

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADJOURNED MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 1985

The Board of Rowan County Commissioners met in Adjourned Session in the Community Building on October 21, 1985 at 7:30 P.M. The following members were present: Commissioner Jamima DeMarcus, Commissioner Harry Sifford, Commissioner Richard Messinger, Commissioner J. Newton Cohen and Chairman Hall Steele.

Chairman Hall Steele called the meeting to order and Commissioner Cohen opened with prayer.

The meeting had been called for a Public Hearing on the Animal Control Ordinance. Chairman Steele said the Board of Health and Board of Commissioners worked together to adopt an Animal Control Ordinance and decided the people should have input into the matter calling for a public hearing to speak the minds and to make points for or against to consider and proceed in passing an ordinance to the best of our ability.

Chairman Steele asked that persons wishing to speak for or against the ordinance to make two to three minute comments giving everyone a chance to speak.

First to speak was Frank Kirk from the Westcliff area who said there should be some protection for the people against dogs. That dogs were protected but not people. He said to keep the records straight that he was not a dog hater but that the dogs were ruining his boxwoods and azaleas and taking his shoes one at a time..

Second to speak was Rick Walters, Old Beatty Ford Road who asked if the ordinance included cats. His answer was yes. He said he had bought a new car and it was ruined before he could build a garage for it. That cats had scratched it sleeping on it. He said one neighbor up the street has 20 cats. He said he had called the Animal Control Officer but was told that he had no way to catch cats. He said he did not know what to do since it was against the law to shoot them.

Next was Pam Hilton, Fish Pond Road who said dogs were killing her chickens. She reported that a dog had bitten a child and had growled at her. That dogs were also after her cows. She said she had to put a ~~petition~~ ^{partition} around her flowers to keep the animals from urinating on them. She said "who's to say if they are a nuisance or if they are vicious or not".

Commissioner Messinger asked Ms. Hilton if the dog warden was called concerning the dog bite. She said a Sheriff's deputy came out but did nothing and this was two months ago.

Next was Walter Elium, Dunns Mountain Church Road- Who was opposed to the article in the paper by Bonnie Smith, Vice-President of the Humane Society. He said don't spend any more tax money on dogs, don't give them anymore rights but take away some of the rights they already have.

Commissioner Sifford raised the comment about the dog bite made by Ms. Hilton. He said according to State Law, quoting the statue, that it was in violation to fail to report a animal bite to the Health Director. He told her that if this had been reported, the dog would have been confined.

Mr. Hilton, said this bite was reported, but who is going to take whose word, "do I have to sue my neighbor", he said dogs cause more trouble that anything I know of.

Commissioner Sifford said somebody has to swear out a warrant, it is as simple as that. Commissioner Sifford said the animal has to be caught in the act. Mr. Kirk said he could not watch them all day and night. Commissioner Sifford said that a leash law could not be enforced.

Next to speak was ^(estelle?) Stell Judkins who said she had putting up with dog problems for five years. She told of an incident where a child was attacked getting on the school bus. She said she would like to see someone with authority to control these animals because she said she did not think it was right for her to have to be bothered by someone else's dogs.

Next was Barbara Luther who said she was surrounded by apartments and trailers and dogs and would like to see a clause in the ordinance read "cru^lty to people" and see it enforced. She said her mother had been cornered by two dogs in her own yard..

Mr. Frank Kirk and Ralph Luther both asked questions concerning the law on shooting animals. Mrs. Luther asked how do you catch a cat to see if it has rabies!

Tom Currin said he was new in the community, but he had some proposals to make to Commissioners. (1) That an Advisory Council be incorporated into the ordinance and (2) Who has the authority to determine if an animal should be euthanized or not whenever it is picked up- he feels like this person should have some kind of training, (3) Penalties should be more strict. Commissioner Sifford told him that this is all the State will allow. Mr. Currin said he would like also to see this incorporated or added later- a change in euthanization- He said he would like to see the animals injected .

Next- Nellie Carter- Roseman Road- She said she lived alone and had to keep a stick outside the door to use to fight off dogs whenever she went outside. She said people who have dogs should have a place to keep them- that we should have some kind of protection.

Next- Bill Cline- Salisbury- He said he had no quarrel with anyone-that he was a hunter and wanted to know what consideration in the ordinance had been given to hunters.

Chairman Steele told him the same consideration that has been given to everyone else. He said all the hunters he knew looked after their own dog.

Mr. Kirk said the ordinance talks about this being a neighbor vs. neighbor situation, but, in his neighborhood, the dog's owners lived two blocks away and comes into his yard.

Back to the cats, Mr. Rick Walters, said he would take out a warrant, but the owner of the cat would say this is not his cat. He said now there are twenty cats, next year as fast as they multiply, there will be fifty.

The Board heard from the President of the Humane Society who said she receives 150 calls per month and that their work is voluntary without a cent. She said they pick the animals up and take them to their homes; and they help with the neutering and spaying of the animals.

Mr. Elium said that he thought euthanization was easy on the animals and that was the way to go.

Question from the floor was Can the County Commissioners not pass a law that everything has to be on a leash? The answer was yes, but enforcement was the problem. Chairman Steele said they were trying to take a reasonable approach to it.

Dr. Charles Steinman, Salisbury Animal Hospital said he thought the new ordinance was broad and if adopted would be most adequate. He recommended two proposals (1) That the dog warden be given the ability to issue citations and (2) to see some mandatory set of licenses for animals. That this should be given some consideration.

Commissioner Sifford read law enforcement procedures to Dr. Steinman in relation to his comment about giving the dog warden the ability to issue citations. He said this would require a legislative sponsor. That you would have to go through an act of General Assembly. That the City Animal Control Officer is a

policewoman and is authorized to issue citations within the City.

Commissioner Cohen said that the Commissioners had talked about the new ordinance and that it was divided into two sections (1) dealing with law which should be handled by the Sheriff's department and (2) the other aspect of it handled by the Health Department- diseases of animals which are communicable.

The last to speak - Bonnie Smith, Vice-President of the Humane Society who said they were trying to make a community where animals and people could live in harmony. She said she had been cruelty investigator for the humane society for twelve years. She said government should be by the people and looked at closely. She said if the new ordinance is adopted that it would be turning 13,500 dogs loose-which is what they have been fighting against for years. She said this would create more work for everyone concerned. More calls- complaints to deal with, greater risk of rabies. She compared the new ordinance with that of Alamance and Guilford pointing out their guidelines. She said that (people) owners are responsible for pets and that non-pet owners should be given the same rights as animal owners. That they should be on a leash. She recommended traps for catching animals to a lady who raised the question.

Chairman Steele said he felt like they had received a good exchange and will take comments and proceed and declared the Public Hearing closed.

There being no further business, Chairman Steele adjourned the meeting until Monday October 28 at 9:00 at that time they will hear a report from David Bailey, COG, on the study made at the Sheriff's Department and the audit report.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Honeycutt, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners

DATE OF REVIEW:

DATE OF APPROVAL: