

Pit Bull Task Force Committee Meeting 9/28/10; Notes taken by Cara Vacchiano

Agenda items 1-3 and 8 were discussed. Items 4-7 were tabled to the next meeting.

Tara Stermer and Amber Rowland reported on the breed identification project. Tara has made charts and a detailed training page for each of the breeds that are commonly confused with pit bulls and also included the breeds that are referred to as pit bulls. She is still working on refining and identifying physical traits that will help people use the charts. Suggestion to make key chains that have cards of that of these on them for staff to use. Amber stated that key chains may not work because the staff have to have similar guides for cats and other animals. The staff that need these are located at three surrender desks and in the animal control vans. Maybe the desks and vans can each have a notebook with the charts? Tara needs more information from TLAC. TLAC will check with Chameleon to see if software can include all of the breeds in questions as well as a mixed breed option. Brad Beam wonders if we can track numbers and see if this is decreasing the numbers of pit bulls identified or if there are more adoptions as a result of these efforts. TLAC is not sure this can be done – it will be counting a negative (counting absence of pit bulls in system that used to be there). Maybe creating more work by tracking these statistics and therefore adding to administrative burden. Another potential problem to be aware of is that people may have been told their dog was a pit bull and if they lose their dog, they will call or look online for a pit bull but may not be able to come look personally. One avenue for clearing dogs out of TLAC is to find their homes so we may be hampering this process. How can we prevent this?

Meghan Turner and Sarah Hammond reported on the adult adoption program. Love-a-bull cannot keep targeting the Meetup members – need to find other ways to attract pittie fosters from the community. Sarah worries about having a foster program because normally, when a dog is going out of TLAC to be fostered, it is for medical recovery but then it is understood they will come back into TLAC when they are healed. If TLAC starts a pit bull foster program, we would choose dogs that are not doing well in the shelter environment, but then we wouldn't want to have these fosters be temporary – they would not want them back in the system because if they didn't do well once, they don't want them back. But if they are not going to come back into the system, who pays for medical, what if an accident happens? Who is responsible for the dog? Can we find even 10 fosters per year who would take on medical responsibility and food costs? Love-a-bull and APA want to help. Volunteers can write stories, take pictures and videos if the dogs are in TLAC (some are out in the community). Volunteers can volunteer to work directly with Sarah on foster and adoption. Maybe start a foster 101 class? How to get people to go? Can it be mandatory? Can APA and Love-a-Bull be a support system? Is there a way for TLAC to work with these groups to find more fosters? Sarah says that we can start with a pilot program of four dogs this month that are already into adoption because they have had a wellness screening. Another thing we can do is make people aware that TLAC does allow people to adopt dogs with the intention of re-homing them but they want the people to tell them about it so that TLAC can provide services and support and track the dogs. It was decided that a pilot program could be started, with a few TLAC dogs that have been identified by volunteers as prime candidates for being placed in homes. Marnie Reeder stated that she is working to organize an adoption event at Southpaws Playschool that will allow pit bulls from any group or person that are friendly and well-behaved to come to meet potential adopters.

Brad Beam presented on the possible funding areas that the committee might pursue. He referred to the recommendations made and approved by a panel for areas of funding above and beyond the annual budget and suggested that the committee could seek to have some of the available budget monies from the Implementation Plan allotted to pit bull-related programs or initiatives (spay/neuter, Spay Street, fostering, make-ready, etc.). Meghan and Brad will work on a draft letter to TLAC that would seek to have portions of these funds designated for pit bulls at TLAC. Some of the TLAC staff and volunteers wondered if doing this wouldn't cause an increase in paperwork and hours by making them track more things if they have to devote things specifically to pit bulls and this would take away from the work they are trying to do. Are we shooting ourselves in the foot? Love-a-Bull said that they could get more pit bulls neutered and spayed if TLAC would give them vouchers to give to people. Could some of the funding be used for vouchers so that the rescue groups are doing the work and getting them to pit bulls rather than having TLAC try to do it.

Events: Love-a-Bull is having a National Pit Bull awareness event on Nov. 7 with the people from Rescue Ink coming. There are still spaces for vendors. All are welcome!

Brad said that there is an effort to have a rolling 24 month event calendar for dogs created – this is in the works with the Public Awareness Committee. Anyone who wants to have an event added could forward to Adette Quintana or attend the Public Awareness Committee meetings.

Next meeting (and meetings from this point forward) will last from 6 – 8 pm (instead of 7:30 pm).