

**SEMINOLE COUNTY
ANIMAL CONTROL BOARD
WORK SESSION**

**September 4, 2008
7:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. DeHaven Batchelor, Chairman
Lisa Giltner, Vice Chairman
Chris LaSage
Marylin Wittmer
Debra Garrambone
Barbara Lewis
Keith Weissman

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS: Morgan A. Woodward, Animal Services Manager
Ann Colby, Assistant County Attorney
Elaine RiCharde, Clerk to the Board

The following is a non-verbatim transcript of the Seminole County Animal Control Board meeting held September 4, 2008, at 7:00 PM, at the Sheriff's Office/Public Safety Building, 150 Bush Boulevard, Sanford, Florida.

I. Call to Order.

Dr. Batchelor called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

II. Roll Call.

Roll Call was taken by the Clerk to the Board. A quorum was present.

III. Work Session.

Francoise Ager and Audrey Posocco, representing Friends of Feral Animals (FFA), and Chip Steele, representing CARE Feline Rescue, Inc. (serving Orange County) were introduced to present three model TNVR (trap, neuter, vaccinate and return) programs to the Board as agreed at the May 8, 2008, Board meeting. In accordance with the Board's direction, the models were to be developed with the following criteria: 1) consideration that SCAS does not have an on site spay/neuter clinic; 2) the County's liability; 3) changing the County ordinance to allow free roaming cats.

Ms. Ager asked the Board to be objective and mindful of the following: FFA will negotiate the best solution for feral cats, taxpayers and the County; FFA

will not consider euthanasia to control feral cat populations; FFA respects nature and all animals.

Ms. Posocco read through the three model programs which information was previously provided to the Board.

Ms. Ager spoke to the model program criteria as directed by the Board.

1) Consideration that SCAS does not have an on site spay/neuter clinic
“So the best solution is to fund spaying neutering (sic) of at least the colonies that Animal Services would otherwise have had to go trap, hold, euthanize and cremate.”

2) The County’s liability

“Having considered liability, the best scenario is to give the TNVR duties to Friends of Feral Animals because there’s no increased liability to the County.”

3) Changing the county ordinance to allow free roaming cats

“Considering Section 20 of the current County Code, the easiest and quickest way to implement TNVR would be to make a few definition changes and add a section to the Code.”

Ms. Ager said FFA has a model ordinance which the Board requested at the May 8th work session. Ms. Ager asked the Board to schedule another meeting to review the model ordinance.

There followed questions, answers and a discussion about the model programs.

Dr. Batchelor asked Ms. Ager to provide the model ordinance to the Board, Mr. Woodward and Ms. Colby for their review prior to the additional meeting Ms. Ager requested (supra).

Dr. Batchelor suggested concluding comments and tabling this issue to either the September 11th meeting or a meeting to be held at the BCC Chambers, at which time the Board can take official action. He called for any additional comments or questions from the Board. The discussion continued.

Ms. Giltner asked Mr. Woodward to share comments from Mr. Bob Brown, Brevard County Animal Services, regarding Mr. Brown’s experience with feral cat issues.¹ Mr. Woodward had two telephone conversations with Mr. Brown, who oversees enforcement in that county. In 2005 Brevard County adopted an ordinance allowing feral cat colonies. An organization was given approximately \$200,000 to start a program to provide assistance to, not to fully fund, a feral cat program. It took a year for the program to become operational, and in the two years since then all the funding has been expended. According to Mr. Brown, the program was clearly defined by ordinance. However, the organization found

¹ Mr. Brown was invited to attend this meeting. He was unable to attend due to responsibilities in Brevard county associated with Tropical Storm Fay.

loopholes in the ordinance resulting in them not adhering to the ordinance and rather providing TNR or maintaining colonies without following the ordinance. Subsequently, complaint calls about feral cats did not decrease but instead sometimes tripled in a given month. This resulted in Brevard's staff spending an extraordinary amount of time investigating feral cat caretakers who claimed to be doing TNR, when in fact they were feeding stray cats in their backyard. This further resulted in issues with neighbors who in turn made complaints to Brevard County Animal Services. These excessive complaints have affected Brevard's ability to timely respond to other complaints, and a day and a half is a common field services response time. When asked what suggestions Mr. Brown could offer, he said if given the choice he would outsource TNR and allow that contracted organization to assess fees to fund their activities. He also suggested ordinance language to require all cats in a colony to be altered and vaccinated, to require the removal of kittens so they can be socialized and made available for adoption, and to limit the number of cats in a colony.

Ms. Lewis advised a person who helped develop the feral cat program in Brevard County was in attendance, and asked that she be allowed to address the Board regarding the information shared by Mr. Woodward. Dr. Batchelor declined her request.

ACTION ITEM Ms. Garrambone requested Mr. Steele provide the Board with financial statements/records, statistics, etc. from CARE, and the same of Ms. Ager and Ms. Posocco for FFA, as an aid to determine the cost to fund a TNVR program. Ms. Posocco said it costs FFA approximately \$40 per cat to spay or neuter. Ms. Garrambone also asked for the number of feral cats in Seminole County. Ms. Ager responded 36,631 according a formula she uses that relies on the 2008 census statistics.

Ms. Wittmer asked Ms. Ager to provide the Board with the location of a couple of colonies to allow the Board to visit a colony. Ms. Ager said there is a colony inside Lake Mills Park. **ACTION ITEM** Ms. Wittmer requested Mr. Woodward provide the Board with complaints regarding this colony.

ACTION ITEM Ms. Garrambone requested FFA provide information on available grants and allowable expenditures for feral cat colonies.

ACTION ITEM Ms. LaSage requested Mr. Steele provide statistics and any identifiable trends relative to feral cat colonies since inception of the CARE program.

Concluding the discussion, Dr. Batchelor said the Board needs a copy of the model ordinance, the definition of a feral cat, and financial and statistical information from both FFA and CARE.

IV. Confirmation of Next Meeting.

- September 11, 2008
- December 11, 2008
- March 12, 2009

Staff will determine if the BCC Chambers is available to hold the September 11th regular meeting. If so, the feral cat issue will be included on that agenda. If not, this issue will not be on the September 11th agenda and that meeting will be held at the Sheriff's Office/Public Safety Building.

If the BCC Chambers is not available, staff will determine available dates and poll the Board for the best, accommodating date. There was a consensus this additional meeting, requested by FFA, will be a special meeting and therefore the Board will be able to take official action.

V. Adjournment.

Motion by Ms. Giltner to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 PM. Second by Ms. Wittmer. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk to the Board