



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at City Hall (Mayor’s Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Aditi Bussells	Chair	Present
Edward H. McDowell	Member	Remote
Tyler D. Bailey	Member	Present

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Animal Services Ordinance Update - Ms. Victoria Riles, Animal Services Superintendent – **Received as information**

Ms. Victoria Riles, Superintendent of Animal Services said we focused on bully-type breeds, as these do get targeted to be the problem, especially in shelter environments. However, without DNA testing there is no way to verify what breed the dog is. The city shifted from this mandate because it’s unfunded, criminalizes poverty, and contradicts with positive community engagement efforts for Animal Control. We propose a modification to our differential licensing ordinance, allowing a pet owner of a spay/neutered and micro chipped pet to get a one-time, lifetime license at the cost of \$25 versus an annual fee of \$100. We have already had this ordinance reviewed by Council and are requesting an enactment date of July 1, 2024. We also propose a Pet Fix N Return program to increase spay/neuters within zip codes that most contribute to shelter intake. Our goal would be to spay/neuter a minimum of 150 animals annually within these targeted zip codes.

There was discussion about enforcement mechanisms and collaborative efforts with Richland County and Lexington County.

2. Update from Pawmetto Lifeline - Ms. Denise Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer – **Received as information**

Ms. Denise Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer of Pawmetto Lifeline gave the history of Pawmetto Lifeline's work, including their operations and how they address the homeless pet population. She said in 2023, South Carolina was the number one state that people moved to and



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now 62% of all households have pets. We recommend that the city and the county have a spay-neuter-microchip ordinance for cats and dogs that is complaint driven. Once the complaint is filed, we would like to mandate that the dog or cat be altered. Having an enforced pet licensing program will provide a revenue source to fund the spay/neuter needs. Having managed intake means you don't take more animals into your facility than you can care for. We are asking to establish a staff-to- animal ratio that ensures certain standards of care. When shelters are full, we are asking to issue a temporary moratorium on intakes.

There was a discussion about responsible pet ownership, defining complaint driven, the pros and cons of managed intake, counties with similar ordinances, and statewide euthanasia rates.

3. Update from Final Victory Animal Rescue - Ms. Katy Cowan, Founder & Director
– **Received as information**

Ms. Katy Cowan, Founder & Director of Final Victory Animal Rescue shared her history, the organization's background, and their current community outreach efforts. Last year, we did 1,200 adoptions, we pulled cats and dogs from 15 different South Carolina shelters, 350 from Columbia Animal Services, and another good chunk from Lexington. It's great to see all of us working together with rescues to pull these animals out and bring down the euthanasia list. Our magic is that we adopt 75% to 85% of our dogs from the Northeast United States. Right now we're at 919 North Lucas Street in West Columbia. We focus on those large, hard to place dogs. We work with animal transport companies and we transport between 15-25 animals per week. Our goals are to expand the reach of our mobile spay-and-neuter van, to acquire a van to transport animals to adopters, and to secure a secondary facility.

There was discussion about partnerships and other collaborative efforts.

4. Revisions to the Climate Protection Action Committee's Bylaws - Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator – **Endorsed for City Council Consideration**

Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator said changes to the bylaws were drafted to go into effect along with the handbook for boards and commissions. They include the removal of non-voting appointees and advisory members and the adoption of city residency requirements. We increased the number of appointees to 11 and we changed the attendance requirements to match the handbook. After you review and endorse the bylaws today, these will go to Council for a vote.

There was consensus of the Committee to forward the revised bylaws to a future City Council meeting.



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PRESENTATIONS

5. Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Update - Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator – **Received as information**

Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator said since August, the Central Midlands Council of Governments has taken the lead on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. This is a regional grant for the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and includes the counties of Calhoun, Fairfield, Lexington, Kershaw, Richland and Saluda. Our priority climate action plan (PCAP) is due on March 1, 2024. It will focus on specific sectors for greenhouse gas sources. It is a first draft with a limited set of requirements. It can be built on previous climate planning efforts. On April 1, 2024, the regional implementation grant application is due. These competitive grants will range from \$2 million to \$500 million and will be used in the PCAP. We gathered input from organizations and individuals in the MSA and got a list of possible grant project ideas. Most likely, we're going to move forward with three projects for the implementation grant: regional solar, local government energy audits, and smart surface projects.

There was discussion about the reduction of single use plastics in combination with existing initiatives, a regional green transportation system, building green spaces and walkability, and additional EV chargers.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk