



2022 Annual Meeting Information

We had our annual meeting with City Administrator John Hamilton on August 25, 2022. We have been interacting with Mr. Hamilton since 2014. He has been instrumental to changes made at Huntsville Animal Services. The following summarizes the meeting related to what we can share publicly.

- There are plans to add 3 new staff members to better develop leadership structure for the 3 functions of the shelter and to help when there are vacancies (as there are now). We recommended networking with the shelter in Florence which has similar intake, fewer staff, is open 7 days a week and only destroys 1-2% of dogs for behavior. (The Florence shelter serves a much smaller population, but the annual intake is similar). We suggested that just adding more positions may not be the long-term solution and that more program development to help people may do more to prevent intake.
- We recommended the shelter be open 11-7 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9-3 Saturday and closed to the public Wednesday to make it easier for people to get there and give the staff a break mid-week.
- We recommended community outreach to those areas from which most intake is coming and shared the GIS map from the city's website that shows that intake by exact location.
- We asked the city to connect with Lamar about use of digital posters year-round to highlight programs, promotions and animals and shared an image from our one-month promotion to highlight at risk dogs. This costs very little and is another way to reach people beyond Facebook.
- We asked that improvements to a play area to add "coyote rollers" which had been considered for over a year be performed by general services perhaps with PVC pipe donated by the North Alabama Spay & Neuter Clinic.
- We expressed concern about the rise in the number of dogs destroyed for behavior and asked the city to consider the protocol adopted for Austin so there is an established process for each dog.
- We were also told there are pervasive problems with people bringing animals into the HAS service area from other counties and lying about where they came from. This is illegal. We

know people do this out of desperation because they think animals will be kept alive locally and not where they came from.

We will network about how to try to reduce this issue, but the solution is for people who live in Marshall, Morgan, DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Lawrence and Colbert counties to seek better from those who govern them. If you live in one of those counties and are interested in tools you can use to start a conversation about your county becoming more progressive, reach out to us by email and we will help you.

If you are an elected official for any one of those counties, you are responsible for meeting the needs of your own constituents without expecting Huntsville and Madison County to meet those needs. Please reach out to us by email and we will provide you with materials to introduce you to progressive animal control/sheltering policies to help your citizens.

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