

PLAN: 2005/2006

VIRGINIA VOTERS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Overview/Objectives	p. 2
2.	2006 Legislative Initiatives	p. 4
3.	Fundraising/Facilitation Initiatives	p. 5
4.	Local Initiatives	p. 7
5.	Media Plan	p. 9
	Gas Chamber Plan	p. 11
	Local Committees Plan	p. 12
	McDonald Proposal	p. 14
	Making Complaints Plan	p. 15
	Sample letter – to breeders	p. 16

3/13/05

PLAN: 2005/2006

OVERVIEW

The plan which follows contemplates multiple local meetings around the state, each lasting about two hours.

At these meetings, the plan elements will be presented first for local approval then discussed at length to decide upon implementation details.

Implementation plans will be bubbled up from local meetings for posting on the website for guidance at future meetings and further comment.

1. Objectives

Continue as VVAW; focus on becoming the voice of rescues, shelter staff, s/n clinics, concerned citizens and all animal welfarists

Collaborate with nat'l orgs: HSUS, ASPCA, ACO, AKC/UKC, RNC/DNC, NRA, NASCAR, etc.

Work through existing local orgs, including Spay VA, VFHS; if leadership declines to collaborate, go to membership directly

Build a statewide VVAW; start new groups where necessary

Become a formal organization, as 501c(3) or 501c(4) or ??

Be recognized as the "trusted source" for local governments/legislators regarding "what to do" on animal welfare issues

one person or small committee to reach every legislator, supervisor, court, sheriff, local vet and church, etc.

every legislator and local elected official must be lobbied by a constituent group, either the SPCA/Humane Society if they collaborate with VVAW initiatives or the VVAW itself otherwise

Become politically active and s/n active

Go to deep pockets for PAC money, local S/N clinics

p. 3 – Objectives (cont.):

Sponsor or support mobile spay/neuter vans in each county; private fundraising and work with counties for public funds (raise license fees/dealer permits); ask counties for portion of costs on theory public \$ saved by precluding excess pets

Find high volume S/N practitioners

Strong media effort locally, nationally; write a book documenting VVAW and 2004-2005 legislative push (Upton Sinclair themed)

File two mandamus writs

Research referendum law

p. 4

2. 2006 Legislative Initiatives: same as 2005

Consensus effort with vets, educators, law enforcement, breeders, counties, rescues, hunt clubs, hunters, etc.

Change definition of “releasing agency” to include pet stores and dealers; all dogs/cats spay/neutered before release/sale unless exempted for reason, including age or health, other good cause shown; exempt all breeders (as defined in Kilgore releasing agency bill); delays for s/n for same reasons as at present

All releasing agencies must provide traceability by chipping all companion animals they release/sell; counties pay in localities where adopter cannot afford; adopter who cannot afford gets license and chipping for price of license

Outlaw gas chambers

Pet shop inspections/VA vet certificates of puppy mill puppies/kittens

Humane Education: develop plug-in curriculum; VVAW volunteers adopt schools (see www.kindnews.org)

Raise license fees, require permits, make fines higher (and punitive for abuse/fighting) to encourage/fund enforcement, deterrence

Impose sentencing guidelines for animal cruelty

Reinstate Humane Investigator

Work with counties for these initiatives and for licensure/permit enforcement, keep pounds and shelters open weekends for adoptions (VVAW volunteers?)

Supplement pound/pet shop/breeder inspections by state vet with inspections by VVAW volunteers, complaints, follow-up

Tweak the Code (re: animal dumping, funds disposition, # ACOs, Tech do chipping, etc)

3. Fundraising/Facilitation Initiatives

A. Fundraising Initiatives

Local VVAW approach every local business 1x/yr for pound/shelter/breed/rescue sponsorships, ads or \$\$, collection cans, donations of goods/services; ditto churches (collections/sponsorships)

approach: all local retail, all local banks, county bar association, chamber of commerce, farm bureau, ABC, VDOT, VA PWR, Verizon, cable/satTV company

pitch: adopt a rescue: VDOT designate section of highway to pound/shelter/rescue for adoption days

