

Sonoma County Animal Services Partnership

Animal Ordinance Review Workgroup

October 22, 2013

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Brian Ness	Pets Lifeline & Vintage Kennel Club
Brigid Wassen	Sonoma County/ACC
Darryl Roberts	SNAP Cats
Doris Duncan	Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue
Jane Eagle	California Sled Dog Rescue
Mark Essick	Town of Windsor
Jennifer Kircher	Forgotten Felines of Sonoma County
Kate Sullivan	SAFER (Sonoma Action for Equine Rescue)
Mark Penn	Sonoma Humane Society
Sheri Cardo	BADRAP
Becky Lunders	teamWorks / facilitator
Jeff Charter	Petaluma Animal Shelter

Action Items:

Task	Details	Who?
Recruit rep from vet community to be part of the work group	Outreach to Dr. Richard Bachman and see if he is interested in providing input and insight to the group	Darryl
Research ordinances and get best practices; come to next meeting with proposed options and recommendations		
A.	Standards of Care	Darryl & Richard
B.	Spay/Neuter	Jennifer K, Sheri & Brian
C.	Barking Dogs	Jennifer P
D.	Limit Law	Jane & Richard
E.	Service Dogs	Esther?
F.	Wildlife	Doris
G.	Horses	Kate & Richard
H.	Licensing	Jennifer K & Jeff
Campaign / Outreach to promote ordinance once complete	The Communications/ Outreach Work Group will be communicated these ideas for implementation	Becky

Next Meeting Date –

Tuesday, November 19, 2013, from 103pm
at the offices of Public Health, 415 Humboldt Street, Santa Rosa.

Overview of initial ordinance review changes (Ellen)

Ellen reviewed the work over the past year that was involved in developing the proposed changes included in version 1 (v1). This included the following recommendations developed by an ad hoc pet limit work group that met from January – April 2013:

- Define animal rescue organizations and animal shelter
- Consider removing the limit on number of cats
- Consider allowing animal rescue organizations to operate in more locations with less restrictions on the number animals they can serve
- Add standards of care to the animal ordinance to assure that all animals are well cared for, regardless of the number of animals that are cared for on any particular parcel/premise.

In discussions with Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) staff, it was determined that these proposed changes would also require changes to the Sonoma County Zoning Code (Chapter 26).

Research / Information Gathering

Workgroup members accepted the task of researching existing ordinances in other California counties on specific topics. We will report back to the group at the next meeting with recommendations and best practices for Sonoma County. Any proposed changes to the ordinance should meet the following criteria:

1. **Legal:** Needs to comply with any requirements in California state law or other county codes. Consider impacts on zoning issues.
2. **Significant impact:** There is evidence or good reason to suggest that the change will create a significant improvement in animal welfare and/or public safety. Consider what is best for the animal and what is best for the public.
3. **Feasible:** The proposed change should be feasible to implement. Consider both public and private impacts and costs. For example, can ACC enforce it? At what cost?
4. **Community support:** The proposed change reflects community values and expectations and is supported by the community.

Research should:

- Rely on existing ordinances in a county in California
- Get specifics on what's working and what's not
- Summarize how the proposed ordinance meets criteria
- Provide proposed language (including citations)

Our goal is to have something to take forward to the Dec 12th meeting of the Animal Services Partnership and make progress in our area of focus.

Items to be considered for review at the November 19th meeting should be sent to Brigid by November 12th.

Areas of Interest *(with assignment of who will research the topic)*

- A. Standards of Care** **(Darryl & Richard)**
- We want recommendations for all animals (dogs, cats) regardless of breed
 - Group received handouts regarding standards of care

- B. Spay/Neuter** **(Jennifer K, Sheri & Brian)**
- Promote as “responsible pet ownership” or as a mandate
 - Make free services available through community events, clinics, vet days
 - Need to address the long wait for an appointment to spay/neuter
 - Review the effectiveness of breed specific legislation

- C. Barking Dogs** **(Jennifer P)**
- Exploring action after two people complain, but what if you have not close neighbors because you live in a rural area (how do you get two complaints)
 - Discussed need for Director to have discretion to waive requirement
 - Idea: after XX complaints owner goes to an educational class about barking dogs
 - Jennifer Phillips has experience with success around barking dogs in Orange County. We will connect with her as a resource.
 - The Quiet Alliance of Sonoma County deals with barking dog issues

- D. Limit Law** **(Jane & Richard)**
- Code has to match intent (what does “owner” mean)
 - How to address fostering: 14 day limit?
 - Question to ask: Is it a public nuisance?
 - No limits on cats (zoning)
 - Reduce acreage requirement (zoning)

- E. Service Dogs** **(Esther?)**
- Define service dog and documentation required
 - Accessibility
 - Fake / fraudulent “service dogs”

- F. Wildlife** **(Doris)**
- What is the state/federal law regarding trapping, relocating, or killing?
 - How can we educate the public on what to do / who to call

- G. Horses – *not under ordinance, but needs attention*** **(Kate & Richard)**
- Disposal options
 - Why won't the county dump take horses?
 - What do other counties do?
 - Is there county-owned land available for horse disposal?
 - Similar to land made available to the food system alliance program
 - How are horses categorized / treated with regard to zoning?

H. Licensing

(Jennifer & Jeff)

- Consider multi-year licensing (consistent with rabies vaccine)
- Have an option for unaltered pets
- Much discussion around licensing of cats:
 - make it a *registration* (a way to retrieve a lost animal)
 - use microchip instead of tag (most cats don't wear collars)
 - will registering/licensing cats at no charge make for much work with no revenue?
 - Why should ranch owners register cats (add carrot of free rabies vaccine if registered / keeps disease off ranch)?
 - Consider registration of feral cat colonies
- Brian talked about a successful campaign in Canada with a girl who was excited to get her cat licensed so she'd get it back if it became lost. May want to take this approach with marketing materials.

I. Campaign/Outreach *(this input will go to the communications work group)*

- Need targeted outreach to the Hispanic community
- Tell the community WHY we need them to license their animals: animal returned if lost, rabies control, State law, revenue for shelter
- Answer the question an owner might ask, "How will licensing my animal benefit me? – in marketing materials

Animal Ordinance Review Timeline

(from previous meeting, provided to keep end goal in sight)

Sept-Nov 2013	Compile list of potential changes; research ordinances in other communities
January 2014	Review proposed changes with County Counsel
Mar-Apr 2014	Community and Planning Commission meetings to receive input
Apr 2014	Revise with community input
June 2014	First and second readings; draft proposed model ordinance
Summer 2014	New Sonoma County animal ordinance approved by BOS
Fall 2014	Develop model animal ordinance to be considered by cities