

**Animal Control Advisory Board - Public Education and Outreach Subcommittee at the Leonardtown Library  
Wednesday, December 13, 2023**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Dr. David Langford, who introduced members of the subcommittee.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Dr. Langford, Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Public Education and Outreach  
Steve Tuttle, Member of the Subcommittee  
Molly Schmeiser, Member of the Subcommittee  
Theresa Marlowe, Manager of the Animal Adoption and Resource Center

**3. SUBCOMMITTEE**

**A. Public Education and Outreach Subcommittee**

**Introduction**

Dr. Langford recognized Barbara Roberts, Don Schramm and Joan Coleman as special volunteers at the new Animal Adoption and Resources Center (AARC). He thanked these volunteers for their commitment and dedication to the animals and that their volunteer efforts also support the staff and the citizens of our community.

**Recognition**

Dr Langford then recognized some of the individuals representing the animal rescue and welfare organizations in our community that help the AARC, Laura Diaduk of Feral Cat Rescue, Kathy McCullough of Second Hope Rescue, Kortney Kepler and Jackie Pek of SOMD Guinea Pig Rescue, Katie Werner of St. Mary's County Animal Welfare League (SMAWL), and thanked them for their cooperation in working together on behalf of the animals.

**Volunteers and Financial support of the AARC**

- Dr. Langford asked about how to increase support from the public for the Center.
- Theresa Marlowe said that recruitment of volunteers is not an issue but "committed and trained volunteers is a need".  
An Animal Relief Fund was suggested as a support for needed foster homes for dogs.
- Currently there is not an AARC staff member available after hours to receive calls about an animal in crisis. This comment was given as part of an answer to a question about the need for "foster parents" of dogs. Ms. Marlowe mentioned that foster care was usually needed for ill or injured animals.
- Rescue Angels works in Charles County and was suggested as an option for help here.
- The T Bone and Heather show was suggested as a way to increase public awareness about the shelter.

- Steve Tuttle showed a fold out card about homeless programs in the county and thought a similar card could be made about the AARC-its goals, needs, hours, and general information.
- This card could be handed out to increase public interest in supporting the shelter with time and financial resources.
- The Take a Photo with Santa program this Saturday December 16 all thought was a wonderful way to get the public in to visit and learn about the shelter.
- Theresa Marlowe said the Trunk and Treat Event at Halloween at the shelter was a success for the second year.
- All agreed that more events at the shelter are worth the effort and planning.
- Theresa Marlowe also said that there are 150-250 volunteer hours a month donated to the shelter.
- Don Schramm said that every time he walks a dog, he posts a video on his Facebook and that has motivated two other people to also walk dogs.
- Theresa Marlowe mentioned that the post she made about full capacity at the shelter had 180,000 likes.
- There was no consensus about whether to post euthanasia and adoption rates because of a concern the public could not interpret them properly. However, there was discussion about mentioning the new shelters' very good statistics in a more general way.
- It was unanimous that a "Fun Facts Friday" about the AARC be put out weekly on the website and social media. For example, a fact about the good things animal control officers do, such as help people keep their dogs by helping with food or a doghouse. Another of the Fun Facts could/ should be a regular comment about the notably good statistics the AARC has achieved relative to a high-rate adoption and low rate of euthanasia.
- Theresa Marlowe mentioned a shelter enrichment program that would involve the animals and the public for example students reading books to cats and dogs.
- This program could be targeted to elementary students and their families.
- The average person must hear something mentioned seven times before they understand it.
- People do donate to the shelter though the Amazon Wish List and it is also helpful as the shelter can know who sent the gift so they can write a thank you.
- The volunteers were asked what gives them incentive to continue to volunteer and some reasons included meeting with other volunteers, seeing pictures of volunteers on a wall in the shelter and hearing about the goals that the shelter accomplishes each month is motivating.
- A monthly email newsletter with goals accomplished new needs and shelter information would be very helpful.
- All volunteers need to complete the online Fear Free Shelter Program. Molly Schmeiser said that it was an excellent program and worth the five hours of time as she learned a lot.
- Theresa Marlowe said that an important message to the community is "a no kill shelter is not possible without community support" and the animal rescue representatives agreed that the community needs to be aware that they are part of the solution.
- Dr Langford thanked all for coming and said that it was a productive meeting. The group asked that another such meeting be held in the spring.

Steve Tuttle motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 6:10 p.m. and Molly Schmeiser seconded the motion.

#### **4. ADJOURN**

The meeting be adjourned at 6:10 p.m.  
Minutes submitted by Molly Schmeiser on Dec 14, 2023.