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p. 3

All of us have studied, thought, and responded, and now we need to decide.

And then we need to work.

All of the items set out below first need consensus, and then need someone/some group to move them from “idea” to “real”.

1. Starting at the top, this confirms we are Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare. We hope all of you will affiliate with and join this effort.

Please send us an email or letter that says you will affiliate with and be part of Virginia Voters of Animal Welfare. Please provide your name, and, if you would do so, a street address.

For those of you who respond before 12/1/04, you are a Founding Member and will get a membership card saying that.

Please let us know whether you join as an independent, as a member of an identified group, though you may not represent the group, or will affiliate your group with you representing the entire group. Obviously, the more groups we have, the better, but we want individuals just as much as groups.

**ACTION ITEM: send us an email or letter of affiliation**

2. In addition, we are working on the Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare website, and you may watch us grow by going to [www.VirginiaVotersforAnimalWelfare.com](http://www.VirginiaVotersforAnimalWelfare.com)

Please respond with your ideas for the site.

3. Recapping, the consensus issues of Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare are:

- spay/neuter as the way to control pet overpopulation
- outlawing the use of gas chambers
- upgrading/supporting animal control function/people

4. We address these issues by enforcement of existing legislation, introduction of new legislation, and public/private efforts - a 3-legged stool made up of:

responsible ownership

responsible breeding

responsible governance (funding and enforcement)

p. 4 – Introduction (cont.):

5. The 3-legged plan is below. It addresses and distills what we believe is the thought of Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare.
  - Please read carefully what it says and decide whether it will get the changes we want.
  - Let us know if there are places where you would withhold your support unless language changes.

By now, you know how to reach us!

**ACTION ITEM: let us know your reaction/support**

6. Please revisit the schedule of outreach activities (Operation Outreach) sent to you several weeks ago.

To see it again, go to [www.VirginiaVotersforAnimalWelfare.com](http://www.VirginiaVotersforAnimalWelfare.com).

Tell us what you are interested in doing and what you will sign up to do. Please respond as soon as you can. Note that we already have a handful of people who have said they will help and are awaiting assignments. If you prefer to be assigned, that is another option.

**ACTION ITEM: let us know what you will do, or whether we can assign you a task(s)**

7. Please note that the attached plan also asks to establish a Task Force on Animal Welfare.

No matter how many of us work on this, there appear to be more issues than can be covered in the upcoming session (January 2005) of Virginia's General Assembly, and the issues go beyond pet overpopulation.

Working through a Task Force with government blessing allows the effort of VVAW to continue over the years and accomplish even more than we can this year.

**THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT AS WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE OFFICE OF THE STATE VET WISHES TO NO LONGER BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPANION ANIMALS. If this comes about, as inadequate as the Office of the State Vet is currently, the situation will be even worse. THIS COULD BE A HUGE STEP BACKWARDS FOR VIRGINIA AND VIRGINIA'S ANIMALS IF IT IS ALLOWED TO HAPPEN.**

We will let you know more as we hear it, and ask you to share what you hear as well.

**ACTION ITEM: share information about changes at the state vet**

p. 5 - Introduction (cont.):

8. Update on presentation by Dr. Michael McDonald regarding lowered cost/high volume spay/neuter at a profit:

In order to first focus on getting the VVAW underway and on the legislature, we are putting off Dr. McDonald's presentation until February. Watch for details.

9. We are planning to have the final round of meetings. To do so effectively and with proper respect for everyone's time, we must have solid commitments to attend. If too few actually are able to attend on the day of the meeting, we would cancel and try to conduct that meeting by email.

We will hold the meetings below. In each case, the meeting will be from 11 am until 1 pm.

Saturday, 11/6

Sunday, 11/7                      northern VA (McLean or Falls Church)

Saturday, 11/13

Roanoke

Sunday, 11/14

Charlottesville

Saturday, 11/20

Wyethville or similar

Sunday, 11/21

Newport News or Norfolk

If necessary, even though it is the Thanksgiving weekend, if you are willing and able to attend and if we get enough headcount, we might also be able to meet

Saturday, 11/27

Harrisonburg

Sunday, 11/28

Richmond

Keep in mind that any legislation we propose from summary and final effort needs to be filed in Richmond by December.

**ACTION ITEM:**

Please let us know which meeting you will attend. If you say you will attend, we count on your attendance and participation. In turn, we will hire a room of sufficient size to hold the group and will provide some refreshments.

