

Animal Control Board
Thursday, September 16, 2021
Virtually

Members Attending: R. Rosato, H. Brown, D. Straub, S. Baller

Others Attending: S. Smith, H. Carroll, I. Litvinov, S. March

Call to Order

Mr. Rosato called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Mr. Rosato noted that a quorum was present.

Public Comment

Otis Smith, 232 S 18th St, submitted written comment because he was unable to attend this meeting due to its being rescheduled. His comments are regarding the keeping of chickens at 236 S. 18th St.

Ms. Smith questioned if the Board would allow her to read his comment. The Board agreed.

Ms. Miller arrived at this time.

Mr. Smith's comments are attached, in full, to this summary.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Straub, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve the June 24, 2021 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Animal Control Agency Report

Mr. Carroll stated that he will provide updated statistics to Ms. Smith to share with the Board.

Permit Updates

- **936 N 5th St**

Ms. Baller stated that this property has been an ongoing issue since April. She stated that she provided a deadline of the end of August to complete the animals (27 cats and 2 dogs) vaccination requirements and submit the application to keep more than six dogs/cats. She stated that three cats and one dog remain unvaccinated and the owner always has excuses about why they are not completed. She stated that she has been lenient to date but that no application has been submitted.

Mr. Straub questioned how this situation was discovered. Ms. Baller stated that a former tenant filed the original complaint. She stated that she will conduct another wellness check on the animals with Codes when the permit is submitted.

Mr. Carroll expressed the belief that the City and ARL have been flexible but feels this owner is taking advantage of both organizations. He stated that the ARL often deals with people with many excuses.

He stated that the City cannot set precedent with simple animal care items not being taken care of. He recommended denying this permit.

Ms. Baller stated that some of the animals will need their next vaccinations before they all receive their first one. She stated that the owner is citing financial issues and transportation problems as the reasons why the vaccinations are incomplete.

Mr. Straub questioned the options. Ms. Baller expressed the belief that animals must be removed to be in compliance with the City's limitation of six dogs/cats. She expressed the belief that the owner has been given plenty of time to comply.

Mr. Brown questioned if Ms. Baller is familiar with the owner's financial situation. Ms. Baller stated that she believes the owner is on disability. She stated that she has been renting out rooms to increase her income but that the renters are not paying her. She stated that the owner claims to have enough financial capacity for litter and food but not for medical care.

Mr. Brown stated that Dr. Rude will make house calls to address the transportation issue. Ms. Baller stated that she offered this solution and the owner stated that the cost for this service was too high.

Mr. Brown expressed the belief that the owner will continue to make excuses. He stated that she is already violating the City's ordinance. Mr. Carroll agreed and stated that the ARL has also delayed filing charges against her.

Mr. Straub noted the need to remove the animals.

Ms. Smith questioned the process that would be used to remove the animals. She stated that no permit has been submitted so the Board will be taking no official action. Mr. Litvinov stated that he will research this issue and stated that a warrant will be necessary.

- **2329 High St**

Ms. Baller stated that there are no issues with the care of the chickens. She stated that there is a separate issue with the fencing that is being addressed by the City. She stated that there is a great coop and all the chickens are healthy. She stated that some of the animals may be relocated in the future. She stated that there are currently 12 chickens.

Mr. Straub questioned if the chickens are being used for food or as pets. Ms. Baller stated that they are used for their eggs.

Mr. Straub expressed the belief that there should be no chickens within the City. He stated that neighbors often complain about them, especially if there are roosters. Mr. Carroll agreed that roosters are problematic. He stated that chickens have become very common in the City. He noted the need to define boundaries to avoid annoyances.

Mr. Brown stated that roosters are not needed for eggs.

Ms. Baller stated that there were no complaints about this property. She stated that the property is more suburban and borders with Muhlenberg Township. She stated that this property has 12 chickens, no roosters and a trailer that has been converted into a coop. She stated that the animals are healthy and the property has passed its inspection.

Motion was made by Mr. Straub, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve the keeping of chickens at 2329 High St. Motion carried unanimously.

- **732 Thorn St**

Ms. Baller stated that there is a permit application for 16 chickens and 2 roosters for this property.

Mr. Carroll recommended that the Board approve the application in part and allow the chickens but not the roosters. He stated that roosters are only needed for breeding. Roosters are noisy and cause neighbor complaints.

