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**LISTENING SESSION MINUTES**

Meeting of July 18, 2013 – 6:00pm  
Meeting held at:  
Shorewood Village Hall  
3930 N. Murray Avenue  
Shorewood, Wisconsin 53211

**Present:**

Mr. Don Schaewe, City of Milwaukee  
Mr. Chris Schwartz, Village of Shorewood  
Ms. Karen Sparapani, Executive Director (MADACC)  
Ms. Lorraine Sweeney, Shelter Supervisor (MADACC)  
Ms. Jessica Huber, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator (MADACC)  
Ms. Laura Nigbur, Friends of MADACC

**1. Submitted Questions/Responses**

We had a great time walking in the MADACC walk/run. How are the funds raised being used to help the animals?

What are Friends of MADACC's specific plans to help you improve MADACC? Their website doesn't say anything or talk about their plans.

What will the money raised from Fido Fest be used for?

Laura Nigbur, Friends of MADACC (FOM) board President, explained that FOM is working toward two objectives: 1) decreasing the number of animals that come into MADACC via community outreach and funding public spay/neuter surgeries and 2) increasing the number of animals transferring out by funding facility improvements and placement partner spay/neuter surgeries. FOM is in the midst of strategic planning, and will update their website once that concludes. Funds from the run are being used for facility improvements. One idea is to add additional outdoor kennel spaces directly behind each of the indoor kennels.

When will temperament testing methods be updated?

MADACC is currently using the most up to date and progressive behavior evaluations that are industry approved (SAFER and the test from Cornell University Veterinary School). We only have one person allowed to do the testing at MADACC to ensure consistency and fairness. Our Shelter Supervisor has had intensive training and still attends behavior seminars and other educational opportunities to ensure she is getting the best results from these evaluations.

What's going on with the court case dogs?

Unfortunately, the court case dogs are still in residence at MADACC. As we have stated previously, our only legal recourse which would get them out of here at the moment is to return the dogs to their owners. Until the legal situation is resolved, they remain the property of a private citizen and we have no ability to do anything with them until that changes.

Should the dogs become MADACC property, I have a plan in place for the ASPCA Emergency Response team to come in and work with the dogs to determine placement options for each one.

I am wondering how old a female puppy has to be to get fixed?

In shelter medicine, we will spay or neuter a puppy or kitten at 8 weeks old, as long as they are in good health and at least two pounds. In private practice, many vets wait until 4 – 6 months to sterilize a juvenile animal.

Can the MADACC Facebook page better promote the Listening sessions so the public is aware they are happening? I almost missed this one because it was not advertised at all.

The Friends of MADACC owns the Facebook page that most associate with MADACC. We did post it there on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Many people, especially adults, do not exclusively use Facebook, so we also promote the meetings on the MADACC website as well.

Photos are so important when promoting shelter animals, since cute and beautiful sells. Are there any plans to bring in a volunteer photographer to take more marketable images of the available animals? The original intake image could serve as a temporary image until someone could come in to take an in-action or more relaxed picture.

The videos of the Transfer list dogs sent out to AWARE members are great! Why aren't those posted on the MADACC FB page to highlight and promote them? I haven't seen any up.

Are the animals on the Pet Harbor site available for adoption or not?

Why are there much less animals up for adoption now?

What is MADACC doing to market the dogs and cats in its foster program to the public?

I wanted to answer all the adoption questions in one place.

MADACC is not at all an adoption facility. We do not have the staff or resources to have the scale of an adoption program that would in any way address the number of animals we have here at any given time. There are not fewer animals available for adoption right now, in fact, there are many more and we have over 80 animals in foster care right now waiting for their chance at adoption.

Animals on the Pet Harbor site are initially strays that come into MADACC. On day 8, those dogs are considered “unclaimed property” and MADACC can then transfer them to other shelters or rescues or put them up for adoption in our program. Most of the time, you can simply look at the intake date to determine when they would be available for transfer by just adding 7 days to that date.

To give you a better idea of what we are dealing with – MADACC takes in 12,000 animals a year – they are strays, safekeeps or surrenders and we try to get them reunited with an owner, or out to transfer partners. Wisconsin Humane Society only does adoptions and they take in 10,000 animals a year. They have twice the staff, twice the budget, half of the animals we care for at a given time and a building set up to be welcoming

and adoption friendly. Adoptions take a LOT of time to do. There is no way that we can have any meaningful adoption program here at MADACC.

That said, we want to save as many lives as possible. To do this, we have limited our adoptions primarily to the animals most at risk of not getting out of MADACC, the felines and the pitbulls. Every other animal is going to get out of here without too much of a problem through rescue/transfer partners.

Cat adoptions are easier to manage. There are fewer intricacies than dog adoptions, so we can do more of those with our current staffing, volunteers and resources. Dog adoptions are always more difficult, especially when someone has just seen a photo, and not met the animal in person yet. There are meet and greets, scheduling and rescheduling, bringing their owned animals into MADACC.

During my tenure at Elmbrook Humane Society, I led an organization that adopted out around 10,000 animals. I am very familiar with running an adoption program, and have begun and will continue to integrate the tried and true methods of marketing animals to the public.