## p. 6 - Responsible Ownership

Initially it seemed that responsible ownership focused on s/n of companion animals as the best way to control population. While s/n is, by far, the most important component of responsible ownership, animal identification is a close second. Both s/n and identification are components of responsible ownership and responsible breeding, but they are discussed only in the Responsible Ownership section.

It is clear that owner give-ups contribute mightily to the overpopulation problem, whether give-ups are when a person drives up and leaves their dog/cat at a public pound or a shelter, or when an owner surrenders an eminently adoptable animal to be killed, or when the owner relinquishes by neglect, allowing the animal to roam, be picked up and sheltered, never seeking to be reunited with the dog/cat. Identification is directly implicated here.

### 1. new legislation

#### a. dog license fees - raise ceiling for dog license fees (and perhaps for cats)

- (1). Current state law is that fees for dog licenses cannot exceed \$10.
- (2) New legislation would change that ceiling for dog licenses to \$25/35 with free licenses for low income owners, discounts for those with sterile dogs, and discounts for those who own multiple dogs (buy five licenses and get additional licenses free).

There are approximately 65 million owned dogs in the US per HSUS. Assuming Virginia has about 3.5% of the US population, Virginia, more likely than not, has about 2.0 million dogs.

If each dog in Virginia were licensed at \$35, license fees would generate approximately \$70 million. Even with a differential for sterile dogs, free licenses for low income families and discounts for multiple dogs, and only 80% compliance, license fees could bring in close to \$50 million, enough to fund all Virginia public shelters, animal control activities, and provide free public s/n clinics.

If you want to keep license fees capped at \$10, funding will continue to be an excuse for doing nothing. Assuming you agree that there must be funding, consider options. An alternative would be a tax on pet products. There are grants, but they are not limitless, nor are there limitless people throughout the state to do private fundraising to bring in this kind of money. If we make no suggestions for increasing funds, then it will not be easy to ask for change.

There is a great deal of money involved here – maybe even enough to encourage enforcement and solve the problem.

p. 7 – Responsible Ownership (cont.):

1. new legislation (cont.):

a. dog license fees (cont.):

(3) which animals will be licensed

- Dog licenses will be required for all owned dogs and for all puppies or dogs available for sale within Virginia, or being brought in to Virginia; licenses will be required for such dogs no later than 30 days after birth.
- Dog licenses will not be required of groups involved in benevolent activities such as public pounds and various shelters/rescues/foster homes.
- Because cats are not protected at this time by state law, we are not recommending that cats be required to have licenses.

**ACTION ITEM: Do you want to do something about cat licenses as well?**

(4) kennel licenses

Kennel licenses will be eliminated as of 1/1/06; they will be replaced with individual dog licenses on the basis noted above.

(5) sale of dog licenses

Dog licenses will be sold more widely than currently. In each jurisdiction, it will be possible to purchase licenses from breeders, pet stores, pounds, shelters or rescues, vets, pet-focused businesses, and supermarkets.

Organizations selling licenses will report sales to the local jurisdiction and will keep 5% of the amount collected.

(6) penalty for not purchasing dog license

Any dog found without a license, either on the dog's collar or in the jurisdiction's records, will be fined \$150 per animal or perform community service.

If the dog remains unlicensed after 30 days, a fine of \$500 or community service will be levied.

p. 8 – Responsible Ownership (cont.):

1. new legislation (cont.):

a. dog license fees (cont.):

(6) penalty for not purchasing dog license (cont.):

If the dog is not licensed within 60 days of the original infraction, the dog will be confiscated.

Community service will be acceptable “in lieu of” from those unable to pay; there will be no dismissals by the courts after admissions of guilt or conviction.

(7) use of proceeds from the sale/fines- dog licenses

Half the proceeds from the sale of dog licenses and fines for non-compliance will go directly to the pounds and the animal control function in the jurisdiction in which the owner lives.

20% of all dog license fees and fines will go to s/n programs in that jurisdiction.

20% will be combined on a state-wide level to help “even the playing field” for areas which are poor, directed to s/n programs in jurisdictions with the lowest 25% of income.

