

MINUTES
Pet Care & Humane Treatment Study Committee
Thursday, Dec. 1, 2016, 10:00 AM
Room 110, Blatt Building

Members Present: Senator Vincent Sheheen, Chairman
Representative Steve Moss
Patricia Hill, DVM, SC Assn. of Veterinarians, Past President
Marli Drum, City of Columbia
Kim Kelly, Humane Society US, SC Director
Barbara Nelson, SPCA Albrecht Center, President
Patty Van Sicklen, Am. Kennel Club, Legislative Analyst
Rebecca Leach, SC Dept. of LLR, Dir. Of Bus. And Govt. Affairs

Staff Present: Senate -- Gene Hogan, Emma Hall; House -- Joannie Nickel, Rebecca Thompson

As Chairman Sheheen was delayed, Representative Moss called the meeting to order and then recognized staff to explain new materials before the committee, as well as the agenda. Following this, the first invited speaker was recognized.

Joe Elmore, a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator with the Charleston Animal Society (CAS) gave a brief overview of CAS then spoke on the need for oversight in regard to animal welfare. He recommended that shelters be required to register with the existing free national shelter registry and that an inclusive, statewide oversight system to cover all organizations that work with companion animals (shelters, groomers, vet offices, etc.) be developed. He cited Delaware as a model state for animal welfare oversight. Committee questions to him focused on the Delaware model, which included the following concepts: decentralization of Animal Control, a stand-alone statewide animal welfare/oversight office and homeless dog control.

Next to speak was Aldwin Roman, Certified Animal Cruelty Investigator, also with CAS. Mr. Roman is one of two Certified Animal Cruelty Investigators in the state and explained how his views of animal cases differ from that of the police, who are not trained in animal control. He indicated the state currently has no regulation of boarding facilities before they meet the threshold of animal cruelty and recommended the committee look into tiered cruelty laws and training law enforcement officers in animal control. Questions from committee members focused on his suggestion of increased regulation to which Roman clarified there is a need for animal safety regulations that include enforcement options, such as more officers.

Jennifer Land of Monroe's Mighty Mission then gave a presentation on pet retention programs. She referred to five models of pet retention, but the biggest focus in the programs is educating the pet owners. Her organization is able to succeed largely because of collaborations with other animal organizations and generous donations. Chairman Sheheen noted there is little need for government in the described efforts beyond the few needs outlined in materials sent to the committee, to which Ms. Land agreed.

Next, Laura Clark, representing Friends of Colleton County Animal Shelter (FoCCAS), reported on the pet responsibility education program the county is testing in the elementary schools. The program fits into the character education required by statute and is given over a six week period to 4th grade students. This year, Clark said they were able to provide the program in four of the six public elementary schools and one private school. The program was first introduced by the Moore County (NC) Citizens' Pet Responsibility Committee and shared online through their website. This group provides a day of free training on the

program and includes all materials required online. Ms. Clark indicated the cost of the program is extremely low, with the Moore Co. group providing free access to materials for volunteers (mostly retired school teachers) administering the program in Colleton County. It is a new philosophy of outreach that she believes can make a difference for South Carolina.

The final invited speaker was Lt. Karl Odenthal, Aiken Animal Control. He spoke to the committee regarding the different approach to animal control utilized by Aiken, organizing that function under public safety. Lt. Odenthal said this structure establishes leverage in moving toward requiring owners to register their pet. Officers have the option to ticket a violator or lessen the fine if the person will take their animal to the Albrecht Center for care and registry. The process has decreased animal intake, while the total cost of animal control decreased 20%, from \$80,000 in 2005 to \$64,000 in 2015.

Following completion of agenda speakers, Chairman Sheheen then opened the meeting to public comment. During this time, Abigail Kamleiter and Kurt Taylor, both of CAS, spoke to give updates on the data previously requested by the committee. All data was shared with committee staff and posted online.

Chairman Sheheen then opened the meeting to discussion of committee progress toward a final report. It was announced that Kim Kelly had previously emailed her requests to staff, which included a tethering law and shelter oversight. Other requests of focus from members included reducing entering population to shelters, a statewide registry, required shelter reporting of transporting animals, and better supporting law enforcement officers in regards to animal control.

Following this, staff reminded members to check the committee webpage where all documents shared with the committee are posted. The Chairman indicated members should continue to share specific proposals for report language with staff and, with all agenda items completed, adjourned the meeting.