

MINUTES
Pet Care & Humane Treatment Study Committee
Thursday, Sept. 22, 2016, 10:00 AM
Room 110, Blatt Building

Members Present: Senator Vincent Sheheen, Chairman
Representative Steve Moss
Marli Drum, City of Cola. Animal Services, Superintendent
Patricia Hill, DVM, SC Assn. of Veterinarians, Past President
Kim Kelly, Humane Society US, SC Director
Tim Loonam, DVM, Grace Animal Hospital, Clinical Director
Barbara Nelson, SPCA Albrecht Center, President
Josh Rhodes, SC Assoc. of Counties, Staff Attorney
Patty Van Sicklen, Am. Kennel Club, Legislative Analyst
Clint Leach, SC Dept. Of Agriculture, Asst. Commissioner
Rebecca Leach, SC Dept. of LLR, Dir. Of Bus. And Govt. Affairs

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

Chairman Sheheen called the meeting to order and then recognized each committee member to introduce themselves and make an opening statement. He then recognized staff to explain materials before the committee. The Chairman then highlighted the duties of the committee per Act 274. Following this, he recognized members of the public desiring to address the committee.

The first person to speak was Jessica Monroe of Let 'Em Live Upstate. Her areas of concern were oversight of shelters through rescue access laws, including utilization of No-kill facilities. She also expressed the need for unhindered low cost basic pet care services.

Next to address the committee was Jennifer Land of Monroe's Mighty Mission. The focus of her organization is pet retention services such as fencing, behavior modification and donations of pet food. These efforts have been productive in preventing pets from needing to be rescued.

The final person to address the committee was Abigail Kamleiter of Charleston Animal Society, a Project Manager with No Kill South Carolina. She spoke in support of No-kill facilities and certifications for shelters. She further stated that there is a heavy reliance on transporting animals out of state to place them in a No-kill facility.

Each of these people giving testimony were questioned by committee members. After this was done, the Chairman recognized committee members to speak in an open forum regarding specific issues that need to be addressed by the committee in future meetings. To that end, and at the direction of the Chairman, the following statement was developed. Individuals will be invited by staff to address the committee in pursuit of those specific issues,

On Thursday, September 22, the Pet Care & Humane Treatment Study Committee held its initial meeting. All appointed members were in attendance and the scope of duties as outlined in Act 274 was discussed.

The committee established an agenda of core concerns. While these are not an exhaustive list of the actions the committee will take, they are illustrative of the priorities to be addressed:

- *Mitigating the population of animals entering the shelter system through pet retention initiatives, as well as spay-neuter programs. Jennifer Land (Monroe’s Mighty Mission) addressed the committee on pet retention and should be helpful in locating individuals with the expertise to address the committee in further detail about this issue. Also of concern in this area is the plight of the animal separated from his owner and making sure he gets back home.*
- *Understanding the existing cruelty and neglect laws, as well as the enforcement thereof and recommending necessary changes. David Miller (2nd Circuit Solicitor’s office) has been recommended as a highly knowledgeable person to address the committee on this issue.*
- *A shelter oversight platform utilizing standard operational procedures / best demonstrated practices. Testimony given indicates that specialists at Charleston Animal Society could make a significant contribution in their particular areas of expertise.*
- *The wide spectrum of SC counties and their resources available for housing stray and lost animals. Consideration should be given to more efficient use of funds (benefitting animals and taxpayers), as well as minimizing the discrepancy between “have” and “have-not” counties. Certainly, county personnel could be enlightening by sharing their experience with the committee.*
- *Quantifying the animal trafficking problem in terms of numbers and destination states, as well as developing regulations to curb substandard transports that relocate sick animals or cause death during transport. A possible help in this area could be veterinary personnel in receiving states as well as our relevant agencies that can discuss the record keeping associated with transported animals.*

The second meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 6. It is the aim of staff to have some of the above mentioned contributors present to address the committee.

Following the discussion by committee members that led to the above statement, Chairman Sheheen briefly discussed dates of future meetings then asked for a motion to adjourn. Rep. Moss offered such motion and the meeting was adjourned.

