



NORFOLK

STAFF REPORT

To: Norfolk Animal Advisory Board (AAB)

From: Ronald H. Williams, Jr., Assistant City Manager

Subject: Response to Recommendations to City Council

Date: October 2, 2013

Overview: I am writing in response to your August 20th communication to City Council regarding policy recommendations adopted by the AAB on August 7th. In most cases with Norfolk boards and commissions it is customary that City staff be offered the opportunity to make recommendations to the board or commission prior to any action taken regarding a policy or regulatory decision. It is my understanding that most of the recommendations from the August 7th meeting were based solely on discussion amongst Board members.

I therefore offer comments and analysis from the City Administration in response to the recommendations, and respectfully ask if the Board wishes to reconsider any of recommendations prior to our communication to City Council regarding the issues below.

Recommendation 1: The AAB recommended that the City of Norfolk support a Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) policy.

Analysis: City Attorney's Office Response: The VA Attorney General recently opined in a letter dated July 12, 2013, that a TNR program run by a locality or a private organization is not authorized under state enabling law. It also advised that the US Department of Interior opposes TNR and such a policy may violate federal law.

Reference: VA Attorney General's official advisory opinion in accordance with § 2.2-505 of the Code of Virginia.

Action to be Taken: The Administration does not recommend any action by City Council.

Recommendation 2: The AAB recommended that the City support spay and neutering assistance for low-income citizens. The income criteria included families and individuals who qualified for the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP)/food stamps, based upon 17% poverty level and under \$35,000/year income.

<p>Analysis:</p>	<p>The City has always sought and will continue to seek ways to make spaying and neutering available for all citizens by partnering with other interest groups to make such services available. The AAB should be encouraged to identify other agencies or groups that can assist with this effort.</p> <p>There is not sufficient information in the recommendation to support municipal funding at this time. For further analysis, it is requested that the AAB provide additional information. City staff can assist with the analysis based on recommendations from the AAB.</p> <p>The information should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the target population(s), 2. the target area(s) of the City, 3. the requested funding amount, and 4. the overall impact on the City's animal population and NACC's projected intake population such support would have. <p>It should be noted that the City does not currently provide funding for an adoption program at NACC. Rather, the spaying and neutering done before an animal is adopted is supported solely by citizens who adopt animals. There is an established restricted spay/neuter account from which money remitted by the adopter is then used to pay the Norfolk SPCA for the sterilization of the City's shelter animals. Due to ever-increasing veterinary costs, and an adoption fee structure that is less than actual costs, the spay/neuter account will likely be depleted within the next year.</p> <p>Action to be Taken: The Administration does not recommend any action by City Council at this time.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3:</p>	<p>The AAB recommended to City Council that the City support a media campaign to encourage its citizens to adopt, volunteer and foster our City's homeless animals.</p> <p>Analysis: Norfolk Animal Care Center's (NACC) current media outreach includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampton Roads Show (quarterly) • WNOR: Shelley's Puppies (quarterly) • Virginian Pilot: COMPASS Feature Pets (weekly) • Norfolk Perspectives: (bi-annually) • Lambda Gazette: Pet Feature (monthly) • Furry Cookie Magazine: (bi-monthly) <p>NACC utilizes the internet, social media and any pro bono media opportunities, because NACC does not have an advertising budget. NACC regularly contributes to the Shelter webpage, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and an additional 30+ pet adoption websites that update the available pet list on an hourly basis. To date, NACC has partnered with the Friends of NACC's for</p>

financial support for any paid advertising activities that are mutually beneficial. The Department of Communications works with NACC to promote events and outreach to the media.

The Department of General Services believes a robust media outreach campaign is vital to reaching individuals who are interested in adopting animals and supports the recommendation. At this time, NACC and General Services do not have funding to expand the current media outreach. The AAB should be encouraged to identify other agencies or groups that can assist with this effort.

Action to be Taken: The Administration recommends adoption of a resolution by City Council to encourage residents to adopt, volunteer and foster our City's homeless animals and to encourage collaboration amongst partnering organizations and agencies to leverage media outreach.

Recommendation 4: The AAB recommended that the City support a policy for increased transparency, which includes posting monthly data of the shelter's intake and disposition on the City website and publicly releasing the data to the media.

Analysis: The NACC will post the Center's monthly Comprehensive Report on the Animal Care Center's Document Center on the Norfolk.gov website. Unless there are other specific issues regarding transparency no further action is required. The City Council's September 2011 adopted priorities of *Accessibility, Mobility & Connectivity* and *Well Managed Government* inherently cover this issue.

Action to be Taken: The Administration does not recommend any action by City Council.

Recommendation 5: The AAB recommended that the City support a policy to have our shelter attain a 70% save rate by March 2014.

Analysis: It is important to note that this recommendation has a direct and immediate budgetary impact. No information was provided as to how this save rate percentage was arrived at or why this percentage was significant compared to other percentages. General Services and NACC have determined with the given existing facility space, staffing level, and allocated resources a 70% save rate is unattainable. Additionally, if the City sought to attain the 70% save rate, the City could be subject to criminal sanctions for overcrowding or improper care. The City faced such a situation in the past when the State Veterinary threatened to close the Center and pursue criminal sanctions, as opined by the City Attorney's Office.

NACC had a 53% save rate for 2012 and expects to have approximately a 56% for 2013. Based on an analysis of the current allocated resources and intake numbers, it has been concluded that the center is working at peak efficiencies. It is important for the AAB to understand the components that make up the save rate at the Center. I recommend that the AAB work with NACC staff to determine a path for achieving this proposed rate of 70% so that City Council can understand the fiscal and operational impacts required.

Action to be Taken: The Administration does not recommend any action by City Council at this time.

Recommendation 6: The AAB recommended that the City support a partnership between NACC and the Norfolk SPCA.

Analysis: NACC has a current contract with the Norfolk SPCA for medical and sterilization services. Norfolk SPCA is an active tenant in the NACC building and frequently collaborates on activities of mutual interest. This has been and will continue to be a professional partnership that the City values. In addition to its partnership with the Norfolk SPCA, NACC has many collaborative partners in the region, both in the animal welfare community and beyond. NACC is always open to new endeavors that will better serve our human and animal residents.

General Services supports this recommendation and actively partners with any and all agencies to achieve common goals.

Action to be Taken: The Administration does not recommend any action by City Council.

Recommendation 7: The AAB recommended that the City support a policy that all animals owned by Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) tenants are spayed/neutered.

Analysis: NRHA already has a policy in place requiring spaying and neutering of tenant animals.

NRHA Chapter 10: PET POLICY [24 CFR 5.309] states all cats and dogs owned by tenants "...must be spayed or neutered, must be housebroken, must have all vaccinations and must be licensed as specified now or in the future by State law or local ordinance..."

Action to be Taken: The Administration does not recommend any action by City Council.