

## **TNR Committee**

**May 12, 2021**

Attendees: John Talty (Chair), Joanne Bergin, Marcus Perry (A-Academy), Scott Smith, Councilwoman Andrea Zapcic

*Not Present: Kathleen Carpenter*

### Roll call

### Status of Sponsors

A-Academy (the Township's Animal Control Officer) has agreed to be the Program Sponsor, who acts as the program's point person/coordinator for the Colony Caregivers. As the program's sponsor, A-Academy will supervise the caregivers and ensure the colony limits are maintained.

The Township's Administration staff will do all of the paperwork required on the back end, to allow A-Academy to fully focus on the Colony Caregivers and the feral cat population.

Councilwoman Zapcic suggested amending the Township's Trap Neuter Release ordinance (#98-62) particularly section c. to clarify that the Township's Administrative Office will maintain the records and section f. to outline that the Committee should be responsible for fund-raising, not the Program Sponsor.

The Committee was originally looking to identify 2 sponsors: one for the north side of town and one for south. But, that was before A-Academy agreed to serve in this role. And, in this model, one sponsor is adequate.

### Public Education Campaign

Charmain Talty asked for suggestions on how to educate the public. Councilwoman Zapcic clarified that, with any public education campaign, it's important to know your audience. The target ordinance of public outreach on why its beneficial to spay and neuter is different from the education for colony caregivers. There's different messaging for colony caregivers and the general public. The public needs to understand the importance of a spay and neuter program.

The Committee discussed developing two different information sheets: one for the public and one for caregivers. The Committee also discussed developing material that outlines the goals of an effective colony using infographics. There is one infographic that shows a pyramid – one cat neutered has this effect.... which is exactly what we're looking to promote. Any educational material developed can be shared on BTV, the Township's Facebook page, the Township's web site, and distributed to the media via press release. The Committee mostly favors graphics for visual messaging.

### Issues or complaints

Resident Tracy Barkus participated in the meeting. Tracy has been providing care to a colony by the Mantoloking Road Pub. A resident complaint came in the she relocated the feeding location. This helped solve the problem. She never intended to start a colony but does feed them. One of the cats has kittens, who then had kittens so the feral cat population here is expanding.

Marcus from A-Academy said that he tries hard to adopt the cats out before bringing them to the Shelter. He's more successful with kittens; it's harder to find adoptive homes for adult cats.

A complaint was also received from a resident on Port Road, who expressed frustration over the feral cats in her neighborhood. She specifically cites neighbors who are feeding cats, attracting the cats who then proceed to use her property as a litter box.

Marcus responded that he has put a trap at this property and has not collected anything to date. The resident's best bet is to put the trap out at night and call Marcus if a cat is collected. Marcus further indicated there is a colony caregiver nearby and all of her cats are neutered.

### Updates on colonies

There are active colonies who have not provided the required documentation to the Town. Marcus will work directly with them to submit the required paperwork and make sure to address any neighbor complaints. Relocating the feeding area is usually a helpful solution when there are neighbor complaints.

Doreen, a volunteer from Animal Birth Control, feels there are double the existing colonies compared with those who responded to the Township's letter. The colony caregivers don't want to come forward because they don't want to sign any documents. Many colony caregivers have had bad experiences in the past, she said. Doreen offered to help; she wants the program to be successful.

She did recommend the Township expand its list of approved veterinarian services to include one specific to TNR programs. East Coast Clinic is equipped to handle feral cats. The veterinarians on the Township's pool don't have TNR experience, she said. For this program to work we need a vet to do spay and neutering. East Coast Clinic does that Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8 to 10 am on a walk-in basis. They keep the cats overnight so once they're picked up they can be released.

The Committee will request a change in the bid process for 2022 that include a vet that specific performs TNR services.

She also supports strong messaging: “If you’re going to feed, you’re going to fix.” Doreen also offered to conduct a workshop to teach people how to trap. Following that, we need to have traps available to provide.

#### Fund-Raising

An application has been submitted for the Summerfest 50/50 raffle proceeds to be donated to the TNR Program.

The Township is also looking into designating \$1 from each cat license issued to the TNR Program.

Councilwoman Zapcic suggested looking into a two-tier system for licensing. One fee for those pets who are spayed or neutered and another, higher fee for those who are not. That higher fee can go into the Rider.

#### Next Meeting Date

The Committee agreed to 5 pm, Wednesday, June 23

#### Public Comment

Two members of the public spoke during the meeting. There were no additional comments.