback from community members about young children being in dog parks.

Duke asked if anyone knew what the age limits were for this kind of thing in other cities.

No one did but Joanne said she would look into it.

Karunungan continued by looking at the Enforcement and Administration sections.

Wight shared that the off-leash policy hasn't been finalized yet and asked if it would be helpful to have a draft for the presentation in case of questions from Counselors.

Schumann said that he felt it would good to include. Karunungan agreed.

Wight said that she would work on a draft and get the off-leash subcommittee together between now and the next Task Force meeting.

The group circled back to what goes in the policy vs. what goes in the ordinance.

Kettler reminded everyone that things in the policy would not be enforceable if they're not in the ordinance.

Karunungan encouraged the group to review and provide additional comments after the meeting to make sure everyone's suggestions and questions are heard/known.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm.