

VOLUSIA COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

AUGUST 31, 2010

PRESENT: ALLYN WEIGEL  
KAREN CLARK  
CATHY DRIGGERS  
JULIE OZBURN  
DR. ALICIA EMERSON  
CATHERINE STORCH

REBECCA WILSON, DIRECTOR ANIMAL CONTROL  
SERGIO PACHECO, VCAC FIELD SUPERVISOR  
DEE FERGUSON, VCAC  
SHARI WILLIAMS, RECORDING SECRETARY

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

JOYCE FULTON  
JEANNINE COLLETTI  
BOB BELT  
MELISSA CRANIS  
ALAN KORNMAN  
WENDY GELLER  
BOB BAIRD  
GENE MILTON  
MICHAEL KIL  
SHIRA RUSSO  
LINDA KALAYDJIAN  
SUSAN PYNCHON  
CAROL GILGORE  
KEVIN HANCOCK  
MICHELLE PARI

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Weigel at 8:30 am. Roll call was taken by Shari Williams. Mrs. Mihalic is absent due to personal reasons; Mr. Minshew is absent due to a prior commitment. Louise DiDio and Walt Rubin are absent.

Mr. Weigel asks for an approval of the minutes for the August 10, 2010 meeting.

Mrs. Ozburn makes a motion for the minutes to be approved. Mrs. Driggers seconds it. The motion is passed.

Ms. Wilson: Welcome to all of you who are visiting us today. This is a called meeting of the Animal Control Advisory Board. To give you a little background of where we are, the County Council asked the Animal Control Board about three months ago to do research and study the free roaming and feral cat issue in Volusia County. They gave the Board five directives (see attached). This is one of the called meetings that the Board has. The Board is meeting with all of the individuals who are interested in participating or are already taking care of free roaming cats. Today is the day for cat rescue people to be a part of this Board meeting. We have a guest speaker who already has a program that's operating and is very successful in Orange County. I want to introduce to you Melissa Cranis.

Ms. Wilson reminds everyone to let Ms. Cranis give her presentation about her program and then allow the Board to ask her questions first, and then if the public has any questions or comments they would like to make we can do it then. That way it is kind of orderly. She also informs everyone that this is a recorded meeting that has to be transcribed and urges everyone to please talk one at a time and state your name before speaking.

Ms. Cranis: Thank you all for having me here today. I'm so excited that you have invited me and that you are interested in possibly doing a tnr program of some sort. I hope today that I can give you as much information that you will need to proceed on those lines. Becky was kind enough to give me a little bit of information on some of the questions you might have regarding tnr programs and the CARE Program in Orange County. I'm going to try an incorporate those as I go along. I will try to keep it as concise and as orderly as possible.

CARE was started 15 years ago. We are a 501c3. Nobody at all gets paid for anything with our organization. Everybody is a volunteer. It started with six ladies who wanted to make a difference. They hounded the County Commissioners and the Mayor about the tnr program that they had heard about and that they really believed in until the Commissioners finally gave in and said ok. We were originally funded through a trust by a lady who gave us money through her will and I believe the original amount was \$24,000. That money we still have in the bank. We try to work off its interest and we work off donations. Our goal and our mission statement is "the humane trapping of feral, stray and abandoned cats". The cats are altered through Orange County Animal Services where they are tested for feline aids, leukemia; they are getting a shot of antibiotic which CARE provides at our cost. Currently they are also being tested for heartworms. There's a new combo test out. It not only does the feline aids and leukemia but it also does heartworms. If they test positive for any one of those particular diseases they are put down. One ear is cropped for identification purposes. The left being a male, the right being a female. The cropping is done while the cat is under anesthesia. It's the top of the ear that comes off, the cartilage; it does not hurt the cat. There is not a standard for the amount of ear that comes off mainly because cats have different size ears. You can't really take too much off. We do have a tendency to take a little more off of the black cats, the solid black cats. As you know when you're out at night time and you want to make sure you don't retrap the same cat, you can check that ear a little bit

better when it's a little bit lower. The cats are recovered by our volunteers and then they are returned where they are found. We are a trap/neuter/return program. Our goal is to control the population of feral, stray and abandoned cats within Orange County.

All our funds, 100% of what we do, is paid for by Orange County taxes. We don't pay for anything. I go down at 7:30 in the morning on Monday morning where we have 40 appointments. We have always had 40 appointments from the very beginning. We started out with 40 and we still have 40. The cats are taken in at 7:30 in the morning. They are picked up after surgery between 3:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon. They are returned to the volunteer's home for recovery. The males are kept overnight just to make sure the anesthesia is out of their system, their eyes look good, we don't see any complications with the alteration and then they are returned. The females we keep 3-5 days. If they've had babies unfortunately we do abort kittens. We just don't have places for all these kittens to go. We don't have foster homes, etc. Kittens are aborted. If the mother has been recently nursing, we hold her a little bit longer. Maybe 10 days. As you all know that kneading action on the tummy can open up the incision. That incision is glued together, it's not stitched. We want to be really careful with our mommies to make sure that they go out healthy and they don't go out with any complications.

As far as our volunteers go, anyone who has used our services in my opinion is a volunteer. We do several functions a year, VegFest, Earth Day. I get out and talk to people frequently and try and recruit more volunteers because a lot of people don't know about us. I also work with Code Enforcement. So instead of referring the cats to Animal Services to be put down, they can refer them to us. Now recently Animal Services has decided they'd like to be a no-kill shelter for cats in particular. If you're familiar with Dr. Levy out of Gainesville, she's done several studies that show that the animals will cull themselves. If they have the feline aids, if they have the leukemia, over time, as you know once everybody's altered, aids being spread stops. Because there's no need, they're not fighting and as you all know it's through the blood. So there's no reason for the aids to continue. With leukemia, the kitties will die off on their own; as well. So they would rather not put any cat down. That's their goal and that's what we're working towards. We do have flyers that were made up and need to be revised at all times. These are our CARE flyers (see attached). Every Animal Services Officer carries these in their truck to give people who they visit an option: do you want the cats to be picked up by Animal Services and put down or would you like to go through CARE?

So as you can see over the years we've built a really strong bond and a really strong relationship and a partnership with Animal Services. Code Enforcement also carries these so they have the same opportunity. In Orange County there really isn't a regulation on how many pets you can have in your house. What happens is when you get in to a hoarding situation or you get in to extensive amounts of cats or dogs, ferrets or whatever you have, and your house is in disarray as well, Code Enforcement steps in and says you don't have a license to be a kennel. And that's where you kind of get into trouble with Orange County. So we try to keep it down by having everybody refer anybody who would come into those type of situations that's a city official or a county official, have these on hand so they can refer to us. Again, Dr. Levy who is the authority

on feral, stray and abandoned cats in Florida has done studies that if you talk to the neighbors and you give them the opportunity, and this will be a complainant neighbor with a nuisance cat and say if you have the opportunity to have the cat removed and disposed of, euthanized, killed however you want to say it, or you have the opportunity to do a tnr program what would you prefer? And even the crankiest of citizens would say tnr. They just don't want them killed. Sometimes they want them removed and every now and then we do have to go through and remove that one kitty which is just so naughty. So we do take those cats out and try to find a home for them. But the goal is not to put any cats down for any reason.

Again, we are totally sponsored by the County. We don't pay for anything. Currently we have 40 appointments on Monday and we have 5 appointments Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. They don't do any surgeries except for spay and neuters. So if you have any other issues, it's not a hospital veterinary clinic, it is strictly a spay/neuter clinic.

I think I have kind of given you the basics. And it would be my pleasure to answer some questions.

Mr. Weigel: For the benefit of the group, the first group of questions I'm going to let the Board ask before the public gets involved because of time and everything. Are there any questions from the Board at this time?

Mrs. Clark: How much do you contract from the County?

Ms. Cranis: Are you talking dollars?

Mrs. Clark: yes

Ms. Cranis: We don't even get into the dollars fees. We have an annual contract that we sign with them and all that contract states is how much the cat's going to weigh or how old the cat is before we bring it in. Currently we don't bring cats in less than 4 months old. We had a problem with kittens being too little to be altered. You have to realize it's not like going to your vet where the vet's looking at one kitty and then he does everything and then one kitty and does everything. You've got 40 cats lined up; so everybody goes out, everybody gets shaved, everybody get's shots, everybody gets an ear clipped.

Mrs. Clark: So you have 55 cats per week?

Ms. Cranis: 60

Mrs. Clark: Oh I had forty five, five and five. That's alright. So that's equivalent so whatever they would charge that's taxpayer but that's good.

Ms. Cranis: While you're on that topic, let me just go a little further with that. They did a survey years ago, and they off and on do it again, to see how much it's going to cost to euthanize one cat versus doing a tnr program. And they found that even on the very very conservative side, it costs \$180.00 for an Animal Control Officer to make one visit to go trap a cat. The chances of them catching that cat the first time, if it's a brand new colony, perhaps they're going to get their cat. But once you get farther into it, they're not going to get their cat. They have to leave the trap, they have to chain it some place to make sure it doesn't get stolen. They have to make sure somebody's not sabotaging their trapping. And then they have to find time in their schedule to come back, check the trap, or should the resident call them and say we have a cat trapped. Now they have to go away from some other duties that might be more important, maybe a biting dog, maybe other situations that are far more pressing, to go by and get the cat. If they don't now you have animal cruelty. Especially if it's raining and the weather elements. By joining with us, we stay with our traps. We never leave them. They don't have to go out at all.

When we very first started we were looked at as a free service. And in today's economy, that's an excellent way to begin a program. Everybody who works is overloaded with jobs. They are picking up 2 and 3 people's jobs because of the cutbacks and they don't have the funds to hire people to pick up all these extra pieces. Whereas if you have a tnr program that's in place and you have your volunteers out there doing the trapping for you, that saves not only the \$180.00 on the conservative side, but also the frustration level of overworked employees. And it shows the city this \$180.00 amount for a spay and neuter program is well deserved because look what it's saving us.

Also we're the only County that, our volunteers have to trap the cats. If you call me and say you've got 12 cats in your yard, I'm going to let you borrow my traps, but you're going to have to do the trapping, transporting, and recovery. Now for some reason you need assistance, perhaps you're elderly, the traps are heavy you can't pick them up, maybe you're on medication where you can't drive, we try and find volunteers to help out. But we don't have a core group of 6 or 10 or 100 volunteers that go out and just trap cats all over the place. We help them because it's important that they take responsibility and ownership for the cats in their area. And even if they say these aren't my cats, they're still part of your community; it's the place you live in, take ownership and responsibility for where you live. And help us get them under control. Again we don't have the volunteers who can go out to everybody's home, everybody's business and trap all the cats for them.

So what we've done is we have about 300-400 traps that we loan. You can borrow them at any time if we have them available. You set your appointments, you borrow the traps, you trap the cats, and you get the cats in. We acquired our traps through grants. Animal Services has a grant or through governmental grants. We also accept volunteer donations from anytime anybody uses our program. That helps buy new traps; it helps maintain the traps. If for any reason one of the CARE cats in an established CARE colony becomes injured or ill, it also helps for a portion of those medical bills to take

care of those cats. So when our cats go back out, they're healthy cats, they're going to live 4-7 years, maybe a little bit longer depending on the caretaker, and they're going to have a good healthy life. They're not going to go back with mange; they're not going to go back with any type of disease. They're going to be healthy cats.

Ms. Wilson: When you say that your program is sponsored by the County, you're talking about the spay and neuter?

Ms. Cranis: Yes

Ms. Wilson: It's money but it's represented in surgery, correct? In other words they're not giving you money to give to people to pay for the surgery.

Ms. Cranis: No. We don't exchange funds at all. Like I said we do one contract a year stating our agreement between the clinic, Animal Services as a whole and CARE. Our responsibilities and dollar amounts are not in that contract at all.

Ms. Wilson: You said that you have 60 appointments a week?

Ms. Cranis: Yes

Ms. Wilson: You've been doing this for 15 years and you still have 60?

Ms. Cranis: You started out with 40 and now we have 60. And it does fluctuate because just like with any company, you have people who get sick, you have people who need to go on vacation. You have people who have emergencies and so sometimes we lose appointments because of that. Especially after holidays, say the holiday falls on a Monday like this coming Labor Day, we wouldn't have any appointments Monday and we would have 20 on Tuesday. So basically we lose a lot of appointments that week. But we're still getting 20 cats in.

Ms. Wilson: So you have about 240 cats that you do a month through Animal Services?

Ms. Cranis: Yes

Ms. Wilson: And that's a County wide program.

Ms. Cranis: It includes all of Orange County.

Ms. Wilson: Do you know what the population is there?

Ms. Cranis: no, a lot.

Ms. Wilson: If you started out with 40, and you're now doing 60, is that because of the population increase in people or is it, I mean over 15 years you're spaying and neutering more animals, is the population of cats going down or going up?

Ms. Cranis: We only have 60 appointments a week because that's all they can give us. We would love to have every appointment they have in that book. And we could fill every one of them especially in the fall and in the spring during kitten season. Summer is a little iffy. Orange has to allow for the public to come in and have appointments. So that's all they can give us. We would take all of them in buckets and we could fill them all as well.

Ms. Wilson: But are they seeing a reduction in the number of cats?

Ms. Cranis: We don't really look at it as that. We look at it more as what are we preventing in the future. We did have an influx of cats in the last couple years with the economic situation. People are leaving and leave an unaltered cat behind. So we have had a big influx of cats over the past 2 years.

Ms. Wilson: Just to try and clarify in my mind, when Orange County has a complaint about a stray cat, instead of sending an animal control officer there, they call you.

Ms. Cranis: Yes

Ms. Wilson: You call the person and then set up trapping for them and then that person is responsible for taking the trap or making the appointment for the spay and neuter?

Ms. Cranis: Two different ways. They will come out and visit them, an officer will go out and visit and in the course of conversation they will hand them my flyer and say here's an alternative. Frequently they will call me at home and say I just finished visiting with so and so and here's the cat situation. Do you guys want to take it? And then I will go out personally and talk to them. I don't talk on the phone because I think it's better to see the situation. It shows a little more human contact. It shows a little more caring. So I go out and talk to them personally and see what we can do to help. And then we have a person who helps me coordinate those appointments and if they need any guidance that person takes care of it as well. We have developed a really fine system. It's a lot of volunteers spending an awful lot of time. And again, if they have any concerns at that time, if I find out they can't drive, or they have more than one cat that's an issue. By going out in person I can detect those things right away and target in on that and solve the problem all at one time as opposed to a little piece meal.

Ms. Wilson: You said that in most cases like 85% or 90% or 75% of the time, people will be willing to do that? But if you have somebody who says no, because you know we get the complaints about cats on people's cars and they don't want them there.

Ms. Cranis: Well that's one reason I go in person. A lot of times the reason they don't want them there is they don't understand that once that male cat is altered a lot of that naughty behavior is going to go away. And once they understand that they're like well ok then I'll give it a shot. But you know you always have that one bad kitty cat that just keeps spraying. You do have to remove it.

Mrs. Clark: Is this through the general fund? If Orange County is like Volusia County you have many cities as well as unincorporated areas. Our area covers the unincorporated areas and the few cities that they have signed on. Do you go through the general fund or where you can be in any one city within the County?

Ms. Cranis: It covers the entire County. And it doesn't matter where you, as a human being, lives. It's where's that cat? So if the cat's in Orange County and you live in Deland and you just work in that area and you want to trap those cats, they're covered. It's about the cats not where you are.

Ms. Wilson: Do you have any veterinarians that participate?

Ms. Cranis: No. Let me retract that. We have some low cost vets that will do low cost surgery for us. And that does come out of the CARE pocket. We do have to pay for that service. We try not to use them unless it's an emergency because we don't want to deplete out funds for that. We would rather put them into traps where we can get more people trapping.

Mrs. Storch: Where is the extra money coming from? How did the County generate the extra money?

Ms. Cranis: It's part of their budget. They realize that this is an excellent program, it's cost efficient especially right now during the economic times.

Mrs. Storch: It's not based on license fees or any of that?

Ms. Cranis: No. We're totally within their budget. And it's one thing when Animal Services goes in for their budget, I'm sure you guys felt the same squeeze, last year they were asked to cut back 14% and another 7% on top of that and this year they were asked to cut another 7% on top of what they cut last year. We were the only vendor, if you want to consider us a vendor, that didn't lose the contract or didn't have to renegotiate the contract. They really realize how important we are.

Dr. Emerson: Do you have an employee veterinarian or is it a volunteer is it one person or is it multiple doctors that participate?

Ms. Cranis: We have 3. We've tried to set up all of our CARE program whether it's picking up traps whether it's going to veterinarians, an east, middle and a west. So if you live in west Orange County, this veterinarian is going to be closest to you. And when we need to pick up traps this trap person is going to be closest to you. If you live in central Orange County, this veterinarian is going to be closest and again on the other side.

Mrs. Ozburn: I had a question about the trappers but I think you've answered that. But do you register with the colonies?

Ms. Cranis: No

Mrs. Ozburn: What do you do about educating? We're just started talking about this and you and I have talked awhile ago I think. We seem to be piece milling. Ok if the little old lady that calls us here and we go out and we catch a couple of those we can get them on the bus today. And then there's 8 kittens born next week because we didn't pick up that cat this week. How do you educate? What do you do to try and help people do it one colony or one part of a colony at a time? We all have an emergency and yet it appears from someone who is too hands on that we need to start stepping back and just trying to do one block at a time.

Ms. Cranis: It's not so much one block at a time, it's finding people who will take ownership of the situation and stick with it. And a lot of that is hand holding. We have excellent people on our call line. We have a number you call in 24 hours a day and you get an answering service. The call is returned within 48 hours. They tell you how to trap. They ask locations, how many cats you have, just gobs of information. Anything you could possibly need to make your trapping successful. When you go to pick up the trap, you then are inundated with an enormous amount of information. A lot of it is repetitive because you know when you're on the phone, you're not writing it down. Which a lot of these people are not. You forget so they go over it again. And then at all points they make sure how many more cats do you have? Are we getting close to your number? Then the week of the appointment, Thursday or Friday we have another group of people who call and remind them to trap, go over any questions they have again. And then their responsibility, the homeowner, the business, whatever it is, is to call the numbers in Sunday night to make sure they have, like if they're suppose to bring 5 cats in on Monday, Sunday night they've got to call our number and tell us that they've got five cats.

Now anywhere along the way, if there are any questions, if there's any concern, there's always a volunteer to step in and hold hands. And if that's helping them trap, we have volunteers that go out and set traps for them, go through it again with them, whatever they need to make it successful, to make sure they get all their cats. The biggest problem we find is people who have a cat that has to be put down for maybe aids or leukemia. And their heart breaks. This is little Fluffy that's been in their yard for 3 years and they are just so attached to little Fluffy and now the cat had to be put down. And they're just heart broken and they don't want to do it anymore. Why am I doing this if I'm just going to kill the cats? So that's when I'm on the phone and you just mop tears and you give the pep talk. And again say you know you've got to keep it under control, we've got to keep going with this, what you're doing is great, you're making a difference in the whole community not just in your yard and try and think of the bigger picture instead of just little Fluffy. And let's be sad for little Fluffy, but let's not forget about Fluffy's offspring that are now going to have more Fluffys. And usually I can get them back on track to trap some more.

Mrs. Storch: Do you guys deal with hoarders?

Ms. Cranis: I do.

Mrs. Storch: Which is a problem here.

Ms. Cranis: I think it's a problem everywhere. They're kind of sneaky. I started first working with hoarders with the SPCA. They had a criminal investigative officer. It just breaks their hearts to take their cats from them. So he found that if he had me go out and chat with them, they were more apt to go through a spay/neuter program. They could keep their 30 cats but they're not going to multiply. Thereby we're establishing that whole colony situation that you guys are all familiar with. So even though she's a hoarder, she's got 30 cats in her trailer, I let him talk about cleaning up the place because he's got the badge and he can be serious about it and then I'll talk to her about ok now let's spay and neuter, let's get everybody under control here so you don't have 50 cats in a couple months. Then everybody will be off your back and make sure you keep it clean. That's also gone over now to Animal Services. If they have a situation with a hoarder where we can step in and help out we do. Sometimes by the time Animal Services gets called it's just way out of control. You've guys have all seen it. The cats are dead, there are animals everywhere.

