



Date: 01/09/2020

VCAS Case #: F191860116

Timeline of Events

- **July 5, 2019**= Inspection of property took place as a result of citizen complaints. Director Adam Leath and Dr. Jennifer Green conducted the inspection. Violations of Volusia County Ordinance Chapter 14 and Florida Statutes 828 were observed on the premises of 1899 Mercers Fernery Rd. Specifically, the following observations regarding the care and treatment of animals were made:
 - Untreated/improperly managed medical conditions. Several of the animals have serious health conditions that are not being managed fully.
 - Lack of appropriate vaccinations and county licensure for dogs and cats
 - Lack of appropriate, state mandated, Coggins Testing for horses
 - Incomplete/absent medical records.
 - Current cleaning and sanitation practices are not effective in maintaining a clean and healthful environment for the animals.
 - Current daily monitoring practices and routine veterinary inspections are delinquent.
 - The housing conditions for the dogs and cats at Journey's End were inadequate for the animals.
 - The group size of the dogs and cats were too large and did not allow for proper monitoring of the animals.
 - Storage and labeling of medications were deficient. Some temperature-dependent medications being stored inappropriately. Expired medications and medications without labels were also seen throughout.

- **July 25, 2019**- Order to provide care was issued to Florence Thout. The order stipulated the following:

The following animals must be examined and treated by a licensed veterinarian within 48 hours or end of day on July 27, 2019:

- *Lionel*, a male gray/black and white Shih Tzu type dog – observed with a neck injury
- *Troubles*, a male tan terrier type dog– listless, deaf, blind, walks in circles
- *Daisy*, a female brown and white pit bull type dog- chronic sore on her caudal end
- *Dublin*, a male beagle type dog- eyes in need of treatment
- *Caroline*, a female brown tabby cat- knuckled down on the right front limb
- *Prince*, a male black cat- down in the rear legs with obvious loss of muscle mass and a damp coat (suspected urine)
- *Iris*, a female brown tabby cat- heat stress and difficulty walking
- *Bunny Boy*, a male black domestic medium hair cat- a thin body condition score and a reported heart condition;
- *Porkahontas*, a female Hampshire cross pig- was knuckled under on left front fore limb
- *Bunny/Clementine*, a female draft cross horse- did not have her Cushing’s Disease well controlled.

Within 7 days or end of day on August 1st, 2019, the following must be completed:

- Any patient requiring specific treatment or monitoring must be housed individually to ensure all proper care is done.
 - Intake of animals must cease immediately.
 - All dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies and must receive a county license
 - The number of animals on the property must be dramatically reduced to improve welfare of all animals. According to Volusia County Ordinance 72-306 lots of greater than one acres but less than five acres in size are not permitted to own more than eight animals. Lots of five acres or greater in size are not permitted to own more than 12 animals.
 - All home remedies of medical conditions, including laser administration, must be discontinued. These are not adequate to treat diagnosed medical conditions observed on premises.
- **July 27th, 2019-** Follow up on order to provide care took place. Officer N. Waterman and Field Training Office A. Dease responded to the location and asked for veterinary records for the animals listed above. All but two of the animals were treated by a veterinarian. 2 animals were recommend to be euthanized. She refused and called VCSO on VCAS.
 - **On July 27, 2019,** Volusia County Animal Services responded to 1899 Mercers Fernery Rd to follow up on the health and welfare of the animals. Florence Thuot had brought some of the animals to a veterinarian but still had not provided care to two of the animals. Thuot became combative when questioned about the status of these animals and called the Volusia County Sheriff’s Office to respond and remove Volusia County Animal Services from the property.
 - **On August 5, 2019,** Volusia County Animal Services received an affidavit and 14 photographs from a volunteer at Journey’s End Animal Sanctuary Inc. by the name of Simon Davies. According to Davies, he had volunteered at the facility on Mercers Fernery Road for more than two years. In his affidavit, he described incidents from July 2018 through April 2019. He reported the death of multiple animals. In one incident on October 2, 2018, he observed a cat in extremely poor condition. He described the cat as having visible blood on it lower extremities and not moving. He informed Florence Thuot of his concerns and was told the cat would receive treatment. Davies

reported seeing the cat dead in the exact same location the following day and was told to bury it behind a barn on the property. In his statement, Davies observed on November 23, 2018 a German Shepherd dog with a large open wound unable to walk and laying on the floor. He stated that the dog remained in that location for at least three months before it was later euthanized. In another incident on April 18, 2019, he found a deceased cat inside the air conditioning system of the "Cat House." The photographs provided with his statement depict excessive urine and feces piled within animal housing areas.

