

Commission on Animal Care & Control
Minutes of May 20, 2021 Commission Meeting
Approved at the July 15, 2021 meeting

Commissioners Attending (6 of 9)

Cynthia Bathurst, Chair, private citizen
Heather Owen, private citizen
Ramona Griffin, private citizen
Josie Cruz, Chicago Department of Streets & Sanitation Member
Paula Fasseas, Humane Society Member
Charleen Propsom, private citizen

Commissioners Absent (2 of 9)

JB Bruederle, Veterinarian Member
Janna Kerins, Chicago Health Department Member

Commissioners Vacant (1 of 9)

Chicago Police Department (Vacant)

Also Attending

Mamadou Diakhate, Interim Executive Director, CACC
Susan Cappello, Human Resources Business Partner, CACC
Arthur Hamilton, Shelter Manager, CACC
Jennifer Schlueter, Executive Administrative Assistant, CACC
Angela Rayburn, Animal Placement Coordinator, CACC
Dr Sandra Newbury, University of Wisconsin
Dr Alexandra Stevens, University of Wisconsin
Members of the public – via livestream

Agenda Item #1: Determination of Quorum and Call to Order

C. Bathurst performed roll call, determined a quorum and called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

Agenda Item #2: Public Comment – Public Comments are to be emailed to askcacc@cityofchicago.org in advance of the meeting.

A letter was sent to visitcacc@cityofchicago.org from Katie Campbell. S. Cappello read the letter out loud and the letter was forwarded to all Commission members. The letter will be attached to the minutes along with a response.

Agenda Item #3: Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes from the March 18, 2021 meeting were reviewed and approved by all in attendance.

Agenda Item #4: Report of Chairperson

C. Bathurst reported on the draft of the Commission report to the Department and the City. Reports from all Commissioners are coming in and looking to submit later this summer. Response to Ms Campbell's letter from March went out and will be posted on the website. The letter mentioned discussion of several concerns; request has been made for a CPD Representative and are waiting for a response; regarding chip scanners at Police districts, C. Bathurst is drafting a letter and will be drafting a letter to the Aldermanic offices too. C. Bathurst invited Dr Tom Wake but County is unable to attend.

Agenda Item #5: Report of Executive Director

Submitted a written report via email. Thanked all staff as CACC is at 94% live release rate although we have staffing issues. Pop-Up food pantry on June 5th and Volunteer program is back with around 100 volunteers returned and working to return the rest in the upcoming months. Stats are online. Open to constructive criticism from the public.

C. Bathurst congratulated Mamadou Diakhate on his appointment and also welcomed Dr Joann Pacheco as the new CACC Veterinarian.

Agenda Item #6: City Agency Reports

- J. Cruz (Streets & Sanitation) S&S picked up two bats and one was positive for Rabies.
- J. Kerins (Health) No report at this time.
- (Police) no report.

Agenda Item #7: Commissioner Reports

- JB. Bruederle – No report.
- C. Propsom – FCACC happy to be part of the outdoor cat program and seeing results; After Hours Care Program (provides emergency care to animals after no Veterinarian is on duty) slowed down and are now picking up, this program is very rewarding. Dr. Newbury thanked FCACC for the After Hours Program. C. Propsom FCACC is responding to calls for service from Chicago residents, not a mass S/N. The cats are tracked and returned appropriately.
- R. Griffin – Best Friends conference June 23-24 and CACC and OTAT will be presenting. Thanked CACC for information and will look at the County Ordinance on this program.
- H. Owen – CRISP continues to operate virtually and have assisted around 70 people with diversion. Most services are around Vet care.
- C. Bathurst – No report.
- P. Fasseas – No report.

Agenda Item #8: Other Business

Introduced Dr. Newbury and Dr. Stevens. Idea of the program to refer calls and complaints that come in about cats outdoors. Calls come in to CACC and CACC developed an alternative to a shelter intake to divert them from coming into the shelter. Calls are referred to PAWS, Tree House and Friends. Friends is the only groups without a medical center. Better for equity in the communities. this is not a TNR program, this is an alternative to intake.

M. Diakhate reported that the City works very well with the County. M. Diakhate also thanked Dr. Newbury and her team for her assistance with getting CACC to a 94% live outcome rate.

R. Griffin asked Dr Newbury – ‘if you leave cats where they are they will get back home’, where is the study on this? Dr. Newbury will send the study from Ohio.

R. Griffin asked CACC how long has this program been in place – M. Diakhate said since February 2021

R. Griffin asked if there are any grants involved – M. Diakhate said no.

R. Griffin asked what services the cats are getting (fully vetted) – M. Diakhate said that fully vetted means different things for different animals.