I know the Chameleon photos are terrible. In many cases calling them terrible is actually a compliment. The problem with replacing the Chameleon photos is that Chameleon is a licensed product that is only available to certain computers in our building. On top of that, replacing the photos is not an easy endeavor. We try to use Petfinder to promote the animals and we are recruiting and training volunteers that will assist with that as it can be done online from any computer. In addition to that we use for promotion the photos and videos we get from volunteers and fosters on the Facebook page. In fact, when the email question came over, we had two videos right on the FB page.

We have professional and amateur photographers who want to help. We have to come up with a workable SOP – as we have space constraints for photography to be done properly.

Our adoptions are increasing, and it is putting a strain on the staff and our resources, but I am committed to making sure that we do whatever we can to get adoptable animals out of our building into new homes. Which brings us to our next question:

What is Madacc doing to increase the amount of rescue partners that it has?

MADACC has literally hundreds of placement partners. Many are breed specific, which is very limiting. However, I do not think the problem is the number of placement partners, because in a perfect world, we would only have a handful and send most of the animals over to Wisconsin Humane Society.

The reason we have problems transferring animals from MADACC is because most of the animals are coming down with a URI when they are available for transfer. Some shelter facilities do not have isolation space for animals with URI and they go into their general population and get all of the animals sick.

Some rescues have had very bad and expensive experiences with animals pulled from MADACC that had left with URI that developed into much more serious problems and they are naturally hesitant to do that again.

What MADACC needs to do is two-fold – internally we need to get the best cleaning and animal management system in order to reduce animal health issues. Then, we have to earn back the trust and confidence of our placement partners so they do not feel they will be taking on expensive health problems.

Another issue is that other shelters and rescues have population issues just like MADACC. Fourth of July is a very slow time for adoptions, everyone is full of cats, and lots of people who want to help just do not have the resources right now. Summer is the hardest time for even the best prepared of organizations.

When the City of Milwaukee TNR ordinance was passed in 2010 (? I think I have that right) the past Executive Director of MADACC was not supportive. The ordinance is due for review in 2015. Will you support changes to further improve the ordinance which will decrease the number of feral cats that MADACC has to kill? Is your current Board of Directors supportive of changes to this ordinance? Are any of them willing to introduce or support changes to their local municipal ordinances outside of the City of Milwaukee?

I am personally supportive of TNR – and this is my position and only my personal feelings and do not represent the feelings of anyone else at MADACC or our municipalities. I feel that euthanizing a feral cat is akin to euthanizing a raccoon or an opossum. MADACC is here to enforce the animal control laws for the municipalities of Milwaukee County and as the director, I have to uphold them. Should there be changes to the ordinance I will absolutely abide by them. I would love for there to be a day when feral cats were not brought into shelters. They are not lost companions, but wild animals and they do not deserve what they get when they are brought into any shelter.

I know MANY people do not agree with this opinion.

I cannot speculate about the position MADACC would take without knowing the specific changes which might be presented for consideration. MADACC's role in Milwaukee's feral cat pilot program is to return program cats to the Wisconsin Humane Society. One would have to ask the Board of Directors directly about their collective and individual position regarding the City of Milwaukee ordinance.

I just saw an article on the internet about England's new law that requires all dogs to be micro chipped by 2016. I think this is a great idea and was surprised that we in the US had not thought of it first....

Dogs in England Must Be Microchipped by 2016

All dogs in England [must be microchipped](#) by April 6, 2016, or their owners will face a fine of up to \$800, according to a new law. Britain's Environment Department is mandating microchipping to help reunite owners with pets, relieve the burden on animal charities and protect the welfare of dogs by promoting responsible ownership. Stray animals currently cost British taxpayers and charities nearly \$80 million a year.

Do you think it would be possible to push for passing of such a law even just within the state of Wisconsin and hopefully the rest of the country would follow suit?

Europe and the US are very different when it comes to animals. In Europe, many countries have breed bans, and many countries outlaw declawing and doing ear cropping or tail docking. In the US if you try to make things mandatory – even things that sound brilliant, like micro-chipping or spay/neuter it gets people up in arms and is likely not to pass. I am all for mandatory micro-chipping, but I doubt that legislation would pass in favor of it. I think that a more likely scenario would be a law that when an owner reclaims an animal from a shelter that they would be required to get a microchip prior to release, as that has been successfully passed in many communities. The other issue is enforcement. This is a law that would not be enforced except for when an animal came to animal control.

Another issue is that a microchip is only as good as the information on the record. I cannot tell you how many chips we see that have not been registered. Have wrong information. Have the information of previous owners and not current owners. Sadly, a microchip is not a guarantee that your dog or cat will get back to you.

I think that the best chance of animal recovery is in conjunction with a microchip that all owners need to have current information on a collar in the form of a tag – and to include a cell phone number. While I agree that collars can be removed – I also think that most of the time, if you or someone else comes across an animal with a collar and tag you are likely to call the owner and give it back rather than bring it to a shelter in the first place, which is always the best scenario.