

The Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2019

- 1) The regular meeting of the Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals was called to order at 1:01 PM in Room 203 of the Legislative Office Building by Chair, Patricia Morris
- 2) **Members Present:**
 - a) Patricia Morris, Chairperson & Equine Association
 - b) Lindsay Hamrick, National Humane Organization & Secretary
 - c) Dr. Jeri Zezula, Jennifer Eber, Marga Coupl, Tom Seymour; General Public
 - d) Heather Faria, NH Federation of Humane Organizations
 - e) Wendy Munroe, NH Veterinary Technician Association
 - f) George Cook, Dog Owners of the Granite State
 - g) Gary Lambert, NH Sportsmen
 - h) Sheriff Mike Moyer, Sheriff's Association
 - i) Kristi Atherton, NH Farm Bureau
 - j) Steve Sprowl, Humane Cruelty Investigator

Public Present: Jana McMillan, NH ACO Association

 - k) **Members Absent:** Tom DeRosa, Cynthia Collins, general public; Senator Birdsell, Senate Representative; Dr. Crawford, Dept. of Agriculture; Dr. Barlow Roy, NHVMA; Chief Dean Rondeau, NH Association of Chiefs of Police; Representative O'Connor; Sheila Johannsen, ACO Association
- 3) **Secretary's Report:** Lindsay presented the minutes from the January meeting. George motioned to approve the minutes as written. Tom seconded. All other members voted in favor.
- 4) **Current Cruelty Cases & News**
 - a) 18 Cocker Spaniels were seized by the Durham Police Department from the 2018 AKC Breeder of the Year. The case has been scheduled for arraignment in April. A number of dogs were transferred to co-owners and others are in foster homes.
 - b) The pre-trial hearing for the German Shepherd case will be this Thursday. The criminal trial is set for March of April.
 - c) The defendant in the Labrador Retriever case has been found guilty. Sentencing has been scheduled for April. The defendant has stated he will appeal.
 - d) The two defendants in the New Hampton sanctuary case have plead guilty. They are ordered to pay restitution costs and the State has requested a ban on animal ownership for two years.
 - e) The Manchester felony case, in which a cat was beaten, was plead down to a misdemeanor because of lack of evidence.
- 5) **2019 Legislative Initiatives**
 - a) The commission reviewed all of the bills impacting companion animals and voted on their position. See attached for vote count.
 - b) The Commission will take the following positions
 - i) SUPPORT SB 77: Relative to Costs to Care for Animals Seized in Cruelty Cases & Prohibiting the Future Ownership of Animals in Certain Cases
 - ii) SUPPORT SB 161: Relative to Pet Vendors

- iii) SUPPORT HB 501: Establishing a Cost of Care Fund to Assist Municipalities Caring for Animals During Animal Cruelty Cases
- iv) MONITOR HB 688: Relative to Transfer & Inspection of Animals
- v) SUPPORT HB 484: Relative to Group Dog Licenses
- vi) SUPPORT HB 605: Relative to Criminal Penalties for the possession, transfer, or manufacture of animal fighting paraphernalia with the intent to be present at, aiding in, or contributing to fighting
- vii) SUPPORT HB 283: Relative to Age Rabbits can be Transferred
- viii) SUPPORT HB 376: Establishing a Commission to Study Best Practices for Companion Animal Groomers
- ix) SUPPORT HB 371: Adding Cats to the Definition of Commercial Breeder
- x) OPPOSE HB 331: Relative to the Duties of a Veterinarian
- xi) OPPOSE HB 426: Establishing a committee to study allowing town clerks to accept proof of certain exemptions from the rabies vaccine for the purpose of registering dogs

6) **Cruelty Tracking Subcommittee**

- a) No new updates

7) **Legislative Subcommittee**

- a) The subcommittee will help compile the minority and majority reports for the Governor.

8) **Funding & Education Subcommittee**

- a) Dr. Jeri is formatting the new brochures and the committee is proofing

9) **Governor's Report**

- a) Members submitted edits to Trish on the draft. She will finalize the report and submit to the Governor.

10) **NH's Animal Cruelty Laws Discussion**

- a) Dr. Zezula had provided the Commission with a possible template for a new cruelty law in its own title at a previous meeting. She will send this out to the Commission again. Dr. Jeri advocates for a draft from the Commission to submit to OLS for a future bill.
 - i) Creation of an animal cruelty title (rather than animal cruelty laws in various sections)
 - ii) Declaration of purpose for animal cruelty laws (ex. Oregon)
 - iii) Discussion of the Five Freedoms as a foundation for the cruelty laws
 - iv) Conflicts between criminal and civil law
 - v) Future editing/comments of court rules and process
- b) MA Task Force submitted their recommendations to the MA legislature and encouraged legislators to implement the changes rather than introducing their own bill but the Commission does have the ability to introduce legislation under the EO.
- c) Lindsay pointed to concerns about a bill that would open up the entirety of the cruelty law and the risks of losing key laws in the process. She will talk to the Office of Legislative Services to see if there's a way to create a new title for the laws without including the specific current language in bills.
- d) Steve feels enforcement of existing law should be a priority as well. A legislative declaration of purpose may help with this.
- e) Jennifer suggested we look at court rules if it's within the parameters of the EO. George commented about the perceived lack of awareness of the prosecution manual. Lindsay asked if the Commission can focus on future education for prosecutors to supplement Dr. Zezula's work in the Police Academy.

f) Trish, Gary and Jennifer will review judicial rules and propose possible updates.

11) 2019 Meeting Dates

a) The next meeting will be March 18th.

12) New Business

a) No new business

13) Call to the Public

a) No comments

Steve moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 2:26pm. George seconded. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted by: Lindsay Hamrick, Secretary