

**CITY OF PETALUMA  
ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF 9 JULY 2008 MEETING**

**Committee Members:** John Cerini, Tim Christensen, Jack Eliot, Grant Garl, Eilleen Hallock, Jonathan Long, Nancy Manchester, Pamela Morris, June Gerron, Charlie Reinhart (chair)

**Council Liaison:** Samantha Freitas

**Staff:** Nancee Tavares, Animal Services Manager; Kathy Sousa, Shelter Supervisor

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- I. Call to Order - by Samantha Freitas at 7:08 p.m.
- II. Approval of Draft Minutes – Jack Eliot made motion with Nancy Manchester seconding.
- III. Public Comment

*Cecily Wallis* – Ms. Wallis said she had been severely impacted by feral cats in her neighborhood and yard. Twenty-four feral cats were trapped by Animal Services on her property. She said feral cats should not be released back within city limits.

*Wayne Till* – Mr. Till is a docent at Shollenberger Park. He said that domestic animals do not belong in the wetlands because they are a danger to wildlife.

*Anthony Piazza* – Mr. Piazza worked as a trapper for Forgotten Felines, trapping in the country and in industrial areas. He said colonies eventually die off and that kittens can be tamed. He explained trapping procedures and said that cats can be a benefit in the country because they kill rodents.

*Angela Zumsteg* – Ms. Zumsteg explained what Forgotten Felines does. She does not believe in restrictions on where feral cats can be released. She said caretakers would cooperate with a non-profit if the City of Petaluma would provide veterinary assistance. She will soon be certified as a funding specialist.

*Kathleen Garvey* – Ms. Garvey explained that she has resided in the same house since 1968. Animal Services trapped feral cats on her property at her request. She said she cannot leave lawn furniture in her yard because the feral cats ruin the furniture. She does not think living in the wild is humane for a cat.

*Marcelle Guy* – Ms. Guy distributed email she sent to committee. She feeds feral cats and said they are not dirty.

*Melva Lower-Joslin* – Ms. Lower-Joslin said that some feral cat caretakers are well-meaning, but do not take care of the cats. She would be willing to take them to a structured environment, which she believes would be a successful conclusion to the problems involving feral cats.

*Carol Huygen* – Ms. Huygen said she has 10 cats. She reiterated what Ms. Lower-Joslin said. She also said that homeowners cannot distinguish between feral and tame cats. Education on spay/neuter and the importance of owners taking cats with them when they move should be done.

*Patricia Boyd* – Ms. Boyd is founder and chair of Save Our Ferals. She discussed success of Sacramento's Miller Park project.

*Steve Wallis* – Mr. Wallis said that all groups should work together because they share the same issues. He has concerns about Trap/Neuter/Return programs.

*Bob Dyer* – Mr. Dyer is the senior docent at Shollenberger Park. He stated that the current ordinance regarding feral cats is properly crafted and also works to benefit feral cats. He cited a recent Argus Courier newspaper poll. Majority of the public were supportive of trapping and removing feral cats. He also distributed list of 40 animals in danger of feral cat predation.

*Sharon Mansfield* – Ms. Mansfield is the educational docent at Shollenberger Park. She said the community is fortunate to live in a major flyover and home to nesting birds. City provides good care of park with balanced wildlife. Five hundred people per day visit the park. Park should not be home to feral cats.

*Gerald Moore, Ph.D.* – Dr. Moore is chair of the Wetlands Alliance. Both the Migratory Bird Act and Endangered Species Act have authority over the Petaluma wetlands. He said it is illegal to kill or allow to

be killed (such as by feral cats) native birds, except during specified hunting times. There is a need to educate pet owners on proper pet care.

*David Yearsly* – Mr. Yearsly is executive director of Friends of the Petaluma River. He said that non-native species, both plant and animal, are being released in the water shed. This includes feral cats. All upset the balance of nature. Cats do not have predators. He suggested that Advisory Committee develop ways to keep cats out of wetlands.

IV. Committee Comment – None

V. Shelter Report – Nancee Tavares announced that, pending Council approval, Animal Services will be under the Petaluma Police Department effective 1 August 2008. Kathy Sousa gave census of animals at the shelter and those in foster homes.

VI. Fencing at Rocky Dog Park – Pamela Morris reported on need for fencing at dog park. Risk Management agrees that the fence is needed for safety. Estimate for fencing and labor is \$3,720. Risk Management will pay half the cost. Pamela made a motion to pay the other half from the funds earned from last year's raffle for Greek Islands vacation. Jack Eliot seconding. All approved.

VII. Legislative Subcommittee recommendations re: Feral Cats – Charlie Reinhart explained process of developing the recommendations based on best interest of community and cats. (Recommendations had previously been mailed to committee members.) Copies of recommendations were available to public at the meeting. Jack Eliot said he essentially agrees with recommendations, but had issues with half-mile radius not being defined. Map distributed was not correct. Nancee Tavares said she will have another map developed. Tim Christensen said he had concerns about allowing a 30 day grace period for removing feral cats. Samantha Freitas said opinion of City Attorney re: legality of allowing 30-days for removal needed. A motion was made by Jack Eliot and seconded by John Cerini that wetlands be excluded. Nancee Manchester had questions on who would form the feral cat group and who would pay expenses. Nancee Tavares explained that the city does not have the funds and it would be up to Save Our Ferals. Jon Long questioned need for cat licensing for cats kept indoors only. Recommended they be exempt. Charlie Reinhart said it needs to be defined where licensing revenue would go. Recommended that portion go to spaying/neutering feral cats. Jon Long asked if there was any city land available for establishing a feral cat park. Pam Morris said she likes the proposal to license cats. Grant Garl explained that he thinks that vaccinating feral cats would be an excessive cost to colony caretakers. Would like to see as little demand on caretakers as possible. Nancee Tavares explained that there is a need for Rabies vaccination because cats are now the major domestic carrier of the disease which is 100 percent fatal once symptoms appear. Samantha Freitas asked if there is a mechanism for training caretakers. Nancee Tavares said that Forgotten Felines does have a program. Charlie Reinhart stated that Animal Services must have oversight over feral cat management. Need wording in proposal that Animal Services has authority to provide oversight. Samantha Freitas said there needs to be a signed contract between Animal Services and the 501c.3 organization. John Cerini stressed need for trust and collaboration. Nancy Manchester proposed that Nancee Tavares bring red line version with proposed changes needed to next meeting. A vote was taken to bring second version of changes back to August meeting. Nine voted in favor. Motion passed.

VIII. Summer Kids Camp – not discussed

IX. Update from Committees – not discussed

X. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.