

## **June 12,2008, Memphis Animal Coalition Meeting**

Lisa Trenthem opened /moderated the meeting of approx. 20 attendees at the Cordova Branch Library. Next meeting date of July 8 7P at Cordova Branch Library was announced.

Lisa gave an update of positive changes at Memphis Animal Shelter. These include vaccination on intake of ALL animals (though of 17 adopted since the policy went into effect only 2 were vaccinated within 24 hours of arrival).

Off site adoptions are weekly: first and third Sat. at Poplar Highland Petco and second and fourth Saturdays at Wild Oats.

There is a now a “Change of Heart” policy that prevents “surrender remorse” when someone surrenders their animal to the shelter. It cannot be adopted until 24 hours after intake. Animals are being shown every other week on the Fox 13 network.

Sylvia Cox gave an update on the Citizens Advisory Board. The item officially passed on June 2 thru the City Council and will be put back into the City Charter. We do not have any details on who will be appointed (seven members).

A question was asked about how would one be considered? It is probably best to submit your letter of intent directly to Ken Moody. Sylvia pointed out that Shea Flinn was responsive and determined to reinstate this advisory board and to please thank him for his efforts.

Michelle Buckalew of Animal World USA gave a report of the upcoming TN week for the animals. This kicks off Sept 20 with a “Peace, Love and Unity” festival at Shelby Farms and ends on Sept 28 with “Woofstock” at Overton Park. Michelle is asking for input with planning/brainstorming on these events. The goal is to bring both rescue groups and animal advocates together with groups that might not usually be thought of in this setting. Michelle emphasized that it was all of us coming together that was instrumental in getting a director at the shelter who would be receptive to the needs of animals.

There was a lot of general discussion in response to a couple of questions. One was “what can we do to improve the environment of the shelter animals.”

It was suggested that music should be played in the animal area to help calm them. There was discussion about the compassion of shelter employees and volunteers. Cindy Russell said she filled out a volunteer application well over three months ago and never received any response to the application. Another comment was that perhaps when Mr. Alexander has had a chance to change policy and eliminate employees that under-perform, a more compassionate applicant may be sought. Lisa Trenthem brought up a complaint that the most basic need of the animals there, proper feeding , was NOT being done since one bowl per cage is the norm no matter how many occupants there are. Gail Phillips pointed out that not feeding animals in your care constitutes cruelty and is a very serious issue. It was agreed a LETTER would be written on MAC letterhead addressing the issue and requesting a response and a copy of the policy on feeding. This letter went out the following week.

It was also requested to please refer any complaints regarding spay/neuter incision problems to the Coalition. Recently several animals have required vet care AFTER routine spay/neuter due to infection or reaction to the suture material.

The other question that stimulated discussion came up when there was a comment about the anti cruelty group that is being formed now in response to Bruiser and Mac, both pit bull dogs who were abused and died in spite of care. Mary Dando asked how can we make the Animal Coalition a more diverse group?

Cindy Sanders explained the group called Common Ground as an excellent outlet for learning more about reaching out to people. The Commercial Appeal and Wendi Thomas were instrumental in starting this group to improve race relations in Memphis. They meet at Rhodes College. The website is [www.Commongroundmemphis.org](http://www.Commongroundmemphis.org)

Finally, Cindy Sanders told us a great story of her quest to stop the selling of animals at our Memphis Flea Market. This is something both her and Jackie Johns have been working on for a while. Cindy attributes the receptiveness of the flea market owner in New York to Oprah Winfrey and her show on puppy mills. The owner said ours was the only flea market he owned (has them all over the U.S.) that sells animals. He agreed to Ban the sale of pets. The room applauded this effort and we thank Cindy and Jackie for their persistence.