

TNR Committee

November 2, 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

20 people in attendance including Committee members. The Committee agreed to a 6-week meeting schedule to allow for more time to report on updates.

Colony Caregiver Update & Discussion

Doreen reported since the last meeting we have 3 new caretakers signed on to the program. TNR Committee members and volunteers have trapped 16 cats since September. Additionally, since April, 27 cats have been spayed or neutered and 21 kittens were placed into rescues, were fostered or adopted. It's important to note these feral cats were socialized and now have a home.

Chairman Talty reported we're getting calls from other towns about what we're doing and how we facilitate this program. We are very transparent and everything we've done and are doing is listed on the web site.

Doreen gave special thanks to Rachel Fondi and Lisa Elio, who have been and continue to be great volunteers who trap cats.

Sponsor Update

Marcus reported that everything is fine with our sponsors.

Veterinarian Update – ear tips and TNR activities

East Coast Vet is still doing our spay neuter procedures along with ear tipping, microchips and vaccinations.

Issues or complaints

A member of the public has 10 kittens she needs to get fixed. She is an approved colony. There are now 10 cats in this colony. All of them now have to be trapped. Chairman Talty agreed to speak to her after the meeting, and Doreen will assist.

Chairman Talty said he didn't fully realize the importance of the Microchipping our feral cats until recently, when a Facebook poster alleged that Brick TNR had neutered and eartipped her

cat without her permission. That information was immediately investigated by the Brick Township Animal Control Officer and he was able to determine the cat in question did not have a microchip and thus was not a cat serviced by Brick TNR. The person who posted the Facebook article was advised her complaint against Brick TNR was unfounded. Chairman Talty advised any complaints of wrong doing by Brick TNR will always be investigated and in this case, he wants the record to be publicly corrected so as to not give the Brick TNR a black eye. Doreen will talk to the woman who posted on Facebook and ask her to consider posting a retraction with the newly-learned facts.

New cat traps

Last meeting, we voted on spending some money to purchase traps. Chairman Talty unboxed one for the Committee and gave a general overview of how it works. For next meeting we will have a working sample of the equipment we have and we'll announce the policy and process.

Chairman Talty asked if we could get inventory tags from John Lolla (Township buildings & grounds).

Doreen has an agreement template to share with the Committee to use when lending out traps. That agreement also requires a security deposit.

TNR Hotline calls/emails

The TNR hotline has received a number of calls. There was one call previously discussed - a lady from Lake Riviera whose cat was neutered and eartipped without her consent. Many callers inquire about the program and what's entailed with being a colony caregiver. Chairman Talty said we like getting calls from responsible owners who do the right thing. A Long Branch resident called asking for a vet since the Monmouth County SPCA vet is out on maternity leave.

Chairman Talty said the TNR web site is packed with information and we're always open to share more information that anyone feels is helpful

Update on TNR Rider account balance

The account balance in the TNR rider as of today is \$10,090 in large part due to donations and proceeds from 50/50 raffle. \$4,000 of the \$10,000 was from the 50/50s. TNR Committee members manned a table at the Blessings of the Animals and St. Paul's Lutheran Church, where they received \$43 in donations! Jo Anne Lambusta reminded everything that we generated double that amount in donations from the Green Fair. These events are a great way to educate the public, make connections in the feral cat community and generate donations at the same time.

There were a lot of vendors at Pet Blessing event. Next year the Brick K-9 unit will do a presentation.

Next meeting is December 14 public meeting at 5:30

Public comment:

A member of the public asked if people are allowed to be a colony caregiver if they live in an apartment. Chairman Talty explained that most apartment buildings are owned by an association and they have to approve hosting a colony on their property. It's private property and you need permission from the proper owner, he said. Waterside Gardens, for example, has a large feral cat issue. The woods around it are not association property and that's why there's a colony there. If a private condo association says no, we cannot overrule their rights as property owners. We have to take other neighbor's rights into consideration. We try to speak to the property owner because if they don't allow TNR, the problem will become a lot worse as that cat population will continue to grow. We try our best to educate them on the benefits of the TNR program. Allowing nuisance animals to roam free is also a violation of the law so it really is in their benefit to cooperate.

When we look at the person who wants to be a caretaker we first look at the location. Small neighborhoods with small properties aren't a good fit for a 10-cat colony, especially if the neighbors don't want the cats, Chairman Talty said. We try and stay below the radar so the cats are safe and the program is effective.

We also don't want people afraid to call if they have a complaint. We want to address their concerns in a humane way, which is the right thing to do for the cats.

One resident asked if there could be a private group message board so that volunteer efforts could be coordinated for trapping. Scott Smith explained that What's App or Group Meet are ideal platforms for these conversations. There's power in numbers, and when it comes to trapping, the more volunteers, the better,

Officer Smith can help identify an app – and will show the group at our next meeting.