\$ for: improve pound/shelter, free s/n (incl. feral cat TNR), adoption days, microchipping

vehicles: just contribute; ad in "yearbook"; annual awards dinner ("Ally of the Year" or equivalent); picnic; pet parade; home move/photo festival; black tie dinner; etc.

learn: charitable collection requirements

B. Facilitation Initiatives

VVAW to feds for Animal Welfare Act amendments to allow private atty gen'l suits, whistleblowers; tax credits for adoptions; require drug/bomb dogs be rescues

VVAW to major VA corporations, banks, venture firms for pound/shelter/rescue sponsorships; s/n sponsorships/ euthanasia fund sponsorships (any pound/shelter not having sufficient funds for anesthetic/lethal injection); adoption days; bring your pet to work days (videos/photos only); community service volunteers

introduction from whomever; letter to Chairman/President; make VA more attractive as work setting, more enlightened (Talent, Technology, Tolerance)

pitch sponsorships

pitch political action committee

VVAW to nat'l grant sources for writ petitions, bag the bad guys bonuses, whistleblower rewards

p. 6 – Fundraising/Facilitation Initiatives (cont.):

B. Facilitation Initiatives (cont.):

VVAW to VVMA, vet school to get student volunteers, curriculum chg, VVMA
“pro bono” program; volunteers for S/N; volunteers for euthanasia; speak out re:
pound conditions

4. Local Initiatives

must have local VVAW committees; local committees invite local elected officials and legislators to address the local group re VVAW legislative initiatives

local committees coordinate “Court Watch” (massive court appearances) whenever animal cruelty case heard/tried

local committees have specific outreach to:

churches/schools: (churchmember approach church leadership, environmental stewardship or social justice committee) witness pound conditions/euthanasias; sponsor adoption days; give sermons; fundraise; lobby re why create life only to take it

board of supervisors:

- . local gets info on pound, euthanasia rate, budget, etc.
- . local meets w/BoS Chair, County Administrator to review pound, conditions, budget, raise fees/fines/penalties, witness conditions/euthanasias, sponsor adoption days; f/up mtgs
- . local meets w/law enforcement, County Attorney, General District Court Judge to ask for Zero Tolerance; f/up’s
- . ask local vets 4 hours/mo. “pro bono” work

legislators: witness pound conditions/euthanasias; tax \$ wasted; bad public policy to let evade taxes/fees

courts: letters to judges urging strict enforcement of the law

local media: encourage screening breeder ads; start newspaper column; line-up letters to the editor writers; get story ideas; publish adoptions/give-ups; “euthanized this week”, animal cruelty blotter; ID people to be I/V’d incl. vets, VVAW contact, nat’l orgs for quotes/stats/etc.

- . local contacts editor/city editor, reporter w/story ideas
- . local contacts publisher, asks for mtg re: VVAW, above

sheriff, ACOs, State Police, magistrates: sensitization pgm; animal law seminar; “suggestion box” to improve facilitate enforcement; prisoners/trustees at pounds 24/7; vet tech training for prisoners; ACO training for prisoners; ACO training program eves./weekends; ACO “bag the bad guys” bonus

- . local contacts sheriff, asks to discuss above

p. 8 – Local Initiatives (cont.):

breeders: responsible breeder message: you become the standards setter, population regulator

- . local visits breeders, inspects, checks adoption pgm, gives awards, files complaints

5. Media Plan

Write outlines for a series of articles “In Virginia Today, It’s Take Their Liberty and Give Them Death”

Hypothesis

Pet overpopulation and wholesale euthanasia are institutionalized.

Mandates for pounds and animal control are state imposed but funding mechanisms to make these mandates self-sustaining are not used

Animal welfare institutions (SPCAs, VFHS) are at best overwhelmed and narrowly focused, at worst self-perpetuating social entities and fiefdoms. In either case, the pace of change they promote is glacial. It also appears some institutions are as interested in livelihood as in final solution or equilibrium

Most rescues are apolitical, content with saving individual lives, and willing to defer to more sophisticated institutional entities

Economic or social self-interest and collegiality prevail: breeders profit from sales; vets and pet merchants profit from breeders and larger pet populations; animal control is for far too many a living not a calling; localities use property tax funding not license fees or dealer permits to keep everyone happy and perpetually starved of resources; legislators are attuned to and better supported by “Old Dominion traditions” groups (hunters, hunt clubs, hunting dog and hoity-toity breeder groups); VDACS are bureaucrats for whom going along to get along is both a religion and way of life