R. Griffin asked for a detailed explanation on the process. Dr. Newbury commented on friendly cats being put back out and R. Griffin said that she does not agree with that.

A. Hamilton gave a description of fully vetted and spoke about cats outdoors.

Dr. Newbury sometime the referral is to go out to see if the cats are needed to get serviced or not.

C. Bathurst when a call comes in can you always send an Officer? – M. Diakhate reported that CACC does not always send out an officer.

A. Rayburn we actually reach out before an Officer goes out to create an education aspect

R. Griffin part of this test pilot program are we reporting on who's releasing these cats and where they go.

Dr Newbury – these are calls that would not be serviced and as part of DEI we want the community to reach out to CACC for help and provide their opinion. Goal to provide better services is to partner with other community agencies.

Agenda Item #9: New Business

None.

Agenda Item #10: Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m. The next virtual meeting is July 15, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

Members of the Commission,

Thank you for taking the time to review my last email and present some answers from yourselves as well as CACC.

I find myself having more questions and appreciate you looking into them.

In regards to intake and the Chicago Police Department, I have a big concern for the reliance CACC places on the CPD to handle animal calls after hours, and also in transporting animals to CACC after hours. In the last 2 weeks alone, I have been alerted to several people who were turned away by districts due to lack of manpower. What is a citizen supposed to do then? Again, we should encourage citizens to help stray and injured animals. Those animals do not disappear at night and relying on an already pressed police department in the midst of unprecedented violence in our city is not the answer.

While I am happy that CACC is encouraging the humane treatment of animals by managing overpopulation via TNR, I do not feel that the answers provided are being fully transparent.

On CACC's website Community Alert, the following is stated: "Please note that we are unable to accept community/feral cats and kittens at this time unless they are orphaned and unweaned or injured. In this case, email askcacc@cityofchicago.org or call 3-1-1 to see how you can help". If CACC is assisting the public with ferals as stated in the response to me, then why is this statement being made?

Cats in Action, the "group" CACC has stated is working with FCACC for TNR purposes is not an NFP organization nor are they licensed, per FOIA request to the State of Illinois completed in May 2021. My concern with this was sent to Dr. Tom Wake of Cook County Animal and Rabies Control, to which his response was "Sponsor is any animal Humane Society that agrees to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance for Sponsors and provides written notice to the Department that it will serve as a Sponsor."

However, as I stated, Cats in Action is not an NFP Organization. Per the Illinois Humane Care for Animals Act (510 ILCS 70/2.05) (from Ch. 8, par. 702.05), a Humane Society is defined as "any chartered, not for profit organization authorized to do business in this State and organized for the purpose of preventing cruelty to animals and promoting humane care and treatment of animals". (Source: P.A. 78-905.)

Therefore, Cats in Action should not even be listed as a sponsor for Cook County and I question why FCACC is being allowed to work with cats that are property of Chicago Animal Care and Control for release with those individuals. CACC itself does not even list Cats in Action as a resource on their "if you find a cat" informational piece to the public.

I respectfully ask and encourage the Commission to do the following:

- seek documentation of colony caretakers of each cat that has been TNRd via FCACC from CACC
- seek documentation of contact by the public (be it through SR #, email, ACO request) for each cat that has been TNRd via FCACC from CACC
- seek documentation of behavioral assessment of each cat that has been TNRd via FCACC from CACC
- seek documentation of any vetting that occurred after the feral cat was transferred to FCACC from CACC
- seek documentation of any meeting, emails or conference that CACC staff had with Cook County Animal and Rabies Control last year regarding the feral cat ordinance and their practices

Rescues historically have a difficult time getting rabies vaccines by CACC for animals before transferring, owners sometimes have to wait a few days for their pets to have spay/neuter done before RTO due to lack of veterinarian availability. Rescues have even had to transfer out urgent medical dogs to the ER vet due to lack of veterinarian availability. Those should take precedence over TNR services when it is impeding on

the transfer of animals to their homes and rescues, especially when there are TNR resources available elsewhere. If CACC is going to allow the TNR vetting for cats, it must be done ethically following the Feral Cat Ordinance and not be done via favoritism for some members of the community above others. One particular citizen has brought in 24+ cats for TNR services since the beginning of 2021. These cats were then transferred for hold to FCACC and released.

I understand the need to have positive outcome numbers for animals, but it should not also be at the cost of their well-being. If FCACC is vested in TNR practices, they should consider becoming a TNR sponsor and beginning a true TNR program with Animal Control and the city like other major cities do.

Thanks for your time,
Katie Campbell

Have a heart that never hardens,
a temper that never tires,

and a touch that never hurts.
Charles Dickens