

Animal Control Advisory Board (ACAB)
Sterling Police Department, 135 Leominster Road
Sterling, MA 01564

Meeting Minutes - January 7, 2021

Roll Call:

At Police Department: Terry Sadler, Chair, and Animal Control Officer Louis Massa

Attending by Remote Connection: Fran Simonds, Edee McNamara, Kathie Nickerson, Anne Marie Catalano, and Cindy Miller

Other Attendees: Pam Donaldson, Jeff Donaldson and Karen Kase

Call to Order: Chairman Sadler called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

Review/Approve Past Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve minutes of the November 4, 2020 meeting was made by Edee McNamara and seconded by Kathie Nickerson. Roll call vote: Sadler - aye; Catalano - aye; McNamara - aye; Miller - aye; Simonds - aye. Nickerson abstained as she was not present at the meeting. Motion carried.

Announcements/Correspondence: None

Old Business:

- Disaster Response Plan for Animals Update:

Ms. Catalano has a draft disaster response plan which she will email to Board members.

New Business:

- Discuss Proposed ZBA Kennel Bylaw Changes:

According to Chairman Sadler, after reviewing the most recent information from the ZBA, her interpretation is that the proposed bylaw change would effectively eliminate kennels in almost all zoning areas of Sterling. In the Animal Control Board's view, most issues with dogs are not kennel related.

Sterling resident Jeff Donaldson noted the term "Commercial Kennel" needs to be defined as opposed to "kennel".

After further discussion, questions/comments were suggested for Ms. Sadler as the spokesperson for the ZBA meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 12.

- What is the intent of this proposed bylaw change? What is the ZBA trying to accomplish?
- Define "Commercial Kennel" and "kennel".
- Why is this bylaw change necessary? There are no complaints about the 13 kennels in town currently.
- Residents may hide the fact that they have more dogs than allowed and not register them or get them vaccinated.
- This proposed bylaw, if approved, could lead to a liability issue for the town.

Reports:

- ACO Reports: to date 1470 # licensed dogs, 0 # pending court action, 70 # unlicensed dogs

According to ACO Massa, licensing of dogs was delayed during 2020 as many pet owners were not able to get their dogs vaccinated for rabies. He sent citations to those who were delinquent. The ACO observed it was a tough, frustrating year due to COVID.

A rabies clinic is tentatively scheduled for March 13, 2021.

- ACO Wildlife and Domestic Reports:

Review of the reports was tabled until the next meeting. According to ACO Massa, there were only 7 wildlife calls, and 17 domestic calls, nothing concerning.

Public Session: None

Appointments: A party interested in becoming a Board member will be invited to the next meeting.

Set Next Meeting Date: To be determined

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Anne Marie Catalano and seconded by Kathie Nickerson. All members were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.