

Pit Bull Task Force Draft Notes
1/25/11

Breed specific legislation: As of the meeting date, no bill had been filed. Anti-BSL petitions with over eight thousand signatures had been delivered to the legislature. Love-A-Bull website has a listing of the steps people should take to combat the introduction and passage of bsl. TX Humane Legislation Network (THLN) has now taken a public position opposing bsl. They will track this legislation and oppose where possible but their priorities are on bills affecting large-scale commercial breeders and seizure appeals. Susan Hightower, TLAC volunteer and UT law professor in animal law, sent a letter opposing bsl to the legislators considering introducing the bill. **Actions: Task force members should take steps as outlined at love-a-bull.org. Tara will send link to the bumper sticker that she developed opposing bsl. Lisa McClain, AAC member and also professor specializing in animal law, offered to send additional letters to legislators.**

Housing: Discussion of potential income to apt complex owners if they just charged additional monthly fee for certain animals instead of barring them. Discussion of various approaches to making bull breeds and other so-called "dangerous breeds" more acceptable to apt owners and realtors, such as providing CGC documentation or having a behavior test that all dogs take (not just bull breeds). Brad Beam is collecting information on the latter approach, which is in used in Nebraska. **Actions: Tara is videoing her assessment process and will be working with one of her clients, a realtor, on getting it shown to the realtors' association as an example of how owners may document their dogs' safety. Chris Sternberg will look at ways to transfer the test video. Tara is to get the disk to Lydia and Meghan of LAB. Chris also will talk with State Farm (the company who insures him) about dog insurance possibilities. Committee will look into ways to get before the apartment associations and the apartment locators (responsibility not assigned). Love-A-Bull website has information on who will insure dogs.**

Breed identification training: Tara has provided this training for a community audience. She is scheduled to provide it three times for TLAC staff, including Animal Control Services (ACS), the cruelty investigators, and a rep. from APD. A note will be sent out inviting dog volunteers to attend as well. In answer to a question, Amber clarified that ACS may change the breed identification given by an owner when surrendering or reporting an animal, if ACS disagrees.

Mobile Community Education Project (MCEP): Chris Robles of ACS gave Tara a list of neighborhoods to which she can take her Mobile Community Education Project (MCEP). ACS and she are in close contact so that they can exchange information about problems that might be observed and can make the greatest positive impact on the neighborhoods targeted. MCEP takes place every Sunday afternoon. They provide dog training and socialization, trade chains and ropes for leashes and collars, provide crates so dogs may be brought inside, and provide treats and toys if possible. Participants are shown how to train their dogs and encouraged to see the dog as a family member rather than just a possession or a source of income. The project needs: volunteers who speak Spanish, volunteers to be body blockers to keep dogs and kids apart, old crates and cages, collars and leashes. Tara mentioned a particular success with a teenager who planned to fight his dog to get money to pay his family's bills and, by the end of the MCEP afternoon, was wanting to intern with Tara and saw his dog more as a fun pet rather than an way to make money. **Actions: Marnie will provide a Spanish language cheat sheet of dog related terms. Marnie will also get Tara in contact with the Pet Food Bank which has crates. Tara will provide Amber with .pdf file so Amber can have posters printed.**

Pit Crew: The pit bull therapy program established by Love-A-Bull, has two spaces left. It starts February 26 for 4 weeks. Most training will be at Gullett Elementary School. Plans are at the end to go into the juvenile detention center as well as other places. Information about the project and ways to enroll is on Love-A-Bull site.

Pit Bull Foster Care program: Coco Chanel was the first dog adopted out of this program, run in conjunction with TLAC. At this point, Love-A-Bull must concentrate on getting dogs adopted out of foster care rather than taking in new dogs. These dogs have professional behavior assessments and training, and come with extensive information about their behavior in homes (like cat interaction, etc). Marnie mentioned a monthly pit bull adoption event that she holds across from Tomlinson's on 49 ½ Street (contact her at jasper@sysmatrix.net for information). We would like to have a monthly adopt a dog event for these animals but no action was identified for this. **Actions: Meghan and Amber will explore sending out a press release about the bull breed foster program. Amber will talk with Sarah and Patricia Fraga about getting more positive spin on it.**

Possible Future Items for Task Force Action:

Anti Chaining: Most people don't understand what they are doing to the dog. Chained dogs are not protection dogs—they are frustrated dogs. **Actions: Marnie suggested the Dogs Deserve Better project, and Meghan will research. Amber has a poster showing dog on chain and dog in home and will look at updating it.**

Rescue Subcommittee survey: Results: Every dog posted should have its TLAC animal id listed in promotional materials. The committee wants to have information from Sarah on what bully breed dogs need help. **Action: Send information to Marnie on what animal would be good candidates for rescue.**

Other ideas for publicity for bull breeds: Get fencing company to sponsor. Identify someone deserving needing a fence, organize community project to build and use publicity to further knowledge about the breed. Use of "Chip In" was suggested.

Announcements:

"Pit Boss" episode filmed in Austin will air February 19. LAB is organizing a community viewing at Frank (4th and Colorado) at 7 pm that night. LAB will have a Valentine's Day fundraiser at Lucky Lounge on Friday, Feb. 11th, no dogs.

Next meeting: February 22, 6pm