Mrs. Storch: We have zoning issues here. We have a limit to what you can have in certain municipalities in the County. So returning 30 cats to somebody in a trailer is probably not an option currently.

Mrs. Ozburn: How many a year do you have to place somewhere else?

Ms. Cranis: You know, I do not have that figure but I would guess no more than 8-10. And that's just a guess. We don't relocate very many cats.

Mrs. Ozburn: You do have CARE colonies somewhere?

Ms. Cranis: We have CARE colonies. We keep those quiet. As you all know most people who trap are women. We find it very unsafe to divulge our locations. First of all we don't want people dropping off more cats there, but even more important than that is when they're out there by themselves and they need to be safe.

Mrs. Clark: Do you feel that if a program like this was established here, and whatever 5013c group is in charge, they should be the one that carries that list of people who feed etc because if the County has that list it's open to public scrutiny.

Ms. Cranis: It is, and it also creates more paperwork for somebody who is already overworked. We're already doing it in Orange County with CARE we have it on computer. We have these elaborate spreadsheets that go back years. If for some reason a colony is under control, maybe they've had 5 cats and it's all fine then all of a sudden we're getting complaints that there are gobs of cats. We can go back and find who did the initial trapping and say "what happened, let's get back on it". Or Animal

Services can call at any time and say I have an issue with whatever address and I can get online and find out “oh yeah we have a colony there let me send somebody out”. So the officer never even has to go out there. Again that’s saving money.

Ms.Kalaydjian: How much marketing do you do and how many volunteers do you actually have. If I understand correctly that the three different divisions of the 40 appointments, people go to different vets in different areas or is there a central (inaudible) as well? I was not clear. There are 40 appointments but where are they all, in different places?

Mr. Weigel reminds the audience to please allow the Board a chance to speak before questions from the public.

Ms. Cranis: The 60 appointments are all through Orange County Animal Services. If for any reason they have emergencies and we’re short appointments and we have pregnant cats and we’ve got pregnant cats that need to get in asap, that’s when we go to private vets.

Ms. Kalaydjian: So they have staff vets?

Ms. Cranis: Yes they do, they have 2 doctors, they have techs and they have administrative backup for us. We don’t keep a number on volunteers because anybody who uses our program is, in my mind, a volunteer. So if I have someone at a home who is disabled and I have someone who is 3 blocks down who has just finished trapping, I’m on the phone to that person saying “can you do some transporting for your neighbor?” To me that’s a volunteer. As far as marketing, we do not do a lot of marketing, we target code enforcement, Animal Services when they go out and talk; they send our fliers out. I try and do a representation of all the animal rights, animal consciousness events so people can come by and either volunteer with us or say “I have a cat problem how do I take care of it?” We’ve always been really low key until the past 4 or 5 years and now we’re a little more out in public. We’ve gotten huge; we’re just really really big.

Ms. Wilson: Of course we’re looking at different programs and we want to take the best of what your program has. If you’re a non-profit group that kind of is the contact hub, so to speak, of the wheel of all the other people that really is involved already. For instance in our County, we have a lot of people and some of them are represented here, who are doing this on their own. And have been doing this for years at their own expense. Do you have groups within your County that still pretty much do their own thing or does everybody work with you and within your organization. Do you have any kind of turf issues?

Ms. Cranis: No we’re the big cat in town. We have a lot of adoption groups and we have a lot of rescue groups but everybody comes through CARE. They come together to go through CARE. And at times there has been talk of people branching off and starting another organization but really what’s the point? Now you’re cutting services

that could benefit everyone. Why reinvent the wheel and have some competition. Let's keep all the appointments where they need to be. It's set up, it works, everybody knows what they're supposed to do, who they're calling, what their organization is, don't mess with it.

Ms. Wilson: With the people, who call in and say they want to use CARE, I want to make this clear and for the record, if someone has a problem and Animal Services goes out, they give them one of the fliers. That person is the person who takes responsibility for the cat or cats in that particular area, and they do the feeding? Are there feeding stations?

Ms. Cranis: Yes they are called care takers. It depends on where you are. In Orange County you can't see the food from the road. If you want to feed in your backyard, have it at it. But we don't want to see it on the front; we don't want to see piles of food in the driveway, gets rained on and all mushy and nasty. None of that. When I talk to people, the food cannot go out before dawn and it has to be picked up by dusk, thereby discouraging raccoons and opossums. Once you start doing that, now you get complaints "well if you didn't feed the cats we wouldn't have so many raccoons in the neighborhood." The raccoons are already there but they love cat food. So that's one thing we have to make sure that that's taken care of. They are called care takers; they come underneath the umbrella of CARE.

We're trying to change the city ordinance which would be the first, I believe, in the United States to recognize free roaming cats. Right now there's an ordinance that says if you feed the animal over 30 days it's now yours. Now you're responsible for the shots, you're responsible for the upkeep. So what we're trying to do is recognize feral cats, free roaming cats, as a city ordinance. Because you feed squirrels, you feed ducks, everybody's got bird feeders but you don't have to keep up with them. So these aren't domestic pets. These aren't your little house kitty that's going to be in your house, you're petting it. Ok those you want to keep up with the shots but once you start working with the CARE program, you don't have to worry about that. They get a 3 year rabies shot when they go out and then the chances of retrapping the cat to get a shot are minimal so we don't have to worry about keeping up with that. Now if you're in a residence or if you're in a business, you're a caretaker. Sometimes what the people will do with hotels, timeshares, some of the bigger businesses, they will set up a feeding station. And they will design it to compliment the architecture of the building. They will put it into the position where the employees can enjoy it, but where it's not going to be distracting. If they aren't going to do a feeding station, perhaps they're going to put it by a dumpster in the back where it's away from the kitchen area, away from doors, any of those kinds of health issues that might arise.

So those are a couple of different options we have. We have some golf courses that set the feeding stations in the rough. It does need to be at least 3 feet off the ground, 2-3 feet off the ground. It does need to have a roof on it that extends over because even with rain you know how it blows. Food dishes must be picked up continually. If you're feeding at a home or a business, no food dishes rolling around with the wind. If you're

going to feed you pick up right away. You only put enough food out for those cats and then you clean up afterwards thereby no leaving litter and unpleasant sights for that business.

Ms. Wilson: Have you had any problems with rabies as a result of colonies or care takers?

Ms. Cranis: No we have not.

Ms. Wilson: Have you had any problems with the health department?

Ms. Cranis: The only time I've had a problem with the health department is when the cats have been too close to a door. Country clubs have been the big ones, where the door to their restaurant is on the outside. All we did is we gradually moved the feeding station farther away from the door. Because the cooks want the cats around because it's a free exterminating service. They're fine with them around but you don't want them sneaking in the back door. We just encourage the employees to go out. We have found through research that they're going to feed cats anyways. You can threaten to fire them, you can threaten lawsuits, you can do whatever you want, those cats are going to get fed. So instead of causing discord, find a win-win situation where they can be fed and nobody feels like they're going to lose their job or their life or their house or anything like that over them.

Mrs. Clark: What does CARE stand for?

Ms. Cranis: It originally was CAARE. Let me see if I can remember this right because it only last a couple of months. It was Citizens Alliance Against Regulatory something or another. It got passed so there was no reason to have that acronym anymore so they just dropped one of the "A"s and kept it as CARE. It originally was CARE Feline Rescue Inc. We got tons and tons of calls to come get cats out of attacks out of rafters out of trees, sick cats, cats that got hit by cars, and we don't do rescue. We're tnr, trap, neuter and return. So almost 2 years ago we changed the name to CARE Feline TNR so we wouldn't have all those rescue issues.

Mr. Weigel: Where do you get all your volunteers from? Do they just see it in the paper?

Ms. Cranis: We use to run an ad asking for volunteers to answer phones, to do non-trapping issues. We got a few volunteers but usually our volunteers come from people who have actually used our services. They've actually done tnr in their neighborhood or they know somebody who has done tnr or they lived in another city that did tnr and they're so glad to finally find us and they can't wait tnr. We have people call us hysterical because "there are five cats in the neighborhood". And we're like "ok yeah 5 cats fine. Come here when you've got 80". We treat them all as it's important. Let's get those 5 cats then let's work on that 80 group of cats. We have everything from just a few to gobs of them.

Mr. Weigel opens the discussion for public participation

Ms. Kalaydjian: How do you interface with your humane society if you work with them in anyway? What is their euthanasia rate with cats and dogs?

Ms. Cranis: We do not interact with our humane society. Humane Society in Orange County deals only with private individual pets. Since our cats are not pets, they don't want anything to do with us. They don't want to work with us. It's not really quite the way to say it but it's not a relationship that is workable. We need to go through Animal Services who deals with the public and all those cats. If you had a feral cat and you took it to the Humane Society they walk it right across the street to Animal Services.

Ms. Kalaydjian: Do you know how much euthanasia goes on?

Ms. Cranis: I don't have their numbers but a lot of their euthanasia is done through Animal Services.

Ms. Kalaydjian: Can a private citizen use your service for a personal cat in their house?

Ms. Cranis: Not a personal cat. If the cat is declawed, has a collar on it, shows signs of being previously altered, it shows signs of ownership and therefore it does not go through our program. Now the only exception is with the economic times, all those that have been left behind. If we can show that that cat is a stray cat now, then we will. If you come in on your Monday appointment and you talk about how little Fluffball loves lying on your bed, they're going to say "thanks for coming bye. Make an appointment though the general". They're not even going to take your cat.

Ms. Pynchon: You just said, if I understood you correctly, that if an individual brings an animal to the humane society, then the humane society walks it over to Animal Services? Does Animal Services contact you?

Ms. Cranis: No. If you take a feral, stray or abandoned cat over to the Humane Society, they're going to take the cat from you and they're going to walk it across to Animal Services or they're going to direct you to go to Animal Services. Now if it's your private cat, humane society is going to help you out the best they can. If you end up over at Animal Services, they will impound the cat for whatever reason and they'll evaluate it and decide whether it's going to be put down or go in through adoption.

Mrs. Colletti: I think what you're doing is fantastic, maybe one day for us. In the situation and this is not hypothetical this is fact, where if a volunteer or someone like ourselves or anybody in this room were to come across a situation where the cats are being fed, you're talking well over a hundred in one area, pregnant, you can't get past it. And somebody calls and says "help" and the people that see this are willing to help trap, they are willing to do whatever is necessary other than having the funds to do it. And the proprietor says "don't care where they go, get rid of them". This is what we run into a lot with tnr. It's like it's a great thing. But where do we put them? The majority don't want

(inaudible) We try, I called at one time a number, Bob gave me and "I don't want these two cats, I have no where to put them" I said you have a dog house? And she said no. Well we donate dog houses. And by the time we got done, we talked them into keeping the cat in the dog house. I said do you have high blood pressure, she said no. I said you will. And she says you have rats? She goes no. I said you will, get rid of the cat.

Ms. Cranis: That's what we do. One of the things that we do is I go out and I talk to management. I explain the benefits of tnr and what you guys are all familiar with. I talk to them about the behavior situation that's going to go away. I talk to them about the vacuum effect. I talk to him about the positives of keeping cats around, the fact that once everybody's altered; they're not going to breed anymore. Once they establish that colony within 4-7 years they're going to die off. And I have yet had anyone say "still take the cats away".

Dr. Kil: Is the (inaudible) role then to have stable populations of healthy cats not reproducing that have the balance to keep vermin and so forth down and after 4-7 years would we expect the populations to be stable and be replaced by other trapped tnr animals? Is it to get rid of all cats or to get a stable reasonable population?

Ms. Cranis: The goal is to control the over population. However we can control the over population, that's the goal. If the cats are going to die out within 4-7 years and the population is going to go away, should it start to come back after maybe 5 or 6 years, you start the tnr program all over again. However normally, they're not going to come back because they already know that there's not a food source there and the shelter is no longer available.

Mr. Hancock: So really what you're trying to do is to create the situation so that over time all the cats in the colony die within 4-7 years. That's what you're saying.

Ms. Cranis: We try to control the population to stop the over breeding as a by product of that, the colony will die out within 4-7 years.

Mr. Hancock: So all you're doing is taking what a normal life span would be, putting them out in the wild spayed and neutered, giving them 3 years of vaccination and saying within 4-7 goodbye we'll see what happens after that.

Ms. Cranis: And it's a humane way, the cat's dying out on it's own, it's not being killed.

Mr. Hancock: Have you done the studies to say they just humanely die of old age in 4 years?

Ms. Cranis: The studies have been done that 4-7 years depending on the caretaker, they sometimes live longer if you have a really good caretaker and they're well taken care of, sometimes the colony will last longer. But that's the average.

Mr. Hancock: What do they die from?

Ms. Cranis: They get hit by cars, they're out in the elements, they don't have protection, and there are predators.

Mr. Hancock: So this isn't really for the benefit of the cats it's to help get rid of the colonies over a longer period of time.

Ms. Cranis: It's both.

Mr. Hancock: Ok, because to me humane is not having being hit by a car and suffering or being out in the exposure and dying from that. That's just me. What's your organizational budget? In other words you keep saying "we have no dollar amounts on these contracts" well obviously the County gives you money because you're doing 60 spays and neuters.

Ms. Cranis: The County does not give us anything.

Mr. Hancock: What is their piece of that? How much do they invest to do those 60 spays and neuters with their 2 vets and their technicians.

Ms. Cranis: It's their cost and that is not something that we get into.

Mr. Hancock: So you don't know what it cost them.

Ms. Cranis: No

Mr. Hancock: So there's no way we can compare and say here's what we spend on spaying and neutering and euthanasia versus what they have to spend for your program.

Ms. Cranis: I'd be happy to see if I can find those numbers for you. You could assume that you have one veterinarian, the cost of his day, you have techs that are probably working at minimum wage if not a little bit above, and you have the cost of the shots.

Mr. Hancock: And the operation supplies

Ms. Cranis: The operational supplies, Ivermectin is furnished by us, they're not holding the cats for any type of surgery so you don't have kennel situations nor kennel staff.

Mr. Hancock: Right but do you have to have the operating room?

Ms. Cranis: They have their own operating room, they have a full clinic

Mr. Hancock: So there's a facility they have to upkeep. And you said there's 3 vets in your County?

Ms. Cranis: 2 vets. The vets in Animal Services, there are 2 vets that work for Animal Services. That's their job. And then we have 3 vets that we use for low income, low cost veterinary services scattered throughout Orange County. So those vets don't go under our contract with Animal Services those come out of our pocket. We pay \$49.00-\$50.00 for spay and neuter. And it doesn't matter whether the cat's pregnant or not.

Mr. Hancock: Now who uses those services?

Ms. Cranis: Only in emergencies. If for some reason we're full with Animal Services and we have a pregnant cat, our goal is to make sure that cat does not have babies, we can't fit it in for another 2 weeks.

Mr. Hancock: These are contracted vets, they're not fulltime employees?

Ms. Cranis: No. They have their own veterinary practice. One vet does charge us a little more if we do have a lactating female and if there's an abortion. The other 2 do not.

Mr. Hancock: Who monitors compliance? Because a lot the issues with your regs about taking the food in, making sure that it doesn't stay over night One of the issues we have is a lot of times they're not (inaudible) these places. So how do you go back and say "well alright we're going to convince you" and the person that you convince is now gone, moot, decides "I'm not going to take care of these cats anymore". Do you go back and monitor compliance of these colonies to make sure they're fulfilling what your requirements are in terms of the facilities and the food and all those things?

Ms. Cranis: We found that people who are interested in this program and who want to be a care taker for a colony are devoted to that colony. They don't just up and leave and say "I can't take care of the colony anymore". If they know they're going to have to move, say they get another job and they're not going to be able to take care of that colony, they're on the web, they're on the phone trying to find a care taker 2 months before they ever leave. These cats are their kids. They know every whisker on them. If for any reason you have issues like the food dishes being blown around, we're going to hear about it. Somebody's going to call and hear about it. And I go out and talk to them or somebody else goes out and talks to them and we make sure that "ok if you want to not have anymore issues with this cat, this is what you're going to have to do. And I don't care if someone else is doing it, you make sure it's picked up". Because we've had situations where like a fence company, and the lady was only allowed to feed on the front door step and on the right side of the building. And that's the only place she could feed. And the food dishes were blowing. So she had to stay with the cats until they finished eating and pick the dishes up. But they kept finding food dishes blowing. So the employer got very cranky as we can all understand. And we got the phone call; "you either have that person quit feeding because my yard looks like trash". And I got on the phone to her and I just said "this is the circumstances, you're either going to have to quit feeding or these cats are going to starve or you've got to start picking up". And she says "I pick up all the time". And I said "then start picking up everybody else's trash. Make sure everything is picked up". And that's what she did.

Mr. Hancock: We all get calls and I think I can speak to everyone in the room, where we get calls from people that have lost jobs, our economy is not very good here, that have 4 or 5 cats they need to do something with them. If you were to get that call, and they say "I'm leaving town, I need to go live with my mother in Pittsburg, I have these 5 cats I've taken care of. I need to do something with them". And we all get these calls. What do you say to that person. Because that doesn't fit into your program.

Ms. Cranis: Are these inside kitties or are we talking about ferals?

Mr. Hancock: All inside kitties.

Ms. Cranis: Inside kitties we try to refer to adoption groups because you're right they don't fit into our program. We refer them to adoption groups and we try to see (inaudible)

Mr. Hancock: So you're dealing with simply and only feral cats that you're trap, neutering and return them so that they can, over time, 4-7 years die out.

Mr. Cranis: Right. If it is the colony that we are talking about, I just want to add onto this, if this is the colony that she has to leave to go live with mom, maybe somebody passes away and we've got 5 cats in the backyard that she feeds. We try to find another feeder in the area to walk those cats overtime to their location and see if they'll work in the colony. If they won't then we will put out an all points to see if we can move these cats to different colonies so they'll survive. And we have done that on many occasions. And we also get those calls from Animal Services, they will call us and say so and so passed away and we notice 6 cats with ear tips, do you guys want to take care of them? And we do.

Ms. Pari: Has Animal Services seen a reduction in euthanasia?

Ms. Cranis: They have. And again their goal is to not euthanize any cats. That's their goal they are trying to work on now. We're actually starting a program which we call the "Zip Code" and we also call it "Ferals for Farms" and the goal is to target zip codes that they get the most calls for cat nuisance calls. And to target those areas and do tnr in there and education. And then get that colony all taken care of and then move to the next one. We're also looking at a program that if an officer goes out and has to trap a cat for a nuisance or for whatever reason and brings it in and it isn't tipped, they do a tnr program and we look for farms or people with large pieces of property that we can relocate the cat instead of putting it down. And the only part CARE would have in that is helping them find locations and doing transporting and educating the people who are going to have the cat.

Mrs. Storch: Are you guys using GIS to map with zip codes and stuff?

Ms. Cranis: Animal Services is, and it's really a great tool.

Mr. Weigel: If per chance our County decided that we would like to consider a program similar to what you do and it seems to be working very well on Orange County which is about 4 times our size. If we could call on your group to help start a program like this, would you assist us in any manner?

Ms. Cranis: We would be tripping over ourselves getting up here to help you.

Mr. Weigel: That's pretty fast

Laughter and applause from many

Mr. Weigel: The reason I'm bringing it up because having watched this program from a personal standpoint for many years and listening to all the problems in the cat areas, we seem to have one up in Ormond Beach, a very successful station feeding program. The officer up there says "we don't have a cat problem in the Ormond Beach area". They take care of all the feral cats and things of that sort. That sounds like a good fit in a small town community but if you cover all the small towns, the whole County, then we could call on you. Are there charges that would be involved with the County? It's obvious that the big bulk of your money is coming from the County to handle the very heavy load. Which you are lucky.

Ms. Cranis: Yes sir, we are very fortunate.

Mr. Weigel: You are very lucky to have veterinarians and it's all keyed in. How many years would you say, 2-3 years did you have it under fairly good control? What do you think the time limit say from the start. 18 months, 20?

Ms. Cranis: Are you talking about control of the cats or control of getting an organization well established and up and running?

Mr. Weigel: Both

Ms. Cranis: I think with any organization, there are always growing pains that you have to look at. There's always changes that come up that you have to be aware of. And you have to be constantly looking to do better to see how you can adjust your way of doing things to better accommodate what you need to have happen. A great example is the economy. We weren't ready for that. But we had to adjust; we had to adjust with all these new cats coming in what are we going to do? We went online, we've got facebook, and we've got all those new technical things out that weren't available to us when we started out 15 years ago. So as times change, and technology is available to us, you have to have people with vision that can see these things and a group that's willing to make adjustments because as you know working with volunteers and groups, people don't like change.

