

CUMBERLAND COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
November 8, 2001
Minutes

PRESENT: Chairman Jeannette Council
Commissioner Breeden Blackwell
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Cliff Spiller, Asst. County Manager
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Marsha Fogle, Clerk
Monroe Rascoe, Animal Control Director
Johnny Smith, Animal Control

ABSENT: Commissioner Talmage Baggett

1. Approval of Minutes: October 11, 2001

MOTION: Commissioner Blackwell moved to approve.
SECOND: Chairman Council
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

2. Discussion: Revisions to the Animal Control Ordinance to provide Joint Regulations with the City of Fayetteville

The revisions to the ordinance build largely on an ordinance adopted by the Board of Commissioners in November, 2000, with accommodations on specific issues of the City's proposed approach. The Ordinance proposes to increase the size of the County's Animal Control Board from five to seven, with the City Council nominating two persons for each of the two additional seats to the Board of Commissioners, which would make each appointment from one of the two nominees for each seat. In addition the Ordinance provides that the City would not levy an additional and separate license fee. For the same level of animal control services provided in the County, the City would not make any appropriation to the County, but all license fees, civil penalties, shelter fees, etc. attributable to animals within the City would be collected and retained by the County. The Ordinance also directs the Animal Control Department to use its best efforts to implement a test 18 month program for microchipping, including microchipping animals released (either by adoption or by reclaim to its owner) from the shelter, and a public education effort to encourage microchipping. The feasibility of such a program will depend on an analysis by the County Manager and Animal Control Department of whether a budget for such an effort can realistically be funded. The revised Ordinance would not ban tethering, but would authorize any Animal Control Officer to prohibit it in specific cases where tethering adversely affects the animal. In addition, the requirement of a completely enclosed yard will not be required. Other revisions include:

- remove the exemption that allows exotic animals such as tigers for zoological parks or medical or educational institutions; instead the only exemption would be a temporary one for circuses;
- a dog determined to be dangerous that has killed a person could not continue to be kept within Cumberland County;

- the Ordinance will continue the authorization for the Animal Control Department to use lethal force to be apprehend feral animals after the use of all other practical methods have been ineffective, but only in unincorporated areas (i.e., not within the City);
- the Ordinance keeps the County's simpler procedures applicable to dangerous dogs and public hazard dogs; a public hazard category is an intermediate level of protection between the stringent restrictions on dogs determined to be dangerous and the sometimes unsatisfactory alternative of no determination or restrictions at all. As to public hazard dogs, this proposal adopts the City's approach of allowing reconsideration by the Animal Control Board of restrictions after six months, if the dog has been spayed or neutered, has undergone a socialization course, and has been on good behavior;
- the Ordinance adopts basic standards for pet shops to assure a decent and healthful environment for the animals.

In addition in Section 2 of Sec.3-99, the following shall be added "The Board further directs the County Manager, **or his/her designee, the County Attorney**, the Animal Control Director....."

Note: Bold notes additions

Following some discussion the following motion was offered:

MOTION: Commissioner Blackwell moved to recommend approval of this Ordinance to the Board of Commissioners

SECOND: Chairman Council

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Commissioner Blackwell inquired if the County can do anything at this time about a new building for Animal Control. The County Manager indicated that Animal Control staff has visited the Animal Control Department in New Hanover County to get a better sense of what we need to do here. They will also be visiting other counties. Mr. Martin, County Manager, said beginning the design phase of a new building will be an expensive process and he is not comfortable at this time for the county to move forward. He said if the next quarterly financial figures are better, he will look at whether or not we can move forward with a new building.

Monroe Rascoe, Animal Control Director, noted a software package has been written that could help the Animal Control Department keep up with collections, tracking a animal, adoption, etc. He said his office and the County Manager's office will be reviewing the software to make sure it will fit our needs. This software package will work on pc's and will not require use of the county's mainframe computer.

3. Other matters of concern:

Commissioner Blackwell told the Policy Committee that he had hopes that new Wrecker Ordinance would be coming to the committee in December and to the Board of Commissioners in January.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:00AM