- **August 5, 2019**, an independent inspection of the property was conducted by Dr. Rachel Barton of Tallahassee Animal Services at the request of Volusia County. As outlined in her forensic veterinary report, Dr. Barton identified several instances whereby animals were not receiving treatment and were in poor condition. There were more animals on the property than the number of people needed to provide the basic care for the animals. She observed animals in severe pain and suffering. The animals' environment was described as heavily cluttered and unsanitary. Dr. Barton described emaciated animals and those with severe respiratory disease. Dr. Barton described specific animals that had chronic, untreated medical conditions, including a dog named Daisy. Daisy was paralyzed in the rear legs and had a chronic infection on her back end.
- **October 2, 2019**, Volusia County Animal Services received an affidavit from an employee of Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. by the name of Richard Sanders. According to Sanders, he resided at the property of 1899 Mercers Fernery. Sanders reported that a dog named "Daisy" was paralyzed and had open wounds on the dog's back end. He also described seeing excessive feces on her wounds. Sanders also reported a paralyzed cat that was in poor condition, dragging its hind legs through piles of feces on the floor. In his affidavit, Sanders reported filth and feces covering the floors of animals housing areas. Sanders reported also finding a deceased cat in the "Cat House" which had been there for a period of time. On October 2, 2019, Sanders observed a cat laying motionless on the floor of the "Cat House" that appeared to be thin and in poor condition.
- **October 6, 2019**, Volusia County Animal Services received an affidavit from a volunteer at Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. by the name of Shannon Sargent. According to Sargent, he was a board member and volunteer of Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. According to Sargent, he observed animals housed in unsanitary conditions with feces and urine piled in animal housing areas at the sanctuary. He observed dogs fighting and killing one another and dogs killing loose cats within the home. Animals that sustained injuries during fights were not provided with treatment by a veterinarian. Sargent also stated in this affidavit that he observed dogs falling into a pool and drowning at 1899 Mercers Fernery Rd. Sargent reported seeing deceased cats in the "Cat House" with no one knowing how long they had been there. These deceased cats were found in various states of decay. Sargent reported that the animals were often not provided with adequate water.
- **November 5, 2019**, Volusia County Animal Services received an affidavit from a volunteer of Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. by the name of Jennifer Severance. According to Severance, she volunteered from 2015 through July 2018 at the property located at 1899 Mercers Fernery Rd. According to Severance, she brought a cat named "Oreo" to the Sanctuary for lifelong care. Severance informed Florence Thout that the cat needed thyroid medication, and provided the medication to Thout. When Severance went to 1899 Mercers Fernery Rd. two weeks after "Oreo" was brought to the sanctuary, she found the cat motionless behind a toilet inside the house. Severance brought her concerns to sanctuary staff and was told that the cat had not received any medication since it was brought to the property. Severance was later told by Florence Thout that the cat was euthanized.
- **November 12, 2019**, an independent inspection of the property was conducted by Dr. Rachel Barton of Tallahassee Animal Services at the request of Volusia County. As outlined in her forensic

veterinary report, Dr. Barton described the living conditions as unsanitary and dangerous to animal and human health. Dr. Barton stated that Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. lacks property veterinary oversight and input to ensure the animals receive proper care. According to Dr. Barton, Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. has dangerously exceeded its capacity for care, resulting in undue animal pain and suffering. She reported that the basic needs of the animals in the care of the sanctuary are not being met. Dr. Barton described the conditions where animals were housed as heavily cluttered and unsanitary. Dr. Barton described numerous animals with very low body condition scores and emaciated. Cats were observed to have severe upper respiratory infections and diarrhea. Dr. Barton identified 19 animals that needed to be removed from the property due to their poor health and behavioral concerns.

- **December 26, 2019**, Volusia County Animal Services received an affidavit from an employee of Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. by the name of Ruby Madeya. Madeya informed your affiant that she had been employed with Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. from December 14th – December 22nd, 2019. Medeya described numerous animals kept in unsanitary conditions and covered in feces and urine. Medeya stated that animals are not receiving appropriate care or medication.
- **January 3rd, 2020**, Volusia County Animal Services received an affidavit from an employee of Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. by the name of Anna Gonzalez. Gonzalez was employed by Journey's End Animal Sanctuary Inc. from January 1st- January 3rd, 2020. According to Gonzalez, multiple dogs were living in their own filth. Animals are housed in unsanitary conditions. Gonzalez described a dog named Daisy who is paralyzed and sits within its own feces. Gonzalez also described a paralyzed cat that drags its back legs through feces covered floors. Gonzalez also stated that many of the animals are in need of veterinary care and do not receive treatment. The residence, according to Gonzalez, is unsafe and falling down in several places.