

**APPROVED BY**

*NB*



**Lakewood Animal Safety & Welfare Advisory Board**

November 19th, 2025 Meeting

Location: East Conference Room

**Present:** Board Members: Emily Christescu, Nancy Binder, Phyllis Dykes, Kate Coghlan, Julia Garleb, ACO Gary Crumley

**Not present:** Juleen Russell, Nancy McDonnell, Stacey Zigman, Emily Petro, Councilperson Marx

---

**Lakewood Animal Safety and Welfare Advisory Board Meeting  
Minutes Wednesday November 19th, 2025**

- I. Welcome and roll call conducted by Board Chair Binder. 5 voting members present.
- II. Approval of October Meeting Minutes - Board
  - a. Unanimous verbal vote in favor of motion to waive formal reading of the minutes. No discussion on minutes as presented. Motion passes to approve the minutes.
- III. Lakewood Animal Control Update - Supervisor Gary Crumley
  - a. ACO Crumley distributes a printed report. Defer discussion to next month.
- IV. LCSC Food Drive
  - a. Defer to next month.
- V. TNR Ordinance
  - a. Discussion: DanaMarie Pannella, Attorney with Holland & Muirden. Ms. Pannella is a special prosecutor, who also specializes in legislative work at the state and local level, regularly working with laws and communities. She is also the Director of Law & Policy with Alley Cat Allies, the leading advocacy organization for cats. Councilperson and Public Safety Committee Chair Cindy Strebig and ACO Gary Crumley are present.
  - b. Councilperson Strebig tells the group that she sent everyone the updated version of the ordinance that included language that Ms. Pannella recommended. She notes an update in section 4 505.03 (a), (b) and (c) that was to maintain the life or health of the dog impounded. Section (f) was added to section 4 about the humane euthanasia of an impounded animal. Section 9 505.25 under (b) Permitted Acts was changed from (1) through (4) to meet the recommended language. Councilperson Strebig explains she looked at the language about cock fighting, exotic animals, etc. that Ms. Pannella has mentioned coming up against in her practice, but she didn't think fit the scope of the TNR ordinance. Councilperson Strebig wants to keep the discussion specific to TNR.
  - c. Board Chair Binder asks if ACO Crumley has concerns. He explains that he forwarded the document to the Law Department. He mentions his preference of having discretion in regards to the severity of a dog bite in regards to the section about animals at large and dog bites. He would prefer a minor misdemeanor or M4 and doesn't like that on the first

offense it goes up. He would like to have the option to have an animal removed if there's a biting situation or recurring unprovoked biting incidents. He questions if the wording about eartip needs to be under section 505.03 (b) Impounding and Disposition; Records noting it doesn't help identify an owner. He also mentions under 505.12 (b) Specific Animal Nuisance Conditions Prohibited, that it never increases for more violations if a person is found guilty of a minor misdemeanor; he would suggest that it is changed to allow for increases. In section 505.25 Trap Neuter and Return of Community Cats under Permitted Acts (5) it says an ear tipped animal can be released if in our custody but he thinks they should have to pay impound fees just like any other animal impounded.

- d. Board Chair Binder asks if Ms. Pannella has feedback on that. She replies that she sent model ordinances to the city and looked at our current ordinances. She tells ACO Crumley that the dangerous dog laws need some work, particularly additional penalties for dogs at large, and encourages the board and Animal Control to look at them and see how it may be worked on. As far as the language for eartips in 505.25, it is important because it shows it is a community cat and is "proof of ownership"; even though the caregiver is not a true owner, the caregiver they shouldn't have to pay to retrieve cats they're being good samaritans for. Ms. Pannella notes that it is hard to imagine what circumstances that would happen under? ACO Crumley replies that there are some residents that trap ear tipped cats to have them euthanized if they're feral, like the situation at Davis Court. Ms. Pannella explains those residents are trapping for euthanasia not for TNR. ACO Crumley mentions this can happen from April 1st to October 31st for any trapped animal. ACO Crumley says Animal Control posts any cats that are brought in to animal control for opportunity to claim the animal (feral or friendly). If that cat is friendly it will be put up for adoption, if it is feral it is euthanized. Ms. Pannella asks if it is easier to say that you don't take ear tipped cats anymore? ACO Crumley explains that he understands TNR but also understands the residents that are frustrated by cats using their yards as litter boxes. Ms. Pannella mentions encouraging people to coexist and suggesting deterrents, spray systems, or other deterrents to put in your yard to discourage cats. She references a bad situation in Mogadore, where a woman is trapping cats to bring to animal control even off her own property. She suggests Animal Control says we don't accept eartipped cats or people trapping ear tipped cats for euthanasia, or leave it the way it is where people can redeem their eartipped cats without a fee. ACO Crumley asks why is it ok for a cat not to be charged an impound fee but a dog has to be charged? MS. Pannella replies that people are feeding, trapping, and vaccinating out of their own pockets; they're doing this to stop the population growth. Board Member Coghlan believes it is better to offer no impound fee for community cats, than to say they no longer accept ear tipped cats, and not deal with the pushback from the community. ACO Crumley says if they're eartipped, not reclaimed, and they're friendly, they will get put up for adoption, but it all depends if they're a feral cat or not. Ms. Pannella explains that generally the policy across northeast Ohio is that municipal shelters are not taking in cats: Cleveland Animal Control will take in a sick or injured cat, but if a neighbor calls in about a community cat, they share info about coexisting, the vacuum effect and deterrents.
- e. Board Member Dykes asks ACO Crumley if he can share the issue and what would fix it? ACO Crumley replies to look at both sides of the situation and that some residents are upset by roaming cats, mentioning the hoarder situation at Davis Court. Board

