

**APPROVED BY**

*AB*



**Lakewood Animal Safety & Welfare Advisory Board**

October 15th, 2025 Meeting

Location: East Conference Room

**Present:** Board Members: Kate Coghlan, Emily Christescu, Nancy Binder, Julia Garleb, Emily Petro, Juleen Russell, ACO Gary Crumley, Councilperson Strebig

**Not present:** Stacey Zigman, Nancy McDonnell, Phyllis Dykes, Councilperson Marx

---

**Lakewood Animal Safety and Welfare Advisory Board Meeting  
Minutes Wednesday October 15th, 2025**

- I. Welcome and roll call conducted by Board Chair Binder. 6 voting members present.
- II. Approval of September Meeting Minutes - Board
  - a. Unanimous verbal vote in favor of motion to waive formal reading of the minutes. No discussion on minutes as presented.
- III. Lakewood Animal Control Update - Supervisor Gary Crumley
  - a. ACO Crumley distributes a printed monthly report. He shares a flyer that explains the shelter is hosting an open house/ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, October 23rd from 1:30 pm to 3 pm. Board member Christescu voices her concern about the short notice and that CCLAS was not invited. She explains it is disappointing that the volunteers that spend their time, energy and money to support the shelter weren't considered sooner, nor were multiple requests to be involved in some fashion, like to fundraise for the shelter animals or make the event memorable as it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. ACO Crumley reports there are 27 cats at the shelter and a small amount of those are ready for adoption. Board member Christescu mentions a resident in Birdtown that needs assistance with kittens and a mom; and that she is receiving messages regularly about residents that need assistance with cats. She reports TNR appointments are very difficult to obtain and that the city shelter and most rescues are full.
- IV. TNR Ordinance Update
  - a. Board chair Binder introduces lawyer DanaMarie Pannella from Holland and Muirden, who specializes in animal welfare law across the state. She has worked on animal cruelty cases and drafts animal related legislation. She has a lot of experience with TNR and serves as the Director of Law & Policy for the Alley Cat Allies organization. Ms. Pannella helped edit the first draft of the ordinance when the LASWAB TNR discussion began and would like to share her feedback on the latest version of the ordinance. She offers to provide draft language to the city.
  - b. Section 4a: She recommends that the language about impounded animals and reimbursement for veterinary care is updated to protect the city so it's clear that whatever veterinary care was necessary. She also mentions that some cities are not

- releasing animals until they're spayed or neutered to help curb the overpopulation of pets. She suggests changing the verblage to: veterinary care that was provided to maintain the health or life of the dog/cat while the animal was impounded.
- c. Section 6: She notes that the first degree misdemeanor is good and that home rule jurisdiction can allow us to make it stronger than the state. She mentions "unsanitary conditions" and asks if that is covered in the current code. This will allow the city to have more avenues to help animals that may be in filthy conditions like insect or rodent infestations. She explains this is used in the city of Cleveland often. There is a trend spreading in Northeast Ohio of cockfighting and many cities are experiencing issues with this activity. She notes that cock fighting, etc. and other conditions could be addressed in chapter 505, which could make it comprehensive for animal protection purposes. This has been beneficial for other cities to strengthen their animal code. She offers to send this list.
  - d. 505.25 section 9: Ms. Pannella's main concern is the necessity of registering and training. She explains that there is no program that is approved by any major organization or government entity about how to do TNR. She is not sure she understands the need to include it in an ordinance and to prosecute samaritans that trap who are using their own time and money, getting dirty to do TNR work. She believes mandatory training and registration will have a major chilling effect on people doing TNR. She expresses that we want TNR to be successful and to make sure more people are coming into Lakewood to do it and we must protect them. ACO Crumley mentions a resident that contacted him about a cat he trapped and left in a trap for three days; he is concerned about people doing things incorrectly. Ms. Pannella explains if there are concerns about people doing TNR wrong, such as trapping and leaving cats in traps, that should be covered under animal cruelty code and it does not belong in the ordinance. She reiterates the importance of protecting the people doing a good samaritan task and recommends no registration and no prosecuting. Ms. Pannella notes that registration will require more paperwork for Animal Control who has limited time and money. The state code is covered for prosecuting people and it's perfectly legal to do TNR under state law. She states that people are doing TNR all over Ohio and not registering.
  - e. Councilperson Strebig disagrees about the registration and training and believes that Lakewood can be a leader and doesn't need to follow what other cities are doing (not requiring registration and training). ACO Crumley says he thought the training was something that LASWAB or CCLAS wanted. Ms. Pannella asks how that helps people get to the end goal? ACO Crumley says the city wants them to follow the rules. Board member Russell asks how you enforce that and ACO Crumley says their permission would be revoked. Board Member Russell and Board member Petro are concerned about the legal consequences for good samaritans. ACO Crumley states that he supports TNR but wants the registration and training; Councilperson Strebig agrees. Board member Christescu believes TNR groups will not do TNR in Lakewood if the ordinance goes through as it's currently written and explains she will not do TNR herself in Lakewood either. Megan Galaida, CCLAS Community Cat Director, agrees. Ms. Pannella mentions 505.02 and says the wording is circular about registration and training and could result in unintended violation of the ordinance.