Article #

- 1) The problem: the numbers, the costs, the beneficiaries of the status quo (breeders/puppymills/pet shops), the State Vet, the gas chambers, the “seasonal” hunting dogs, the disposable pet, the ease of disposal, the fighting dogs
- 2) The “ecosystem”: legislators; their “reliable sources”; “vested interests”, their positions & why; localities; law enforcement and Animal Control
- 3) The solution: Why VVAW not VFHS and SPCAs, VVAW history, VVAW legislative initiatives 2004-5 and the results; new for 2006; the economics; equilibrium of spay/neuter; mandatory chipping; Why Driver’s Ed not Humane Ed; what you can do to help

p. 10 – Media Plan (cont.):

- 4) Larger issues: is it possible/is it necessary; the meaning of stewardship; the meaning of humanity; slippery slope to animal rights or better sensibilities; whose standards define us and what are they; the right to bear arms and c/animal euthanasia; overcoming the large litter survival strategy

Gas Chamber Plan

The plan we would propose for VVAW on gas chambers follows:

- 1) we write each location (pound manager) using gas advising that we believe their gas chamber is noncompliant with state vet and OSHA regulations regarding construction, maintenance, operation and fixturing; county administrators, BoS, county attorney are copied.

If the location has already indicated a transition plan , we ask for confirmation.

If they have not indicated a transition plan, we ask if they are planning to transition and when. We advise that we will help them logistically and financially under certain conditions.

If they have no transition plan, we ask they confirm that the gas chamber configuration is as our letter described it and ask that they explain why they believe their chamber to be compliant. We advise we will help them transition logistically and financially under certain conditions.

We ask for response within 30 days.

- 2) If there is no response and there was no previous indication of a transition plan, we inform the State Vet and OSHA that what we know of the construction of that facility's gas chamber, coupled with lack of timely response to our inquiry, has led us to conclude the facility is noncompliant and must be inspected.

Copies of that letter are sent to the aforementioned county staff and the local press.

If there is no response and there was a previous indication of a transition plan, we inform the State Vet and OSHA that what we know of the construction of that facility's gas chamber, coupled with lack of timely response to our inquiry, has led us to conclude the facility is noncompliant and ought to be inspected unless the facility promptly furnishes its transition plan to the State Vet.

3. If there is a response suggesting that we are wrong, we reply that we would like to visit the facility.

If we are denied access, we file a FOIA request for all the records relating to the gas chamber and the certifications of pound staff, and we advise the local media.

This is preliminary and needs to be made more fully developed but let's not start until it is complete and we review it within VVAW.

Local Committees Plan

The plan we propose for local VVAW committees follows:

- 1) a local committee is formed, independent of existing humane societies or SPCAs, or in collaboration with them if they will endorse the VVAW initiatives and timetable

local committee started by last year's volunteers in that area, or by networking to uncovered areas by last year's volunteers in other areas.

local committee starts/expands by recruiting rescues; s/n clinics; concerned c/a owners/custodians; shelter staff; ACOs; concerned citizens; friends, neighbors and church-members; teachers; lawyers; vets; vet techs; Sheriff/senior law enforcement (Capt/Major/etc)

local committee calls around, refers people to website

local committee has "kick-off" meeting with VVAW; "kick-off" meeting is our meeting for that location

local ad or PSA for the meeting; media coverage; press "kit" (includes copies of bills, #s, horror stories, ABC \$, drugs \$, quotes from Sen. Potts/Del. Kilgore/Del. Scott/Del. Petersen/etc)

- 2) the committee familiarizes itself with the county's pet licensing efforts, fees, business licenses and dealer permits (County Administrator and/or County Attorney); population of backyard breeders and pet shops/dealers (Pets For Sale ads/yellow pages); local hunt groups and breeders
- 3) the committee collects pound/shelter statistics and animal control budget costs, including when the shelter was built and for how much
- 4) the committee invites its Sheriff to discuss animal control issues; its Supervisor(s) to discuss animal control funding and VVAW legislative initiatives; and its legislator to do likewise

