

COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
MARCH 21, 1996, 11:00AM

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Chairman Rollin Shaw
Commissioner Johnnie Evans

OTHERS: Commissioner Marshall Faircloth
Commissioner J. Lee Warren, Jr.
Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager
Neil Yarborough, County Attorney
Danny Higgins, Staff Attorney
Staff from Animal Control Department
Pet Shop Owners
Citizens who owned wild and exotic animals
Marsha Fogle, Clerk

Chairman Shaw called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of Minutes: February 15, February 29, March 13

The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Consideration of Giving the County Manager the authority to settle claims in the amount of \$5,000 or less.

The Board of Commissioners referred this matter to the Policy Committee for review and recommendation.

The Committee reviewed the Resolution providing for the disposition of claims by the County Manager as drafted by the County Legal Department.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval to the Board of Commissioners.

3. Discussion/Consideration of a Proposed Ordinance regulating the keeping of wild and exotic animals within Cumberland County.

Chairman Shaw asked for comments from Pet Store owners and owners of wild and exotic animals.

SPEAKERS:

1. Thomas Johnson, Pet Store Owner. Mr. Johnson said he believed the definition of wild and exotic animals was too wide. He noted he did not believe reptiles should be considered under that particular definition. He did suggest that the County require a permit for those who do own ~~and~~ exotic animals. The permit could be issued by the pet store and forwarded to the County along with the fee collected. He suggest a fee of \$10.00. He also suggested pet stores could help the Animal Control office capture loose reptiles. He asked the committee to look at the definitions and perhaps amend the proposed ordinance.

2. Rick Foster - Aquarium Pet Shop, Yadkin Road. Mr. Foster agreed there

needs to be some regulation of wild and exotic animals. He said the classification of wild and exotic animals is too broad. He said he hoped the Board could come up with an ordinance that everyone can live with. He said to put an overall ban on these animals is not the thing to do.

3. William Prince - Great American Pets, Spring Lake He said he disagreed that reptiles and small mammals were dangerous. He said however he was not unsympathetic for control when and where control is needed. He noted the pet industry has an advisory council that could provide assistance to the county in drafting an ordinance. He left a "sample" ordinance, one that has been adopted in St. Louis, Missouri. He said the biggest problem is an uneducated pet owner who does not know how to care for and house his animals.

4. Sheila Hancock, New Love Pet Shop. Cross Creek Mall. She noted the majority of her clientele is Ft. Bragg soldiers, who purchase reptile type animals.

5. Frank Buie - Owner of leopards. Has worked with and been around leopards for 16-17 years. Currently owns two. He said his cages are adequate and the ordinance as written as it relates to housing these cats would be impossible for him to comply with. He said if the Board decides to ban the big cats, he would like to be grandfathered in. He said the ordinance currently on the books is adequate.

6. William Blevins - owns lion. Mr. Blevins has owned this lion for 18 years. It has been declawed. Animal Control has inspected his cages and they meet the current requirements. It would be economically unfeasible for him to build a 2,500 square foot cage as the new proposed ordinance calls for. He indicated he did not think it a good idea for the public to own these animals.

7. Johnny Smith, Animal Control Department. Mr. Smith told the committee that it is important that these animals are contained in a secured environment. He noted that if the animals were to escape and injure someone, the County may be held liable if it had not taken precautions to make sure the animals were secured properly. He also noted that wolves and hybrids are dangerous, noting an incident that happened in South Dakota. He also indicated there is no vaccine for these animals to protect them from rabies.

Following some discussion, the Policy Committee appointed a committee made up of the County Staff Attorney, one representative from the Animal Control Department, one exotic pet owner and one pet store owner. This committee will meet and try to come up with an effective ordinance that will protect the citizens, the animals and the pet stores. This committee will report back to the Policy Committee.

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4. Discussion of a Policy regarding the naming of County Buildings and Facilities.

This item was referred to the Policy Committee by the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Evans indicated initially he was imposed to adopting a policy reference the naming of county facilities. He said each Board should have an opportunity to do what they choose. Chairman Shaw said she thought it a good idea to have a policy that says simply the Board will not name facilities after a person unless that person is deceased.

Commissioner Faircloth indicated he believed a policy concerning the naming of county facilities would be a good idea, noting his experience on the Board of Education with naming facilities. Commissioner Warren said he believed if a policy was adopted it should be rather broad.

The Committee decided to table this matter until the next Policy Committee Meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 12:30