- f. Ms. Pannella encourages the city to meet with the TNR groups in the area. Most folks go through groups because they have appointments and funding. She reiterates there are laws that cover animal cruelty, but notes you can make legislation about specifics like keeping a cat in a trap for 3 days without food/water, or a cat left out in the sun without cover, etc. to avoid the entire problem if you think people will do the wrong thing. Ms. Pannella thinks it is great to have training available but you shouldn't be penalized to take training. She notes CCLAS is uniquely positioned to do the work to assist with training and that is an advantage Lakewood has.
- g. Board Member Russell asks ACO Crumley to explain his position on registration and he replies that helps to know who is doing the work. Ms. Pannella says registration causes TNR to fail, noting registration is a waste of animal control resources, causing more paperwork that doesn't accomplish a larger goal of enforcement for things people are doing wrong. She mentions laws against trespassing already exist, but the city could put in the code "you're not to do this unless you have permission to be on property" if you want to make it explicit. She mentions prosecuting by state law for cruelty/neglect. Board member Petro thinks it's not realistic to make TNR groups jump through hoops for work they regularly do. Ms. Pannella asks about training - how will the city create it and have it available. ACO Crumley replies that the city hasn't created anything yet. Ms. Pannella says the city needs to let the TNR happen. All of the cities around Lakewood are allowing it to happen; TNR is done all over the state without these issues, let TNR be done in the city and if people have issues handle it other ways. She suggests allowing training to happen, but warns not to over legislate the ordinance. She asks the city to listen to the stakeholders, noting that she doesn't know any TNR groups that would be ok with this version of the ordinance and if it passes TNR will be ineffective in Lakewood.
- h. Board member Russell says she is not hearing much compromise. Councilperson Strebbig thinks it's a good ordinance and it includes everything LASWAB wanted. Megan Galaida, CCLAS Community Cats Director, shares that Ms. Pannella is an expert and works with the most reputable TNR organization of Alley Cat Allies. Ms. Galaida explains that she has worked for over a year with the rules set by the city with animal control in good faith, but the TNR community will be furious once they see the ordinance. Noting if this is what goes forward she will show up at the next meeting with stakeholders. She feels the city isn't hearing what people are saying. She explains she is willing to do training and has talked to PetFix about mass trapping events. She feels asking every person to register for TNR is insane. Councilperson Strebbig discusses the difference between recommended versus required. Board member Russell thanks the volunteers and advocates and says LASWAB doesn't want to see animals suffer. Ms. Pannella explains she believes recommended training is fine but mandatory registration is not. Ms. Galaida expresses her desire to go on the local Facebook pages and share that the city has a good TNR ordinance and then talk to the community to help community cat caregivers and encourage residents to become trappers. Ms. Pannella notes that people in NEO are very passionate about cats, and other than one article, this ordinance has been quiet for a long time. Ms. Galaida agrees that TNR and cat advocates will be unhappy about the ordinance as it's written now and believes TNR groups will go to the communities that don't have restrictions instead of helping the many cats in Lakewood that need assistance.

- i. Councilperson asks Ms. Pannella to clarify if her recommendation is to make training recommended and remove registration; Ms. Pannella states that is correct. She notes that on line 3 where it mentions "food, medical care" should change if we're not doing registration. She reiterates her suggestion to tighten animal cruelty codes if there is a concern about people doing the wrong thing. Ms. Pannella does re-writes for cities regularly and is happy to provide language and modifications to the city. Councilperson Strebig suggests Ms. Pannella, ACO Crumley and the Law Department meet soon to discuss potential updates.

#### V. Committees & Initiatives

- a. Wildlife -
- b. Ordinances/Admin -
- c. Community Events - Board Member Russell shares that the Lakewood Community Services Center Pet Food Drive will be on Saturday, November 15th from 10 am to 2 pm at the Marc's Plaza. She is working on the flyer and will have printed copies to share. LCSC requires 1,200 pounds of pet food a month and has 250 families with pets that need assistance. Greater Good Charities and Cuddly are options for pantry donations and Board member Russell asks if anyone on the board can look into those ideas. The board discusses other ways to market and find partnerships to assist the LCSC and notes that the center assists families in Lakewood, Rocky River and Westlake. We will need volunteers to help that day and Board member Russell will send a group text to coordinate.
- d. Spay/Neuter -

#### VI. TNR Ordinance Update and Discussion

- a. The Public Safety Committee meets on October 20th at 6:30 pm to discuss the latest version of the ordinance.

#### VII. Public Comment

Motion is made to adjourn; motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm.