



3839 W. Burnham Street
West Milwaukee, WI 53215
Phone (414) 649-8640 Fax (414) 763-6234

LISTENING SESSION MINUTES

Meeting of June 17, 2014 – 6:00pm

Meeting held at:

Hales Corners Village Hall
5635 S. New Berlin Road
Hales Corners, WI 53031

Present:

Laura Nigbur, Volunteer Coordinator/Community Outreach Director (MADACC)

Mike Weber, Hales Corners Village Administrator (MADACC Operations Committee)

I recently heard on the news that MADACC no longer euthanizes adoptable animals. That's great news. Could you please speak to the criteria that makes an animal adoptable versus not adoptable. Would this classify MADACC as no kill?

MADACC does not describe itself as no-kill. The determination of whether or not an animal is an adoption or transfer candidate is determined by the resources available in the animal welfare community. Many animals with medical issues can easily be placed with another organization that can deal with those special needs. Behavioral problems are judged on a case by case basis and we find that animals with behavioral issues are harder to place or transfer because of the limited resources available for those animals. MADACC judges each animal as an individual and does not make decisions based on age or breed.

Has MADACC ever considered changing the name? I read about a shelter that did this and thought it was a good idea. We do care for the animals. Thank you.

No, we are not considering changing our name.

Same question submitted twice, written differently:

Can you address why MADACC doesn't have an official policy in place to support seized animals, such as the court case dogs? Consider a written policy related to dog welfare,

socialization, training, enrichment, etc? With Animal Control consistently receiving seized animals, doesn't this make good sense (and business practice) to have an official policy in place to address the dogs welfare while they are being confined by, judicial limbo?

Are there any plans to implement socialization/training/stimulation programs for today's and future court case dogs? If so, what?

This topic has been discussed several times before. MADACC does not own these animals and therefore is not permitted to do anything with these animals other than hold them and keep them healthy and happy as possible through enrichment provided by our staff until they are returned to their owners or ownership is terminated. The Chicago program that is repeatedly mentioned for Court Case dogs is for SIGNED OVER ANIMALS ONLY! Not for animals still owned by the individuals they were taken from.

What happens if another 22 dogs are seized today? Are there contingencies in place?

Unexpected influxes of animals are a fact of life in the animal control field. MADACC has successfully dealt with these in the past and will continue to do so.

How much money has MADACC made from its contract to hold seized dogs in 2013?

We do not have a contract to hold seized dogs, therefore, we have made absolutely \$0.

Is Madacc inspected by the DATCP? If you aren't, who inspects to make sure there is compliance with city and state laws?

No, MADACC is not inspected by the DATCP. State and local ordinances generally state or imply who enforces specific laws.

Why did the Board want the shelter exempt from Act 90? How was that made possible?

MADACC never asked for nor did they receive an exemption to Act 90.

Since you are exempt from Act 90, what is the process for people to register a complaint? To where or who should the complaint be sent to? What's the formal process? Who would oversee the complaints and process them?

Complaints generally can be made to the MADACC Executive Director. Should an individual feel uncomfortable with that, they can make the complaint to whichever agency or governmental entity they feel comfortable making it to.

Why aren't the Operations Committee and Board of Directors meeting dates noted on MADACC's website? All other county services post their meetings on their websites, could MADACC please do the same?

MADACC complies with all open meetings laws and is not required to post this information on its website. However, since receiving this email, we have posted on the page with our statistics and meeting minutes the information that the Operations Committee meets the third Tuesday of every month. That has been the case for many years with very few exceptions. Our full board meetings are in April and October and are usually held right after the Operations Committee Meetings on those months.

If a new city in Milwaukee County wanted to pass Breed Specific Legislation, and asked for MADACC's opinion, help, or guidance, what would you say?

We deal with all requests of this nature on a case by case basis. Remember, because of the nature of being a "commission" we ARE the municipality. Occasionally a city or village may ask us for an opinion on potential ordinance changes or additions but our primary role is to simply enforce the laws they put in place.

How has the program of sending incoming kittens directly to WHS for care/fostering worked out so far this kitten season? Has MADACC been able to transfer small, nursing kittens directly to WHS for fostering in the event that there was no one available to do that at MADACC? Are you able to keep up with the large numbers of kittens coming in or are kittens, including very young ones, being euthanized?

If kittens are signed over by the finder as owned animals and are eating on their own, we can send them to WHS and other shelters and rescues soon after intake, and as far as that goes, we have been doing well with that. The program we have in place was not set up to address neonate kittens. We have been working very hard and our feline euthanasia numbers have been lower so far this year, but our busiest season is still ahead of us. I do not think any open admission shelter is immune to the struggle to keep up with the sheer numbers of cats and kittens brought to them over the summer months. We are saving all we can, and doing a better job at it than we ever have before and will continue to look for opportunities to do more.

