

The West Branch Animal Control Commission met on January 12, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Alan Beyer, Amy Lynch, Leesa Johnson, Ashley Olson and Gina Heick.

Absent: None

Also present was City Administrator, Redmond Jones, Deputy City Clerk, Leslie Brick, Officer Zach Murdock and TNR Representative, Ashley Carroll.

Minutes from the November 10, 2020 meeting were approved.

Old Business:

Alan stated that the TNR Program has been in affect since April, 2020, with the understanding of trying it for a year to see how it goes and then giving City Counsel a recommendation that we would like to do it again and that we've got money in our budget.

Ashley Carroll, representing the TNR program, presented us with some statistics on the program: 27 cats have been taken care of in some way.

13 kittens were rescued.

2 adult cats were relocated to a barn.

2 cats are in foster care.

10 or 11 cats have been thru TNR. Those cats came from the areas of Beranek Park, 5th & Main Streets, Pedersen Street and Cookson Drive (near the West Branch Family Practice building).

Alan: It's a little different than what we expected. We thought there would be colonies. A group of cats would be TNR'd and then later on another group of cats, and so on.

Ashley: With an understanding that they cannot take a whole group of cats to the West Branch Animal Clinic all at once.

Alan: Would be a good idea to call ahead and see if they have time.

Ashley wondered if IHA (Iowa Human Alliance) could be a second option. Alan said absolutely.

Ashley questioned how the billing would work, believing that it was \$55.00. Leslie stated it would be best to bill the City.

Alan said the Animal Clinic is Okay with continuing to participate, however, City Council has to approve it if we are going to renew, as TNR was entered into as a trial program. Leslie stated we may possibly know by the next Animal Control Commission meeting. She will report back.

Alan stated that an Ordinance was passed last year to allow people to renew city license up to three years (couldn't exceed their Rabies expiration date), thinking this would make it easier, but it did not. Deputy City Clerk, Leslie Brick, spoke to the commission regarding improving the efficiency of Pet Licensing. The on-line ability to register pets has been going very well. They may also pay for fees on-line and register and pay fees for the Dog Park. Last year with the multi-registration, we also offered a Forever Tag. It has been very helpful, the challenge still is registering their rabies shots because many of them don't seem to remember when that happens. They don't remember when they were registered and don't remember when their rabies expire. They are always expecting that reminder. Chief Hanna would like to make some recommendations. We are thinking about along with the forever tag, have a forever registration and make fee appropriate to that. There would be one record for life until the pet passes away and we take that pet off our records or when they get a new pet, registering that new pet. This would eliminate constantly sending out post cards, and the expense to the city for time and postage each year.

Amy: What does pet registration help?

Leslie: Have received calls regarding dog bites, wondering if the pet has had its rabies vaccination. Her information is only as good as she has it, as she cannot make people give it to her. The vet should be their first call anyway, as her records are sometimes not helpful. She does

not see a big value in the time it takes. Up until a year ago, we didn't have any way to access information. Leslie has created a Google spreadsheet, allowing the Police Department to access it on weekends and evenings. She mentioned that microchipping is a quick and easy way to find out about the pet. They are exploring additional ideas. Chief Hanna may attend the next meeting to address concerns he had. He will also review the Codes, hoping to keep them updated.

Leslie stated that they have held off on the fee increases until we can have another discussion and decide about the registration.

Leslie noted a discrepancy in the West Branch Animal Commission Annual Report regarding Dog Park fee to remain at \$15.00 a year (not \$20.00). Gina to correct and turn in a corrected copy.

Amy: As far as licensing the pet, is it really a benefit or something we should just drop?

Alan: It does give some leverage in our Ordinance for dog bites, so there's some value there. Agreed by Officer Murdock.

Alan: Telling pet owners they have a responsibility to their pet and it's in an Ordinance.

Amy: Does the value outweigh the extra time it takes?

Alan: Dealing with an animal that has bitten or attacked another dog, that without it, it might be difficult.

Leslie: Do the fines go thru the Court because she has not had to bill anyone.

Alan: Yes, fines go thru Court and it has happened several times. Officer Murdock confirmed.

Old Business:

The commission voted Alan Beyer as Chairperson, Amy Lynch as Vice-Chairperson and Gina Heick as Secretary.

Officer Zach Murdock reported no dog bites or animal complaints since he last reported to us at the November 10, 2020 meeting.

Alan mentioned that there is furniture in the shed at the Dog Park. Asked if any members had a problem with that. None did. Leslie suggested putting a bench around the perimeter of the inside, making it permanent and economical. Commission agreed and thought it would make a good project for a Scout.

Amy reported the security light is out at the Dog Park. Alan to get in touch with Alliant Energy to replace. Alan asked Redmond if he had any comments on the Budget. Redmond stated there was an incident of an owner not taking care of 16 cats. It was overloading our West Branch animal services, so the cats were taken to Tipton. We received a bill from Tipton for \$808.00. Redmond said that Chief Hanna will give a detailed report at our next meeting. There is not an agreement, so we need to re-evaluate in case we run into this situation again.

Alan asked if we should do an article in the West Branch Times outlining Winter Pet Care. Food, water and shelter is standard, but the problem is dogs licking their paws and getting salt/ice melts in their system. Amy agreed to write. Leslie offered to put it on the City website and on Facebook.

Next meeting is February 9, 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.