For the first meeting, it is OK if representative of Sheriff or legislator is sent; OK if only one supervisor (from District with most members) is invited. Later, for pre-2006 session meeting, need Sheriff, Legislators

- 5) the committee sets its fundraising methods and uses, i.e., which rescues to support; s/n clinic to start or subsidize; political contributions

p. 13 – Local Committees Plan (cont.):

- 6) committee acts as “shadow government’ to County Administrator re: licensing pets/dealers; Treasurer re: collections/enforcement
- 7) committee has media relationship for pound/shelter stories, money outrage, other story ideas as in Local Initiatives section

p. 14

McDonald Proposal

1. Ask Paul Gregory to evaluate. DONE
2. Collect and contact three professional references, two from the present and one from the State Vet period
3. If acceptable, ask for business financials
4. If acceptable, ask for conference call with Kelly Farrell, Fauquier SPCA vet, one other (Tonya Higgins?)
5. If acceptable, meet with him in Kentucky, prepare his presentation

Making Complaints Plan

1. Choose your target: irresponsible breeders, pet stores, shelters/pounds, dog fighters
don't spread yourself too thin
even if a surfeit of people volunteer, don't go overboard
2. Know your subject: make a copy of the Animal Welfare laws and State Vet regulations
3. Document: always go with someone else
take photographs
the day you make the complaint public, send someone else back to document that conditions were unchanged
if told fixed, ask to be shown
4. Explore process: complain to everyone until you get it right for your locality: State Vet, Animal Control, local Magistrate, press
5. Follow-up: find out what has been done, what will be done, and when
make FOIA requests to confirm that what you've been told actually happened

Sample letter – letter to breeder groups

VVAW will need letters and calls to various constituencies. VVAW will provide samples and some “talking points” for each. An example of a letter, which could be sent to each breeder group in the VFDC&B by VVAW, follows. The letter is written (see last paragraph of letter) if another attempt to work with the VFCD&B leadership is tried and fails.

Dear ___:

We understand you had concerns on the initiatives of VVAW but if so, they are misplaced. We want change to reduce an excessive reliance on killing, to save money and to drive irresponsible breeders out of business.

Throughout the process leading to the 2005 session, we tried to work with Marge McClung, President of the Virginia Federation of Dog Clubs and Breeders, to review our plans with her and through her with you.

We were told by Mrs. McClung, speaking we believed for VFDC&B, that we had a common goal to eliminate or diminish the adverse impact of irresponsible breeders on overpopulation and on responsible breeders.

Accordingly, our draft of the Releasing Agencies bill specifically exempted hobby breeders, fancier breeders and breed-improvement breeders from sterilization requirements. The definitions used to define and exempt responsible breeders were:

hobby breeder – one litter, not for profit

fancier breeder – competes in AKC and/orUKC sanctioned competitions

breed improvement breeder – breeds working dogs or can demonstrate plan to eliminate genetic defects, disease or other specific improvements

We presented the VVAW draft to Mrs. McClung and to Dr. Steve Escobar of the Virginia Veterinary Medicine Association for comments. Dr. Escobar said he had some concerns about the definitions and said he understood Mrs. McClung had the same concerns. We offered to eliminate our definitions and replace them with definitions acceptable to both VVMA and VFDC&B. Dr. Escobar said this would allow VVMA not to oppose. We did so.

We then asked Mrs. McClung repeatedly for these replacement definitions but got no response. To meet the Friday bill filing deadline, we told Del. Kilgore to file and for our part, we would make sure that Mrs. McClung and Dr. Escobar were on board over the coming weekend. We called Mrs. McClung repeatedly with no answer or response. On Monday, we advised Del.

Kilgore to pull the bill since it lacked the consensus we promised to deliver. He offered to wait another day, we did, but there was still no response, so we asked Del. Kilgore to pull the bill.
p. 17 – sample letter – breeder group (cont.):

Make no mistake, our version of the bill protected responsible breeders. We did so because we want to work together. However, our interest in doing so was thwarted. Perhaps you know why for we surely do not.

We tried again this year but still meet with Mrs. McClung's silence. We therefore contact you individually to ask that you have your board give us suitable language, or do so yourselves. We hope we can put together a collaborative measure that represents our mutual best interests.

3/13/05