10% will be directed to the State Vet’s Companion Animal Division.

b. animal identification

(1) no animal may leave a releasing agency, public or private, without being micro-chipped

(2) the cost of the chipping will be added to the adoption fee or the sale price

2. existing legislation

a. enforce dog licensing

b. enforce leash laws in those jurisdictions having them

c. enforce animal cruelty and animal fighting laws

p. 9 – Responsible Ownership (cont.):

3. public/private activities

a. education

develop and promote a humane education unit for each grade level to be taught during February in every public school in Virginia

b. 10 steps to pet retention

- (1) know your breed/mix
- (2) training
- (3) quality time
- (4) socializing
- (5) when you're not there
- (6) a buddy for your buddy
- (7) bad habits and how to break them
- (8) illness, not willfulness
- (9) ? – make suggestions
- (10) ? – make suggestions

c. 10 steps to re-homing

- (1) understand the disconnect
- (2) work to correct it
- (3) advertise
- (4) ask your friends/ colleagues/church members/ family
- (5) work with rescue groups
- (6) attend adoption days
- (7) Petfinder
- (8) ask your employer to include in employee newsletter
- (9) home check new owners
- (10) ask your/major employer to allow adoption days at their facility

d. consider a program such as that offered at the Roanoke Valley SPCA under Don Thorne which combines public and private activity

p. 10 – Responsible Breeding

No matter how many dogs and cats are re-homed, if the supply of dogs and cats exceeds the homes available, the problem will not go away.

1. new legislation

a. releasing agency

Treat all sources of “supply” the same way by redefining “releasing agency”.

Currently dogs/cats adopted from pounds/shelters – “releasing agencies” - must be sterilized within a given number of days of adoption if of a certain age.

Even if all these were s/n, animals from other sources such as commercial breeders, pet stores, and puppy mills are not.

Redefining “releasing agency” to mean any group or individual offering for adoption OR SALE a dog or cat in Virginia, or to be brought into Virginia, will extend s/n globally.

No animal from any releasing agency can leave that agency without being sterile.

exemptions:

- fancier/breed improver
- due to health, age
- owner’s promise to sequester
- postponement for 30 days if the nearest facility (including mobile vans) is more than 50 miles from the site of the shelter or the breeder; in this case, the cost of the surgery (based on averages in surrounding areas) will be added to the adoption fee or cost of the animal

p. 11 – Responsible Breeding (cont.):

1. new legislation (cont.):

b. facility inspection

~~Casual, for-profit breeders, will be inspected by the office of the State Veterinarian on same basis as public pounds, humane societies, and rescues.~~

c. non-fancier breeders must have business licenses

Those who breed for profit must have a business license from their local jurisdiction. The business license fee will be no less than \$150.00.

Failure to be licensed is punishable by a fine of \$500 for the first offense, \$1000 for the second, and confiscation thereafter.

Such business license numbers will be required to appear in any print ads and on receipts.

For-profit breeders will be required to collect sales taxes and, as a condition of renewal, be required to demonstrate that they reported income to state/federal taxing authorities.

2. existing legislation

There is no existing legislation.

3. public/private activities

fanciers/breed improver groups will be encouraged to develop a breeding “standard of ethics”

breed groups will be encouraged to certify casual, for profit breeders, inspect their facilities, see both parents, check on take-backs, immunizations, record-keeping, general well-being of the animals

breed groups will be authorized to file complaints with the Office of the State Vet, such complaints requiring immediate inspection to ensure compliance with Commonwealth shelter standards

breed groups will be encouraged to maintain and distribute list of all breed rescues

p. 12 – Responsible Governance (funding and enforcement)

1. new legislation

a. Outlaw gas chambers.

b. ACOs

Animal control officers will be treated as law enforcement, with any assaults on ACOs classified as a felony.

c. classified ads

Newspapers or magazines sold in Virginia may not run “for sale” ads for dogs or cats without a business license allowing their for-profit breeding; the number of that business license must appear in the text of any “for sale” ad in such newspapers or magazines.

d. tax on pet food/supplies

(1) This could be an alternative to, or an addition to, increasing the cost of dog licenses.

(2) All dog/cat food and supplies will have a 2% tax added to the purchase price.

(3) The proceeds will go to the same programs as the dog license fees.

e. tax on vet bills

(1) This could be an alternative to, or an addition to, increasing the cost of dog licenses.

(2) All professional fees by and pet supplies purchased from veterinarians will be increased by 2%.