Mr. Weigel: We do have in this County people who are dedicated and I see quite a few here that do take care (inaudible). To me they would be the type the County could franchise and put in charge of a group once we identify them. But you go to the individual a lot. I'm thinking more where you get the greatest number of feral cats is would be in a colony. And if the colony were place right, you would be caring for a lot of these animals. It's really a 4-7 year program and they're out. I understand that versus the humane societies that try to keep those that they can but there's a limitation to what they can because you've got cost factors. It's a business. It's a commodity. I hate to use that word because people come down on me that you don't love animals. That's not true. But there comes the cost of feeding and care and people who's going to maintain this group. You seem to have just locked into the one area. Can we incorporate colonies?

Ms. Cranis: You can't set up a colony on how you want it. Cats will set up the colony. They'll decide how many.

Mr. Weigel: I understand that believe it.

Ms. Cranis: When our colonies get established, somebody works there, somebody drove past there somebody lives there. And they want to make a difference. And this is what they want to do. And this is the colony they want to work. So they're the ones doing it, we assist them.

Mr. Weigel: If we come under the umbrella of the County in respect to monies and things like that, and you have a group out here, and I use the word franchise because we know that's an established group of people who have the dedication and they also could internally do their own recruiting for their replacement. You always have to be looking at who's going to take over.

Ms. Cranis: There are bumps along the way, that's going to happen. And you do have to look at it as a business. You'd have to make sure everybody's doing what they say they're going to do. You have to make sure you have all your areas covered. You have to make sure you have enough volunteers who are dedicated. I feel that everybody needs to have a backup. We have person who does bailouts, if one of our cats comes into Animal Services, it gets tagged, and we get called. She checks where it was picked up, who's the closes trapper calls them and gets them back out. She needs a backup. What if she's sick? What if she decides I can't do this anymore? What if she gets a job that doesn't allow it? That's part of an organization and it's part of growing and it's part of just watching over it and making sure it's housekeeping.

Mr. Hancock: If we were to ask, because you obviously you do get funds from the County. If we were to take these recommendations and say "wow I really think this is a great idea". The County is going to say "alright how much is it going to cost us to start this program. What is the number?" They're not going to say we have an open ended contract. In your estimation to start a program from scratch, what kind of number within a range are you talking about?

Ms. Cranis: Man you're killing me. Well I think it depends on how you want to divide it up. If you want your group, like in our case CARE, we bought our own traps, they don't own our traps we own our traps. So where can you get the best deal, what kind of traps do you want? So you have your cost of your traps. So that's something that is market value at any given time you have to do your research and see what you want. They go anywhere from, if you buy in bulk \$ 35.00 to \$80.00. So you can even go higher if you want. We even have remote control traps. We have drop traps; those are things you acquire along the way. You start out small just like you would anything else, and add as you have money. You get a big donation from somebody, you buy traps. You keep buying traps. Then you go back and find out through your Animal Services their spay and neuter clinic. How many vets are they going to give you on what day? And how many staffing. These are County employees.

Mr. Hancock: Do we have any County vets?

Ms. Wilson: We have one on the bus.

Mr. Hancock: that's it, on the bus.

Ms. Cranis: Well the bus is really good because the bus can be scheduled in certain areas. And people who whine about I can't take the cats, it's too far to drive. Well you know that bus is going to be in your area on blah blah blah day. Get yourself down there and get on it.

Mr. Hancock: If we do the bus, that was one of the options. We would still have to get all the cities to allow us to use the bus in their cities. They'd still have to pass that right?

Mrs. Clark: That's why I asked if they did it through the general fund or their unincorporated fund. And she said it goes through the general fund.

Ms. Cranis: And our bus has been broken for years. So we haven't had a bus that goes out for awhile. So all of ours are done at the clinic at Animal Services.

Mr. Hancock: Which is a separate facility with a vet. All of that would have to be part of the initial start up.

Ms. Cranis: It all goes underneath. We have the clinic that's the kennel and the administration building are all together and everything goes down there right now.

Ms. Wilson: I think we're getting in the weeds a little bit on some of this. We're just hearing from the CARE program and how theirs works today. We are a smaller county in compared with Orange County. And the clinic that you're talking about that you use and what the government provides, you're a non-profit group and you have funding of your own that takes care of the traps. You have volunteers that actually do the work.

The part that the government contributes is the spay and neuter and the vaccinations. And that's it. They don't give you money for traps; they don't give you money for food.

Mr. Weigel: Wait, no money for food?

Ms. Cranis: No, we handle everything.

Mr. Weigel: I wan everybody to hear that.

Ms. Cranis: One more thing, Animal Services has a grant program set up and we apply for their grant every year. And you can apply up to \$2,000.00 and we take that money and we buy traps every year.

Ms. Wilson: The other thing I wanted to clarify too is that Orange County has a stationary clinic for spay and neuter. I've been over there; it's probably as big as this room. And we have a bus with very limited space. Our veterinarian does not want to have feral cats the day she's doing dogs. So we have a designated day for ferals.

Ms. Cranis: Our Monday's are like that. Mondays are all feral cats and then the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday we have the five in and they try and keep us together as a group. A lot of times that doesn't work but you only have 5 going in. It's not like you have the 40 going in.

Ms. Wilson: We only have the capacity for 22 animals period because of cages.

Mrs. Russo: There's already in Volusia County, dozens of people doing tnr at their own expense. I have spent thousands and thousands of dollars even with low cost spay. We need something like this here before I go bankrupt. I don't mind doing it. Another thing about the 4-7 years, I don't know of one colony that you don't get a drop off once every 3 months. People are always going to drop off cats. I think this should be mandatory in our area.

Mrs. Clark: You had mentioned before that on the bus there's 22 cages but according to her, they have their people there, so if they're going to take the animal that's done. And you have your 22 cages but you also have the carriers that these people are going to take so you won't be filling your bus with 22, it's actually whatever your vet can handle because there will be people there putting those cats back in a carrier and leaving the bus. They won't be like stored there for the day. You would have room.

Ms. Cranis: They do need to watch them to make sure that every cat comes out of anesthesia correctly. Cats sometimes don't come out for whatever reason. We found a lot of issues with heartworms and with the anesthesia they're not coming out from under that, they may have heart issues. So they do hold the cats for observation to make sure everybody comes out first before they go home.

Mrs. Clark: Right and if they this they need to have a vet tech who would volunteer there and we find a location for the bus, say like a Lion's Club, that has their own building. They could put the bus there if it's acceptable, the animals can be placed in carriers inside the building, is that an option?

Ms. Cranis: That's exciting, that would be fabulous. With ours they have to be in a trap or a hard carrier. No soft carriers. They are too hard to get the cats out of those things. No laundry baskets with wood on top, no shopping carts with wood on top.

