

TNR Committee
October 11, 2023

Attendees: Members: John Talty (Chair), Councilman Perry Albanese, Catherine Daley, Doreen Gesslein, Jo Anne Lambusta

Absent: Zack Prawdzinski (A-Academy), Scott Smith

Scribe: Joanne Bergin

Roll Call and Welcome

19 people in attendance including Committee members.

Colony Caregiver Update & Discussion

Doreen reported that the TNR Program has 330 cats registered with 59 colonies. One new caretaker signed on since the September meeting. Doreen is helping the new colony caregiver trap cats (Elmwood Court) thinks she has 6-8 cats to trap and TNR.

In the last month, the program has TNR'd 18 adult cats – two were pregnant and 2 were kittens that went to rescues.

Doreen reported that the TNR Program has spayed/neutered 72 cats so far this year. Last year a total of 63 were spayed/neutered as part of this program. In total, 135 cats have been spayed/neutered since the TNR Program started last April.

Sponsor Update

Doreen reported that all colony caregivers are up to date on their paperwork including all required information on number cats and their status as spayed/neutered.

Veterinarian Update

There is nothing new to report. East Coast Vet continues to do a great job.

Doreen reported that one time we had to use Holmdel but when we do, the amount charged to Brick TNR is the same as East Coast. ABC pays the difference.

Animal Control Update

Zack is not in attendance, so there is no update.

Issues or complaints:

East End – behind Visitation Church. Still investigating.

Barra Street- under control, 4 kittens taken out and adopted. Two adults are left and it's still in progress, but the trapper was able to get the kitten out.

North Lake Shore Drive – there is a colony here. When the colony caregiver traps, she brings them to her own vet.

Elmwood Court – the resident signed up to become a colony caregiver. Paperwork has been received. In the process of getting traps out on location. Doreen will work with them to complete the trapping and get the cats spayed/neutered.

Chairman Talty received a complaint from a gentleman on Millbrook Road. He had more of a concern as opposed to a complaint. He called at 830 this morning. The resident spotted a lady on their front porch asking if there were cats in the area. He found this suspicious and contacted the TNR hotline. He sent Chairman Talty an email with the ring camera footage. She identified herself as a Brick TNR volunteer. Any volunteer work should be assigned by the Committee. Chairman Talty's concern is if somebody is saying they're from Brick TNR we have to know who is going out there representing us so that we can verify if a resident calls.

Chairman Talty and the Committee observed that there is a lot of activity on social media reporting missing animals and animal sightings. We do not respond, but Doreen will send private messages if someone needs help.

Cat Traps

2 traps are out now on Elmwood Court

TNR Hotline calls/ emails

Most of the calls were referred to Doreen. One call was received from a resident on Elm Street interested in becoming a colony caretaker. Doreen reported that the property owner submitted paperwork, but it was incomplete, so they are not an official colony at this point. Once the completed paperwork is submitted, we will have a new colony.

Chairman Talty reported that he typically responds or assigns all TNR website calls on the day they are received.

TNR Rider Account

Chairman Talty reported that the TNR rider account as a balance of \$6,934.76.

2023 events:

Blessing of the Animals October 21

Chairman Talty and Catherine are the only volunteers so far.

Fall Fest October 28

Joanne did include this event in the 50/50 raffle license so we can sell tickets. However, sales are not strong at this event because people come for the food trucks and leave. They generally don't want to stay for the fireworks. And, the people that come for the fireworks are a small percentage with limited ticket sales.

October donation bins – donations were not as plentiful as hoped. The more people that get involved and help spread the word, the more likely we will become better known, Chairman Talty said. In the meantime, we have to support each other as best we can. The people benefitting by the donations and the cats they care for appreciate the donations so much, that it is important for the Committee to continue to try and help them.

Next meeting date

November 15th.

Public Comment

Doreen reported that *All For One* is offering a free vaccine clinic on October 22. Advance registration is required. Microchips are available for \$20. Cats and dogs are welcome. Doreen also asked the attendees to remember that, if a trapper is helping you, please help contribute to the costs of gas or food. Volunteers who trap should not have to pay this money out directly. Volunteers spend time and money to help, and those who benefit from the help should contribute, Doreen said.

Chairman Talty said when we restarted this committee, the Township provided seed money. We have been self-sufficient since that time thanks to fund raising and donations, he said. The money goes through pretty quickly because of the cost to treat feral cats. Food and litter costs for the rehab of feral cats should be paid for by the colony caregiver. Doreen has donated money to the rescues who have taken feral cats in need of placement, because it's the right thing to do. Rescue organizations need financial support and they are helping people with kittens that need homes, she said.

One member of the public asked if we are seeing a reduction in the number of feral cats in our community as a result of the TNR Program. Chairman Talty explained that when we first reestablished the Committee, there was a lack of trust with people wanting to identify as colony caregivers. As time has gone on and caregivers have gotten to know people on the Committee (Doreen specifically) caregivers have become more comfortable with being a part of the program.

There's also a stigma that trappers will take the cats to a kill shelter and nothing could be further from the truth.

The number of caretakers have increased, not that there's more colonies, - they were always out there but have only now feel comfortable coming forward and getting involved. Sometimes they get intimidated by the paperwork but it's absolutely necessary so they confirm their commitment. Plus, the paperwork is the only thing that protects them from being in violation of the Township code for ground feeding. As an approved colony, they can feed feral cats.

A member of the public asked if the Township Animal Control officer (ACO) has a scanner for when they pick up deceased animals. Shelters only scan if the ACO indicates that a scanner is needed. Councilman Albanese said the shelters usually scan. If they don't, a complaint should be made to the Health Department. Doreen was told they scan live animals and not deceased animal. There has to be a way to let the pet owner know the animal died. Chairman Talty would

like the ACO to have a scanner. One member reported that there are new halos that will send a notification if the animal is reported missing.

Doreen said the Township is paying for the microchip, so we should be notified. The Township should be directing the ACO to scan anytime a deceased animal is collected. Zack did not scan Doreen's cat when he collected that cat and she spoke with him about it. People want and deserve closure, she said. The group was consistent with asserting that the shelters are not scanning. Zack needs a scanner. Joanne Bergin to call A-Academy and direct Zack accordingly.

One of the members offered to buy the Township's ACO a scanner. She will buy it for Brick TNR and lend it to whatever ACO is assigned to the Town.

Former ACO Marcus had one through A-Academy and he returned it when he left. A-Academy had one and we need to get Zack on board with carrying it and using it every call.

A resident from Lavallette came to talk about their progress in starting a TNR Program. She goes to Lavallette Council meetings to help spread awareness. She thanked Doreen and other volunteers for their help and support getting this program off the ground.