

Animal Management Committee Meeting



MINUTES

Thursday 4 February 2016

Meeting Room 1

Meeting Start: 5 pm

Meeting Close: 605 pm

Apologies:

Alderman Justine Glover

Present:

Alderman Robin Knox; Meg Gardiner – Dogs NT; Steven Gatt – Manager of Regulatory Services; Anthony Smith – Animal Education Officer; Sharon McTaggart – Supervisor Animal Management; Julie Schuller - Cats Association NT; Alasdair McGregor; Kate Dixon; Emma Barber; Amy Dobell;

Amendment of distributed minutes identified by

Adoption of minutes – 21 January 2016 – 1st Kate Dixon 2nd Steve Gatt.

General Discussion:

Alderman Knox is to chair the committee in the absence of Alderman Glover, who is away on business, and is to teleconference in during the meeting.

It was noted by Alderman Knox to the Committee that the main purpose of the committee is to raise the main focus point for Council to focus on when creating the new strategy.

3 more sittings are left and the committee needs to create a report to present to Council on the key points to be added or amended in a new Animal Management Strategy.

Business Arising:

Registrations:

It was moved that Tag for Life and a new pricing structure be placed into the report along with a wider media campaign highlighting the benefits and responsibilities of pet ownership.

1st Alasdair – 2nd Kate – Carried

Nuisance Barking:

Steve noted that more clarity can be gained through amendments to the By-Laws and through the use of technology.

Amending the By-Laws section 71 is moved to clarify the nuisance definitions By-laws with and improve use of technology in the administrative process as a report item.

1st Steve and 2nd Kate - Carried.

Media and education:

It was determined by the committee that there needs to be a broad range on going education programme that includes registrations for dogs and cats, roaming animals and responsibilities of pet ownership.

It was moved that an going media and education campaign is developed to ensure residents are aware of councils focus on pet ownership – the rights, responsibilities and penalties.

1st Amy 2nd Anthony - Carried

Correspondence Received

Two letters received from REABL and Laurie Defrenne were noted and distributed.

Comment was made in relation to the comments from Mr Laurie Defrenne – the Animal Management Plan is no longer the key document as voted at the first sitting. The plan is to be split into two separate documents. One was relating to enforcement process via enforcement guidelines and a 4 year strategy to implement the recommendations of the committee and other initiatives over the life of the strategy. As such the detail around the email had been previously addressed.

The correspondence received from REABL will be dealt with as per normal administration procedure. - Carried

Agenda Items:

Mandatory Desexing

Kate asked that it not be called 'mandatory desexing' as people often react to it or dismiss it but perhaps it should be more about encouraging people through rebate and registration charge levers.

Alderman Knox agreed to encouraging Desexing rather than calling it Mandatory Desexing.

Julie asked that cat seizure fees be higher and a portion of the fees go to a feral cat programme.

Sharon presented the group with research regarding mandatory desexing from arguments for and against and what effects it may have on animals also with what other Councils have done.

It was also found through the research that it is hard to enforce mandatory desexing.

The group was asked that they submit by the next meeting their ideas on how to encourage desexing and different incentives.

It was asked of Sharon what happens currently with animals at the pound and problem animals. Animals at the Pound are kept for four days before being assed to be re-homed.

Alasdair looked at the By-laws and its noted that the R.S.P.C.A gets special treatment but PAWS should be added to help with re-homing of animals.

Kate would like to see fees and payment plans be moved to an agenda item for further discussion.

Alderman Knox suggested that it be changed from naming particular organisations to 'Approved Shelters'

Kate noted that Council recognising and working with Volunteer Rescue Organisations (including shelters), represents an opportunity to cost-effectively progress goals such as reduced numbers of animals surrendered to, and euthanized at pounds, increased desexing, registration and microchipping rates, and education of owners at the point of purchase of a new pet. Volunteer Rescue Organisations in other jurisdictions have been able to gain formal approval to work with pounds, and in doing so, the groups become exempt from certain administrative costs associated with rescuing and rehoming cats and dogs (expoundment costs, etc). This allows them to drop their own adoption fees and rehome more animals to approved homes..

Animals on Property

Julie believes that there should be different rules for cats and dogs around licencing along with land sizes.

A large discussion followed regarding animal licencing, land sizes and different breeds of dogs and issues, with keeping only one dog on the property can cause issues with noise as animals can become bored and bark.

It was decided that the rego fee structure needs to be reviewed first before deciding on licencing.

It was noted that under the current fees and charges there is no concession for residents with concession cards or cheaper fees for over 65 pensions.

Steve mentioned that there are pension concessions however changes to fees and charges for animal registrations have been flagged for next financial year and will be considered by ELT. These considerations include the points just raised.

Action

Business items for next meeting

- Animals on Property
- Mandatory Desexing
- Off-leash areas
- Fees and payment plans
- Amendment to By-Laws with a change from naming particular organisations to 'Approved Shelters'

DECISION

That the report contains the recommendations;

- That Council investigate, pursue and act on any identified benefits and efficiencies provided by a tag for life registration system.
- That the By-Laws section 71 be amended to clarify the nuisance definitions By-laws
- That Improved use of technology in the administrative process for nuisance matters is investigated and adopted.
- That an ongoing media and education campaign is developed to ensure residents are aware of councils focus on pet ownership – the rights, responsibilities and penalties.

General Discussion:

Next Meeting 18 February 2016.

5pm – 6pm

Meeting room 1.

Meeting Closed:

6:05pm