Mr. Baird: The County has done really good helping us with ferals on the bus. However all cities are blocked. Only County people can use the bus. So we've got a big problem. Because everybody in all these cities are saying "help us help us". I say "I can't help you" We don't know how to get around that. The cities do not want to pay; they do not want to get on board.

Ms. Cranis: You know it's strategic; it's talking to your congress people, your commissioners, your mayors, getting everybody on board. I think this is a big step right here. This is a positive moment we are having. If everybody puts their head together and starts working together and shows the benefits of what can happen, and that you're willing to be cohesive as one united group and make things happen for the good of the cats and put the cats first, I think you'll be far more successful and you'll have open ears to having this project come forward.

Mr. Weigel: That's what we're here for. At the end of this term here, Becky's going to have to put together a presentation that we're going to give to the County. And this is one of them and why she got you up here. You have a program that's successful and we'd like to borrow all the best of whatever we feel is going to be best for Volusia County. That's why this step was made.

Ms. Fulton: Has your group ever had to deal with the Freedom of Information Act? Has anybody approached you for that?

Ms. Cranis: No. The cats that go through, when they come through Orange County, we get at the end of the day a piece of paper that shows the cat's name, if it was pregnant, how many kittens were aborted, if it was tested, the stickers from the vaccines are on there and this is all a copy. And then the rabies tag is attached. And that goes home with each trapper. They also keep a copy of that on file so if the public want to go dig through that, it's public information, they can. But good luck trying to find it because it's just another sheet of paper. It's not listed by colony; it's listed in a different fashion.

Ms. Pynchon: I can see that everybody is trying to look at the big picture and I would like to urge you to continue to do that. To not limit yourself to thinking about the bus for example, and I can see that you're not doing that. This is a great time to look at the big picture and try to see what changes can be made.

Mrs. Clark: In regards to the Freedom of Information Act there's also Homeland Security that also protects the homeowners name and address to public scrutiny.

Mrs. Colletti: I know when I first heard that the animals live maybe 4-7 years that does concern me just a little bit. I've see them die in the road. I've literally had to put them down myself in the road. That wasn't humane. On the other hand I've seen neighbor's cats that are let out and were road kill within 2 days. So, it's six of one half dozen of another.

Ms. Cranis: we really want to give the cats the best life we can. They're out there under really ugly circumstances to begin with because it's humans fault that they are out there to begin with. If somebody had spayed and neutered from the beginning you and I would all be out there shopping for shoes and handbags right now. Maybe having coffee. But people who are the ones who didn't take responsibility for the ownership of their animal and it's all we can do now is to pick up the pieces and try and put it back together. A lot of times I feel like I'm a Band-Aid on a situation and that's all I do. I just keep putting the Band-Aid on. But then you hear of all these moments where the cat survived, the cat lived, the colony is doing great, people who were at one time so negative about the cats now are so happy to have that colony with them. It just makes what you do, takes that band aid off and says ok I did good.

Mrs. Colletti: I think when you really get down to it it's quality life as opposed to quantity of life.

Ms. Cranis: Thank you all. If I can help you with anything I'll be around.

Mr. Weigel: The next meeting will be September 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at the Fire Services Training Institute on Tiger Bay Road.

Ms. Wilson: That's with our Veterinarians. So it's an important meeting.

Mr. Weigel adjourns the meeting.



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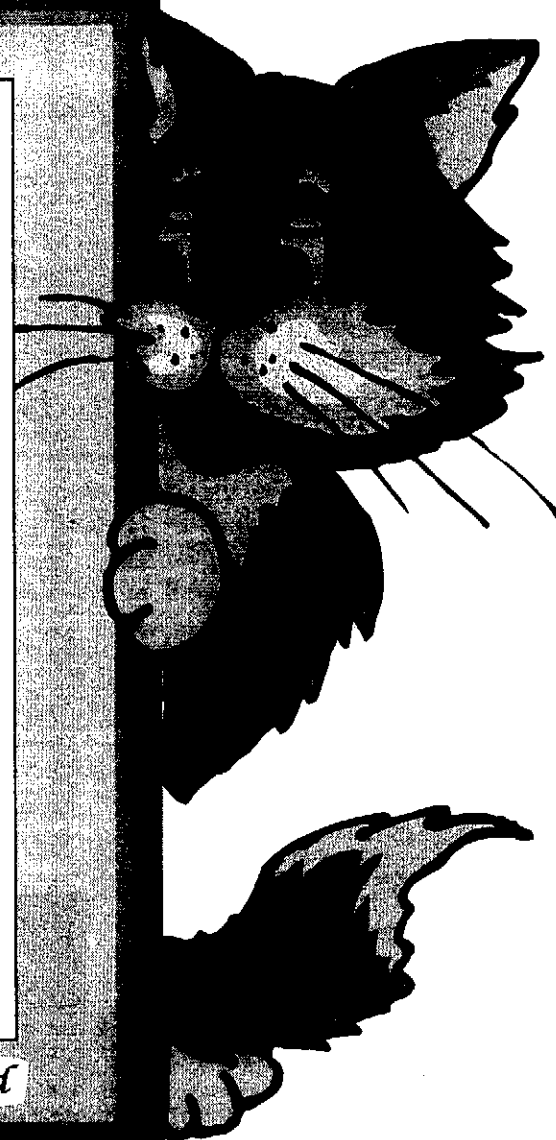
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2. Call **CARE Feline Rescue** to get advice, support and equipment for doing Trap-Neuter-Return. Make an appointment through CARE for the cats to be seen at Orange County Animal Services.  
CARE's phone number: (407) 522-2617  
CARE's Internet address: [www.carefeline rescue.org](http://www.carefeline rescue.org)
3. **TRAP:** Borrow a trap from CARE and humanely trap the cats in the colony.
4. **NEUTER:** Take the cats on your appointment day to Animal Service to be spayed or neutered, eartipped (for identification), and vaccinated.
5. **RETURN:** Take care of the cats through recovery from surgery (1-3 days), then return them to their established outdoor area. Provide food and water daily and keep an eye on their well-being.

### **By Following These Steps You Have:**

- ✓ **Prolonged the life of the cats**
- ✓ **Improved the cats' health**
- ✓ **Stopped the cycle of breeding**

Source: Alley Cat Allies, 7920 Norfolk Ave, Suite 600, Bethesda, MD 20814

County Council Directives  
Animal Control Advisory Board

1. Conduct research to discuss and determine the scope of the free roaming cat problem county-wide.
2. Identify solutions to address the free roaming cat problem.
3. Explore options for implementation of the solutions and include local veterinarians, rescue groups, city animal control officers, animal shelters, and animal non-profit organizations that partner with local government to address the free roaming cat problem
4. **Determine what funding may be available from grants to support a free roaming cat program. Money may be available to non-profit organizations that partner with local government to address the free roaming cat problem.**
5. **Identify a reputable local non-profit rescue group to lead, manage and have oversight over the free roaming cat program.**