Motion was made by Mr. Straub to approve the chickens and deny the roosters.

Mr. Carroll stated that he will follow up with the owner about the removal of the roosters.

Motion was seconded by Ms. Miller.

Mr. Brown reminded all that rooster crowing is a noise violation and can be cited by the Police.

Motion carried unanimously.

- **236 S 18th St**

Ms. Smith stated that Mr. Blankenbiller has tried to contact the owners two times and has had no response. No permit application has been received.

Mr. Rosato reminded all about the public comments made about this property.

Mr. Carroll stated that he will visit the property. He stated that if he finds issues he will remove the chickens. He noted the need to keep the chickens from bothering neighbors. He stated that the State frowns on droppings being tracked into the owner's house.

Mr. Brown stated that the chickens should be confined to one area of the yard.

Mr. Carroll stated that he will try to visit this location tomorrow.

Old Business

- Regulation of cats

Mr. Carroll stated that he is drafting language and will provide the draft to Ms. Smith when it's completed.

Mr. Brown stated that running a cat rescue should be considered a business and require the same permits and licenses.

- Zoning Ordinance amendment

No report.

New Business

- 1043 Chestnut St

Ms. Baller reported that there are chickens and roosters at this location. She stated that they are not housed properly and no permit has been submitted.

- 1522 Cotton St

Ms. Baller stated that there are two roosters in crates in the backyard. She stated that she will be visiting the property again soon.

- 528 S 14th St

Ms. Baller stated that she is very concerned about this situation. She stated that there is no permit for these animals. She stated that there are seven dogs in the yard and they are being bred. She stated that the owner is building kennels in the rear with two dogs per kennel. She stated that she told the property owner that this operation will require many approvals. She stated that she observed one dog with a sore ear and leg. She stated that the owner stated that he provided antibiotics on his own without the assistance of a vet.

Mr. Carroll stated that he and Ms. Baller will discuss this situation in more detail. He stated that he does not like backyard breeders. He expressed the belief that diseases are spread. He stated that self-medicating is also not suggested. He stated that he would advocate that the animals be spayed and neutered. He stated that he will provide additional updates at future meetings of the Board.

Other Matters

- 1300 block Amity St

Mr. Carroll stated that a Pitbull got loose and killed a Chihuahua. He stated that the State Dog Warden was notified. He stated that the Pitbull was wearing a collar and a leash and it appeared to break loose. He stated that it has not been claimed. He expressed the belief that this would qualify the Pitbull as a dangerous dog. He stated that he is working with the Police Department.

- Church St

Mr. Carroll stated that there are three dogs that attacked and killed a small dog. He stated that he has filed for confinement and is working with the Dog Warden to also declare these dogs as dangerous.

- Humane PA Clinics

Mr. March stated that Humane PA will be holding another series of “Pay What You Can” clinics on Wednesdays for the next nine weeks. He stated that the clinics will be held at three locations and are for dogs and cats. He stated that there is additional information on Humane PA’s website.

Next Meeting

Ms. Smith stated that she will poll members if a meeting is needed to process applications. Otherwise the Board will meet in January 2022.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

I'm speaking today about chickens at 236 S 18th St. As a neighbor, I am compelled to provide information about this situation. I have also called the City's Citizen Service Center.

This is a dense neighborhood of rowhomes and small backyards. I do not feel it is appropriate to have any type of farm animals, including chickens in this neighborhood. This will set precedent and other residents will think that they can also keep chickens. Most, as in the case, will not apply for permits before they get the animals.

These chickens are allowed to roam throughout the backyard and it appears that the coop that has been installed is too small for the number of chickens present. There are three young children who live in the house who are allowed to chase the chickens around the yard and carry them around, sometimes into other neighbor's yards. The children are often barefoot and are surely getting chicken droppings on their feet and spreading them to other properties. My family and I no longer walk barefoot on our own property for fear of getting diseases. In addition, there is children's play apparatus in the yard that the chickens fly onto that may allow them to fly over fences and retaining walls into neighboring yards.

I also feel that it is important that this Board notify neighbors when permits are being considered. The Board should hear input from those who will need to live with the conditions created by approving these permits.

Thank you.

Otis Smith – 232 S 18th St