

Below are the minutes of the meeting on Saturday, 10/9/04, in Richmond.

We hope to get the Roanoke minutes out later today.

There is one meeting left in this round. It will be on Saturday, 10/16/04. Originally to be held in Falls Church, we have outgrown that space, and so now it will be in McLean. It will run from 11am to 1pm. If you want to attend, let us know and we will send you directions. Try to come. You won't regret spending the time on this important project.

Lillian Clancy and Don Marro

---

A meeting regarding the pet overpopulation study started at 11:10 am at the Colony Club in Richmond on Saturday, 10/9/04.

Attendees:

Marcy Balkan/PetFix  
Lillian Clancy  
Sharon Cornett/Richmond Animal League  
Gwen Dean/independent  
Marie Gratton  
Tonya Higgins/Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society  
Donald Marro  
Eileen McAfee/independent  
Susan Patton/independent  
Annie Pelfrey/independent  
Nancy Peterson/Animal Aid Society  
Suzanne Wolstenholme/Hanover Humane Society

unable to attend:

Michele Basye/Royal Vista Min Pins  
Deborah Bronk/Newport News SPCA  
Maureen Bergin/SOS  
Alice Berry/Chesterfield County Animal Control  
Nancy Brown/Chesterfield County Humane Society  
Pat Canning/Westmoreland Animal Shelter  
Beth Cunningham/Animal Life Raft  
Sherry Eaton  
Bonnie Keller/Virginia Reptile Rescue  
Victoria Marshman/Great Pyrenees rescue  
Birgit Michael/Chesterfield County Animal Control  
Donna Newman/Dalmatian rescue

Katherine Norman

Jim Perry/Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society

Mary Rogers

Lyn Tamy/Hanover Humane Society

Vince Tamy/Hanover Humane Society

Gene Thayer

### Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and spoke briefly of the group with which they are affiliated or otherwise described their reasons for attending.

## Agenda

1. The proposed name of our organization, Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare was discussed. There appearing to be no opposition, we record this group to be in favor.
2. A potential presentation by Dr. Michael McDonald about doing lowered cost/high volume s/n at a profit was discussed. The goal is to provide a variety of options regarding s/n, McDonald's "for profit" model included. Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare is tentatively hosting a presentation by Dr. McDonald on 12/1/04.

Marcy Balkan wondered if vets would really be interested in attending. She noted a little later that some vets are still promoting that a dog have a litter prior to being spayed.

Annie Pelfrey suggested that numbers about s/n mean little to most people, but she's found that explaining the positives of s/n can make a convert.

3. Lillian Clancy and Don Marro met two weeks ago with Teresa Dockery of Spay Virginia in an effort to see how various groups could work together. The common interest in s/n suggests this as an area in which there might be an opportunity for joint effort.

Other groups will also be approached to see if common ground on one or more issues might be identified. Groups include veterinarians, VACA, the office of the State Veterinarian, breeders, and AKC.

4. Nancy Peterson brought a copy of a book called One at a Time which contained numerous shelter stories and photos. The attendees found the book very appropriate for our group and discussed the possibility of selling it as a fund-raiser and/or serializing it (or our version of it) as a way to help educate people about pet overpopulation.

Several spoke about some of the public being offended by the media's depiction of graphic images of euthanized and abused animals. This is the segment of the public that does not want to know what's happening in our pounds/shelters and does not want to think about the problems associated with pet over-population. These people need to be the target of education on animal sterilization.

Eileen McAfee mentioned the airing of an actual euthanasia of a dog in a pound in North Carolina. This resulted in a rush by the public to adopt animals from the facility.

Galvanizing pictures can shock and have positive effects in some cases.

Sharon Cornett noted that recent stories in the Chesterfield paper have resulted in the reporter getting hate mail.

Others in the group suggested that those in Chesterfield inundate the paper with letters of support.

It was noted that change has started taking place in Page County because of constant and public pressure.

5. Several spoke to the theme that public pounds that have no volunteers because they don't want volunteers generally have something to hide. Good facilities welcome volunteers.
6. Sharon Cornett understands that the head of the VVMA, Dr. Escobar, is a breeder.
7. Annie Pelfrey suggested looking at the AKC breeder on-line directory for information. Pelfrey has been active in contacting the office of the state vet and/or the advertiser when underage dogs/cats are being given away or sold.
8. It was reported by Sharon Cornett that Alice Berry/Chesterfield will be amenable to considering a breeders license.
9. Eileen McAfee discussed the Richmond breeder's ordinance as a potential state-wide model.
10. Susan Patton asked if other states weren't doing a better job than is Virginia in controlling overpopulation, and suggested that we talk to people in those states who were instrumental in developing successful s/n programs. Nancy Peterson said that part of New Hampshire's success is from devoting some portion of revenues from licenses to their s/n program.
11. Tonya Higgins discussed several issues including their success in follow-up on adopted dogs/cats and their sterilization. She mentioned the issue of limited veterinarians in their area and the open admission shelter policy that doesn't allow them to wait for 3 weeks until a vet is available to do surgery. As a result, they are looking at the possibility of doing a mobile unit and finding volunteers to help with transport..

Though there is "the dog ran off" loophole, adopted animals are sterilized within the required time period 98% of the time, or people are taken to court.

She further suggested that an area be exempt from mandatory s/n prior to adoption if there is no vet service within a yet-to-be-determined distance from the facility. She mentioned a 3-4 year phase in.

Higgins said she would work on some ideas that would provide reasonable exemptions for facilities having to s/n prior to adoption.

12. Eileen McAfee suggested that any facility putting forth "a good faith effort", should veterinary service be distant, could provide an exemption to mandatory s/n prior to adoption.

13. Gwen Dean said that in her area, Wise County, the county doesn't do any follow-up on s/n. Officers there instead talk about "Wise law" vs. "state law". There is no follow-up because the Board of Supervisors in the county won't support and sees s/n as cruel.
14. Eileen McAfee would prefer that the facility be required to sterilize adopted animals prior to release by the agency rather than leaving it up to the adopter. She also stated it is not the State Vet's responsibility to ensure citizens sterilize their adopted animals; it is the releasing agency's responsibility.
15. The possibility of filing writs of mandamus against the State Vet was briefly discussed; it is very difficult to be successful in the short term but effective as an illustration.
16. Sharon Cornett suggested that both cats and dogs be covered by any s/n program.

The meeting adjourned at 1 pm.