(3) The proceeds will go to the same programs as the dog license fees.

f. Office of the State Veterinarian

establish a companion animal “division” within the Office of the State Veterinarian

p. 13 – Responsible Governance (funding and enforcement) (cont.):

2. existing legislation

- a. promote zero tolerance policy by the courts
- b. promote active enforcement of animal cruelty and animal fighting laws  
NOTE: does this appear elsewhere?
- c. ACOs do spot checks for licenses, living conditions

3. public/private activities

- a. All DMV offices promote sales of animal friendly car license plates.  
  
Promote their sale when drivers license renewed; allow purchase to reduce by 5 (?) hours the time spent at driving school for traffic infractions.
- b. Virginia Department of Taxation promotes tax refund check-offs to the Spay/Neuter fund, with joint press releases on the check-off during February/April.
- c. establish low cost high volume clinics state wide combining public and private funding; work with various models including Spay Virginia, the McDonald model, the Angels of Assisi model, the Fauquier SPCA model, the PreventALitter model  
  
subsidize completely using dog license fees if jurisdiction cannot otherwise sustain
- d. other spay/neuter programs
  - (1) pay owner to have animal s/n  
identify 2 counties with the highest euthanasia rate per capita; set up a year-long program where s/n is encouraged by paying each owner \$5 per cat/dog to bring their animal in for s/n surgery
  - (2) mall-based s/n and adoption center  
establish as a pilot one mall-based low cost high volume s/n clinic which also serves as an adoption center for dogs/cats from surrounding groups
  - (3) s/n clinic in an animal emergency clinic when clinic normally closed  
establish as a pilot one low cost high volume s/n clinic run at an emergency vet center which would otherwise be closed during the day

p. 14 – Responsible Governance (funding and enforcement) (cont.):

3. public/private activities (cont.):

- e. work with the Office of the State Vet regarding records and inspections
  - (1) twice annual unannounced inspections
  - (2) mandatory animal record keeping/reporting for public and private pounds, shelters, rescues, for profit breeders
  - (3) design and mandate use of uniform inspection and animal record forms
  - (4) collect breed-specific information in public/private facilities
  - (5) collect sterilization information of animals in public/private facilities
  - (6) collect reasons for owner give-ups
  - (7) collect name/residence of those relinquishing animals
  - (8) require inspection and animal records to be on line
  - (9) require under penalty of perjury statement from those completing animal records and inspection reports
  - (10) allow volunteer inspections; encourage whistle-blowing

4. private fundraising

- a. Las Vegas nights for rescue/humane groups
- b. sponsorship of shelters, breeds in shelters, seniors in shelters, puppies in shelters
- c. encourage corporate involvement and affiliation

Home Depot/Lowes donate materials for new facilities/upgrades

developers' proffers for shelters

large employers/hotels allow their parking lots to be used on weekends for adoption activities

p. 15 – Responsible Governance (funding and enforcement) (cont.):

5. private marketing efforts

a. not “shelter dogs”, but Fido, Fluffy, or Max

b. Got Dog?

ask advertising agencies for pro bono help

c. write letters to editor about killing dogs/adoptions

c. develop our own version of the book One at a Time: A Week in an American Animal Shelter (by Diane Leigh and Marilee Geyer) and serialize it locally

d. promote state-wide “animals dream of home” art show

p. 16 – Task Force

Establish a permanent Virginia Animal Welfare Task Force.

- a. include cats in the publicly funded pound system
- b. classified ad revenues
  - (1) will newspapers contribute some portion of classified advertising revenues from companion animal sales; funds to be dedicated to s/n surgeries and the establishment of surgery centers, both fixed and mobile, plus transport
  - (2) could a surcharge be imposed on classified ad rates with funds to be dedicated to the animal control function
- c. reinstate humane investigator program
- d. address companion animal “exotics” such as rabbits, ferrets, birds, reptiles
- e. civilian review board  
  
establish an oversight board of trained docents to work with pounds and state vet’s office to do inspections/follow-ups
- f. develop, for the collection of data for animal records,
  - (1) common software and common form
  - (2) common reports
  - (3) report on line; available immediately to the public
  - (4) add new categories to animal records
  - (5) how to enforce penalty of perjury oath on reporting forms
- g. develop, for facility inspections,
  - (1) standardized inspection forms
  - (2) all use same software
  - (3) inspection results to be available immediately on line
  - (4) copy of the letter which goes to the jurisdiction, with the inspection report, also be posted online