

TNR Committee

March 23, 2022

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

Scribe: Joanne Bergin

Excused: John Talty

Roll call and Welcome

Scott Smith served as chairperson for the meeting in John's absence. Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting. Approximately 15 people in attendance including Committee members.

It's positive to see the word is out on social media about our Committee. Scott thanked everyone for their help spreading the word about the Committee and our goals.

Colony Caregiver Discussion

Marcus Perry reported that all is well with the colonies and had no issues to report.

There are 35 active, registered caregivers and we hope to have more register within the next few months. Initially, colony caregivers expressed hesitation sharing information with the Committee. A lot of the hesitation has been addressed by the Committee's hard work, and that's encouraging participation.

Two members reported observing new cats in their area that are tipped. So, they have had care and may be part of a neighboring colony that has not registered with the Town. There's no way to know, but feral cats tend to roam (but generally stay close to a known food source). As long as they're tipped, we can assume they have seen a vet for proper care.

Sponsor Update

No issues to report.

Sponsorship Material Discussion

Marcus showed everyone the new door tags that he will place on the door of anyone who he needs to talk to about their cats. Members received one for their reference, but Marcus asked them not to leave them on doors as he knows who he needs to engage. His cell phone number is on the door tags and he prefers to use that only with people he needs to talk to based on potential issues or concerns.

Veterinarian Update

The Township has funds in place for this service, but can only reimburse providers after the fact, which does not work for East Coast Vet. Additionally, East Coast is the only vet in Ocean County that will take TNR cats. This problem was resolved thanks to a generous donor who put up the funds and then will request reimbursement from the Township along with the proper certification. Now, colony caregivers who have trapped a feral cat can use East Coast, who will spay or neuter and facilitate the ear tip. Reimbursable services are only provided to registered caregivers. Doreen will provide a voucher so no one has to pay out of pocket. The attendees gave a round of applause as this is a game changer for feral cat caregivers. Operating hours for feral cat care is Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 8 – 10 am. The cats are kept overnight; pick up is the next day during the same times.

Issues or complaints

One complaint Marcus is working on is at Waterside Gardens. The smell is overwhelming and we have to determine who is providing the food. Marcus and Officer Smith both have been on location many times and are still working on getting it addressed. There are shelters set up in the woods, but the people who are feeding aren't walking out there to leave the food. The food draws them out from the woods. Hopefully that was because of snow/winter and now it's the spring they will go back to the shelters in the woods. This is an important aspect – caregivers not participating in the program. People like these that are not caring for cats in the right way and give our program a bad name. The feeders are aware there are shelters in the woods. They're all aware and have been advised this cannot continue. The property manager has advised of same. All of the colony caregivers are doing things the right way. These people are making it harder for us to be successful. Eventually, other residents will complain and then we will have a problem. If Marcus gets complaints and has to trap non-colony feral cats, they are taken to the shelter. Marcus is going to go back and talk to the "feeder" again and advise that ground feeding is a violation of Township ordinance.

Marcus and Officer Smith have tried numerous times to talk to the feeders. That's how the shelters got constructed. Management closed the crawlspaces and these people opened them right back up. They leave the food out and there's garbage everywhere. Other nuisance animals will appear if there's food left out. The public information aspect is essential. The residents may not realize the vulnerable spot these feeders are putting the cats in.

It's private property so we're limited in what we can post and where. The property manager can hand out flyers or hang signs about TNR, but not the Committee.

We do want to get the word out that there's funding available from the Township for registered colony caregivers.

Upcoming events

The Green Fair is on May 21 and we will have a table for TNR. This is one way for us to share information, accept donations, maybe sell baked goods. Next month's agenda have an item that talks about who's bringing what goods for the bake sale.

Next meeting

Wednesday, April 27 at 5:30 pm