

The West Branch Animal Control Commission met on September 10, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Members present were Alan Beyer, Leesa Johnson, Amy Kessler, Ashley Olson, and Red Provine.

There were no minutes from the last meeting due to it being held at the dog park cleanup.

Old Business:

- A. Hometown Days: Johnson Family carried the Banner in the Hometown Days Parade.
- B. Dog Park: The dog park cleanup was held on a Tuesday. There were people there commenting, thanking us for keeping it up, and looking good. Keeping the cleanup during open hours to be decided in the spring.

The Tether ball base cannot be found at this time. Maybe going to order another base. A concrete culvert/tunnel is another idea Al and Red discussed the placement of the culvert on the day of cleanup.

- C. Stray Cat Proposal – TNR Program (Trap/Neuter/Release): Guest speaker Ashley to talk about TNR. She and 3 others were at the meeting last month. But, there was not quorum. They had brought the President of The Iowa Humane Society (Preston Moore) he went over the benefits of a TNR. Dr. Samuelson was also there to talk about his and the West Branch Animal Clinic's involvement in the program. Her impression was that it was positive to all that were in attendance. The meeting was ended with a desire to figure out how many colonies that there were.

They came up with six that have not been trapped and vaccinated. A lot of times feral cats stay hidden. If they are truly feral you won't see them during the day and they avoid people. They don't have exact numbers but the largest one is on Ohrt Drive. The question was asked if they belong to someone. The Maher's feed them. They are hesitant but may be open to the idea of getting them fixed or neutered. The neighbors have complained a lot. Also, the neighbors are open to maybe having the trapping happen on their property. Johnson County Humane Society is willing to do the trapping. We need to get some permission waivers signed and go forward from there. Al: Do they realize that with this program that they are put back to where they came from? They have explained the process to the neighbors. The Maher's have led them to believe that there are more than what they have seen there. They have kittens every year. It is an ongoing problem that keeps getting worse. From what they could tell the cats are very sick.

There are other colonies on Main St., 5th Street, by Kum & Go, Beranek Park. Mostly sightings of cats that appear to not have homes. Leesa mentioned a colony by West Branch Roofing. Tawny has begun housing the adults and rehoming the kittens. 2 behind Mexican restaurant are being taken care of by her. They have been fixed and vaccinated.

Al: In visiting with Preston Moore. He said that one of the important things if we decide to do this. Two things. Funding? – Need to know the numbers that we are dealing with. And is this outside the purview of the city? Is this within our budget?

Any idea on the numbers? Colony locations mainly. Ohrt is in the teens for sure. 4 or 5 by Beranek. Kum & Go has 2. Ashley has had 3 or 4 in her garbage cans.

Is there any way to outreach to the people that are feeding them? That would be a good way to find the number. Al said that for a TNR Program to be effective you have to have somewhere around 2/3 of the cats neutered each year to make progress. If we caught 15-20 we would have to come up with a budget number. The city gives us approximately \$3,000 each year. Mainly used for the stray cat and dog program. We do not use it all. We could probably use up to \$1,000 for the TNR Program. We need to find out the numbers that would be required for each animal. We will reach out to other communities to see how they address the issue. For the SNAP Program for farm cats the charge is usually \$15 for neuter and \$35 for spay. Which is looking like about \$400 without vaccinations.

Ideas for funding – fundraisers for testing and vaccinations as additional funds will be needed. Are other communities doing it through the city or stand alone. As of now, in Iowa City, if you trap it you are responsible for the animal. Ashley will contact other communities about what they are using. Other possibilities are pet food companies or Petco or PetSmart.

Preston Moore is willing to help. He has volunteered to come to the city council meeting if necessary and can help write the ordinance. First, we have to give him some particulars. Ashley will attend next month's meeting with more information.

The most effective program besides TNR is to trap and give vasectomies to males and to tie the tubes of the females. You can get by with trapping 1/3 of the cats. Long term birth control is not an option in cats at this time.

New Business:

A. Leslie Brick (Deputy City Clerk) says that dog park registrations lower this year. She has sent out reminders. There are a lot of people out there. Questions about enforcement. Potential purchase of a keyed combo lock. \$1,500 last time Amy checked. Can we create a "Neighborhood Watch" system. Amy said that she has spoken with some of her customers to no avail. Possibly for fear of being the bad guy. The time to do the lock would be the first of the year. Next meeting we will address this issue and whether the fees are appropriate.

B. Police Report: Nothing to report.

Next meeting will be October 8, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.