- Member Christescu knows Davis Court residents that are seeing more cats on the street but don't want to trap for euthanasia with Animal Control since over 40 cats were trapped for euthanasia last year. She notes that it was discussed last year that trapping to euthanize cats would not solve the problem and now there are many roaming cats in the area again. ACO Crumley replies that some residents are upset by the roaming cats. Ms. Pannella asks what has been done there? ACO Crumley says the homeowner won't let them into the home. He replies that the problem is not just Davis Court. Ms. Pannella explains that if the new TNR legislation is passed by the city, that shows the city supports TNR and Animal Control should say we're not catching and killing anymore.
- f. ACO Crumley mentions the wildlife euthanasia numbers. Ms. Pannella believes people will take advantage of using Animal Control as pest control if the city euthanises. ACO Crumley explains that Animal Control will offer suggestions to residents on how to coexist with the wildlife and some people don't care. Ms. Pannella asks if this is a service the city wants to provide, noting that she sees people trap less animals if they have to pay for it themselves. She reminds the group that if the city moves forward with TNR, the city is saying these cats belong here and we are stabilizing the population with spay/neuter. The cats aren't reproducing and with natural attrition they disappear. She explains that over time the resources deplete because the cats are aging out. The vacuum effect shows that if the resources continue, cats will come in. ACO Crumley argues that people won't stop feeding because the population got down to two cats. Ms. Megan Galaida, Community Cat Director of CCLAS, notes that's also an education piece as we discuss community cats - if you feed, pick up afterwards and if you see less cats, then feed less. Ms. Pannella agrees that there is an educational component of not feeding wildlife and not leaving food out.
- g. ACO Crumley explains that he forwarded this version of the ordinance to the law department. Board Chair Binder says the law department was invited, but chose not to attend our meeting. Board Member Dykes asks if there is any way to resolve this and ACO Crumley reiterates that he is not against TNR and believes the city needs TNR. He replies that he doesn't think a dog owner should have to pay an impound fee but a cat person doesn't. Board Member Christescu explains that dogs have different rights in the state of Ohio, like licensing, etc. Ms. Pannella explains that yes, there are maybe two counties in the state that take in stray cats and maybe 1 or 2 local animal control facilities. She says that an owned cat would have to pay, not a community cat, noting that most people won't take off their cat's eartip to avoid a cat at-large fee. She asks ACO Crumley if Animal Control is charging ear tipped cat bringers for euthanasia and ACO Crumley replies no. Ms. Pannella asks if the city should make them pay for euthanasia services? ACO Crumley replies that residents that bring in wildlife aren't charged either. He notes that if a trapped cat is brought in and it's friendly, it will go up for adoption.
- h. Public Safety Committee Chair Strebig asks if there are any other concerns. Hearing none, she will move forward on this version. Councilperson Strebig suggests the board and Animal Control discuss the dog biting language in the future if we want to make recommendations on that language, ACO Crumley prefers to update the dog language as we work on TNR language. Board Member Christescu reminds the group we've been working on the TNR language for two years. Ms. Pannella applauds this version and says it gives all the protections needed, the concerns about unattended traps were

addressed, it addresses the overall problem. She reiterates this was worked on for a long time and in this form is a great accomplishment, noting that there are obviously other ordinances that could use some work. Board Member Binder confirms that the board's focus is TNR right now. Board Member Coghlan makes a motion for LASWAB to recommend the version that was discussed, Julia seconds the motion. The motion passes. Councilperson Strebog notes that this version will be discussed at the next public safety meeting, but budgeting will take up the entire month of December. The Public Safety Committee will probably meet in January (or February) and recommend that we accept this version and then vote on it there. Councilperson Strebog notes a typo in section 505.25 (b) (5) that says "release" not "return" that needs to be edited. Board Member Dykes makes a motion to accept the new version with the edit, Board Member Coghlan seconds the motion. Motion passes. Board Member Dykes asks which groups will work on education and Board Member Christescu notes that CCLAS would gladly host educational events. Board Member Binder Nancy mentions new members will be joining LASWAB next year.

#### VI. Public Comment

Motion is made to adjourn; motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.