

NOVEMBER 27, 2017, LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

5:15 p.m. Council Chamber. Members present: M. Hraban for A. Hraban, J. Pearson, B. Stoneberg. Others present: A. Christianson, N. Christianson, J. Clough, K. Gorsegner, K. Julien, A. Kenyon, H. Marten, D. Parker, M. Sanko, K. Welke.

Call to Order:

Committee Chair B. Stoneberg called the meeting to order and presided.

Appearances:

Janet Clough, Harvey Marten and Melissa Sanko all appeared in regard to yard clean up orders issued to them. They feel they are being singled out and expressed concern about being able to meet deadlines. They were assured that there are many other properties that will be receiving similar orders and that, at this time, nobody has imposed a deadline. It was acknowledged they have made some progress, but also that they need to continue to do so.

It was explained that the Committee plays a role in developing or revising ordinances, but that the LPD is responsible for enforcing these. If anyone has issues with how the enforcement is done, they will need to address that with the Police and Fire Commission.

Feral Cats:

There was brief review of a simple ordinance intended to prohibit feeding of feral cats in an effort to reduce their numbers. Violators would be ticketed. Among problems cats can cause are passing worms to kids by using sand boxes as litter pans; getting trapped in garages and walking on cars; killing large numbers of birds that people like to watch; stray cats can cause dogs to bark resulting in complaints about the dogs.

Rusk Co. Animal Shelter Manager Karen Welke provided considerable information on the subject, including many of the following comments:

- There are probably fewer feral cats than thought. Many are likely pets let out for the day, which may act wild in the presence of people they are not familiar with.
- Trapping, fixing and releasing vs. trapping and euthanizing are the two viable options available.
- Trapping, fixing and releasing reduces populations over time as the fixed cats still dominate an area, but can't reproduce.
- Trapping and lethally injecting resolves the problem, but takes staff time, which is limited.
- Truly feral cats can't be tamed and adopted out.
- Many pets let out for the day could be trapped in an all-out effort, which might lead to push back from owners angered by having to pay for their release.
- The shelter is currently over capacity with cats.
- The new shelter will be equipped with a cage that makes lethal injections easier for staff to administer.
- Winter is the best time to trap as food supplies are limited.
- Some households outside the City have very large numbers of cats on their premises.
- Truly feral cats are unlikely to be seen.
- Feral cats are a nationwide issue. At 2-3 years, their life expectancy is much less than for pets.
- The local shelter doesn't have enough staff to monitor traps regularly. Some volunteer or neighbor help would be needed.
- Once cats have been let out, they cry at the door until they are let out when they want to be.
- There is no miracle ordinance.
- Most grants that are available to non-profit organizations aren't available to local government

- operated facilities like ours. Some require "no kill" commitments.
- Foxes and coyotes may reduce feral cat numbers but come with their own set of problems.
 - Identification collars really help, or microchips can be implanted for about \$25.

Education:

It is felt that educating the public, including cat owners, about the issues may help reduce problems whether as a forewarning of planned trapping or just for general purposes. Mrs. Welke will seek information that can be used in this effort.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at about 6:15 p.m.