Why does MADACC place different value on purebred dogs versus mutts? At past Sessions, the ED made very concerning comments such as 'I not only have pit bulls here, but I have old dogs, dogs with medical needs, and dogs that are not as desirable as a purebred'. Followed up by another comment that 'purebreds are highly desirable'. So non purebred dogs are undesirable based on what she said. What a poor message to put out there, and poor choice of words to send to out to adoptors . How are these comments going to encourage the public to adopt all the great mixed dogs there?

I do not agree that the comments were concerning, but certainly this interpretation of those comments is very concerning and appear to be misleading and adversarial. Obviously MADACC does not place different value on mixed breed dogs since our whole adoption program is geared solely toward pit bull terriers and pit bull type dogs which are mixed

breed dogs. The comments that were quoted in this question were made to illustrate that purebred dogs have rescue groups associated with them, and thanks to those groups, MADACC does not have to put resources into those animals. We can instead focus on the animals that do not have a rescue group to come for them and who need the most help, and those animals are the mixed breeds (including bully type dogs), the seniors, the sick and injured.

Anyone who works in animal welfare can also attest that adopters flock to shelters when there is a purebred dog available for adoption. MADACC once had an English Bulldog puppy and we had constant calls and drop-ins from people who wanted to adopt that puppy. Literally, over a thousand inquiries for one purebred puppy. But, the same is true for almost all purebred dogs at all shelters. I have actually had a person demand MADACC break our own rules and adopt a Boston Terrier to them because they did not want to pay “rescue prices”, because MADACC only charges \$100 for a dog adoption. I am not sure why stating the obvious is concerning to anyone. It is a fact, a sad one, but still a fact. I doubt that anyone in animal welfare “values” one dog over another. We do this because we love dogs, and cats and we do everything we can to get them into forever homes. Period.

MADACC’s message to adopters is always positive. We are the largest animal control facility in the state of Wisconsin and we are sending out a positive message about mixed breed dogs every single day. We are always encouraging the residents of Milwaukee County to adopt a great dog from us and the evidence of that can be seen advertised throughout the summer all over Milwaukee County during our “Pit Bull Proud” campaign.

How do you test dogs for dog to dog friendliness? What behavior from the dog constitutes he or she being labeled dog aggressive?

We don't label dogs, per-se. Dogs are evaluated through a procedure called temperament testing. However, we really can't "test" for temperament, so it's more of a behavior assessment. There are a series of tests and that information, along with handling and behavior with staff and owner info if applicable is combined to determine to the best of our ability a bit more information about the dog. Although there is some controversy over "temp testing", it's just one tool used by many shelter and animal control agencies. This is a tool (not a pass/fail test) to see what type of situation or home the dog might be most successful in. Aggression is the most common and serious behavior problem in dogs. To say that a dog is “aggressive” can mean a whole host of things. Aggression encompasses a range of behaviors that usually begins with warnings and can culminate in an attack. Aggression toward people, aggression toward dogs and aggression toward other animals are relatively independent patterns of behavior. If your dog is aggressive toward other dogs, for example, that doesn't mean they are any more or less likely to be aggressive toward people, though a dog may exhibit more than one type of aggression. We have discussed MADACC’s temperament testing practices repeatedly at these listening sessions and recommend referring back to the notes from previous listening sessions for more information.

How is it determined which Ops Committee member is the President of the Board? Is it always the West Milwaukee member?

The election of officers occurs at a bi-annual meeting of the Executive Board.

What was the feedback from the WHS Board members after they toured MADACC?

You will have to ask the WHS Board Members for their thoughts as we did not ask for feedback.

The monthly stats are improving every month for MADACC. Thank you and your crew for that! The summer months are always brutal on shelters. With all of the good things you have in place what more can we as a community do to keep the momentum going during the June to October time frame?

Things are already getting off to a rough start this summer and we are working super hard to keep up the positive outcomes we have been able to achieve. We need cat and kitten and dog fosters desperately! We need people to surrender owned animals to WHS instead of MADACC. Owner surrenders during busy months can take up resources that need to be used by the lost and abandoned animals in our community. Our transfer partners have been really working hard to pull animals from us and that has also helped a lot. Bottom line is that Milwaukee County is a diverse community with lots of animals and MADACC is always going to be here as a safety net for all that need us. We are working hard to make sure that every animal gets the help it needs and as many as possible can go back home or move on to new and loving homes.