

TNR Committee

February 23, 2022

Attendees: Members: John Talty (Chair), Councilman Perry Albanese, Catherine Daley, Doreen Gesslein, Jo Anne Lambusta, Marcus Perry (A-Academy), Scott Smith

Scribe: Joanne Bergin

Roll call and Welcome

John welcomed everyone to the meeting. Approximately 20 people here in attendance including Committee members.

Colony Caregiver Discussion

Marcus Perry reported that all is well with the colonies and had no issues to report. John's been in touch with him regarding calls that come in to the Hotline with a variety of issues. Everything is going well. One caller needed a trap, which he is providing.

As it stands now, caregivers are directly offsetting the costs to neuter colony cats. John reported that being able to provide these funds through the Committee is at the top of our list.

Sponsor Update

No issues to report. The list of colony caregivers is growing. Right now, it's kitten season.

Sponsorship Material Discussion

The Committee is moving along with great ideas.

Previously, Committee member Jo Ann Lambusta suggested the development of sponsorship opportunities that can be used to garner financial contributions and community support. The Committee can collect donations when manning tables at Township events, but can also use the web site to generate bigger sponsorships.

For example, Loudoun Community's Cat Coalition has a Friends of Community Cats page, which connects visitors to an Amazon wish list.

TNR of Warren offers a Business and Corporate page on their web site that outlines the benefits to the business of being a sponsor.

Other ideas including developing sponsorship levels for "Spaying a Stray" and for other equipment and materials for colonies including shelters and supplies.

John gave an overview of possible sponsorships for corporations and private citizens.

The Committee asked if they could sell items at the Green Fair or give out thank you gifts for donations. Joanne will inquire and circle back.

The Committee discussed a flyer on ear tipping since many people don't know what that means.

Veterinarian Update

John and Doreen met with East Coast Spay Clinic twice hoping to secure their services for this program. John provided an update on that meeting, The Clinic quoted the Township pricing for males and females, and if the female is pregnant the cost varies based on the number of babies and the stage of the pregnancy. We have prices given to us for East Coast because they are a spay clinic that specializes in feral cats. We have money to spend, it's a matter of identifying the proper mechanism to pay that legally works for Brick and is agreeable to the veterinarian clinic.

East Coast doesn't want to use the purchase order system. John explained that the Committee is discussing other options and hope to have more updates in the coming weeks. He's looking for creative ideas to do what we want and need to do. For the time being, if anyone out there is looking to gets cats spayed or neutered, right now there is not a mechanism for that. There are some non-profits out there who may help pay the bill, he said,

East Coast would like to be provided with a township credit card and keep the card on file. But that will not work for the Township to be in accordance with local procurement law.

The staff at these places don't want any more paperwork. They'll take cash or checks but not a draw down purchase order system. There's got to be a way and we're working on that.

A member of the public said Ocean Township has a TNR. Monmouth County has a spay neuter clinic through the SPCA. They regionalize it through their office. Ocean County does not have an SPCA.

We're exploring other options to have funds available but a credit card isn't it. The vendor has to identify a process that works for them and it also has to be compliant with township code.

Consider this, when the Township put out to bid for TNR type veterinarian services, no one replied.

John is hopeful there will be a solution. East Coast is willing to ear chip and vaccine for rabies. Fund.org offers free lifetime registration

There were also ideas for individual caregiver reimbursements or starting our own 501 c3 non-profit organization.

As a municipal entity, how we pay vendors is specified under the Local Contracts Law.

The Township Purchasing Agent advised of the following options:

- 1) **Use drawdown purchase order** – Veterinarians don't want to wait a long time for their payment, but if they email the invoices immediately when they're issued, we can set it up internally in the office that we'll process them for payment immediately, and put them on the first available Bill Resolution. It's possible to mail the check in 3 weeks, if everyone treats this as a priority. Finance can also do wire transfers after a Bill Resolution, that may be the fastest option.
- 2) **Issue checks before BR** – State law allows the CFO to issue payments prior to them being approved on a bill resolution. Our CFO would have to be authorized to do so via resolution. But this is a possibility, if Council agrees.
- 3) As a last possibility we could do the **reimbursements**, as John suggested. We would need receipts. The caretakers would be without the funds for a while. If we have all paperwork, realistic turnaround for payments is 4-6 weeks.
- 4) Finance does not recommend the Procurement-card. It cannot be "on file" as a credit card and it may be only used by authorized personnel.

Issues or complaints

A resident on Marlbro Avenue called the TNR hotline interested in participating in the program. She was referred to Marcus.

A member of the public reported there is a woman who feeds cats and when she tries to talk to her, it falls on deaf ears about the harmfulness of ground feeding. She doesn't want to hear about TNR. I encouraged her to come to a meeting. But she won't, we could pursue it as a complaint.

Scott Smith explained that if there were a ground feeding complaint we would not injure the cat in any way. We educate first and foremost unless there is a health concern. We educate them on the laws, but don't issue tickets, because we want compliance. PD does not trap either. Some people might not listen to peers and their neighbors, but they may list to a police officer or animal control officer. The exception to the ordinance against ground feeding is if they're part of a colony. If not, they're in violation of the code. A lot of what we do is mediation we don't want to take cats away if we don't have to, he said.

John reminded everyone that colonies can only be located on private property, or with written permission from the property owner.

Fund raising/Upcoming Events.

JoAnne Lambusta previously suggested a table at the Township's annual Green Fair, which is typically held in conjunction with Earth Day. Committee members agreed that having a presence at the Green Fair would be beneficial. The event is scheduled from 10 am to 2 pm Saturday, May 21 at the Herbertsville Farm/Bob Anstett Cultural Arts Center.

TNR will get a table and have information on the Committee and a mechanism to accept donations.

Next meeting

Wednesday, March 23 at 5:30 pm