

Domestic Animal Services Advisory Committee**Agenda**

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

6:00 pm

2800 N. Horseshoe Dr., Naples, FL 34104
Growth Management Community Development,
Conference Rooms 609/610

NOTICE: Persons wishing to speak on any Agenda item will receive up to three (3) minutes unless the Chairman adjusts the time. Speakers are required to fill out a “Speaker Registration Form,” list the topic they wish to address, and hand it to the Staff member before the meeting begins. Please wait to be recognized by the Chairman and speak into a microphone. State your name and affiliation before commenting. During the discussion, Committee Members may direct questions to the speaker.

Please silence cell phones and digital devices. There may not be a break in this meeting. Please leave the room to conduct any personal business. All parties participating in the public meeting are to observe Robert's Rules of Order and wait to be recognized by the Chairman. Please speak one at a time and into the microphone so the Hearing Reporter can record all statements. The public is welcome to attend either in person or remotely.

Individuals who wish to participate remotely should register for the meeting using the Webex Meeting link on the webpage: [DAS Advisory Committee November 19, 2025, Meeting](#)

The registration deadline for the meeting is 6:00 p.m., November 19. Individuals who register will receive an email in advance of the meeting detailing how they can participate

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call – Establish a Quorum
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Agenda (Action Item)
5. Approval of Minutes (Action Item)
 - a. September 9, 2025, Workshop MinutesPages 3-7
 - b. October 15, 2025- Meeting MinutesPages 8-13
6. Public Comment– Items not addressed on this Agenda
7. Public Comment - Agenda Items in Sequence.
8. Staff Updates
 - a. Leadership Report..... Page 14
9. Old Business
 - a. Collier County Code of Ordinance Section 14-41.....Pages 15-19
 - i. Florida Master Shelter ListPage 20

ii. Cat – Reclaim Percentage	<i>Page 21</i>
iii. Community Cat – Friendly free-roaming	<i>Pages 22-29</i>
10. New Business	
a. Community Cats – Common Practices	<i>Page 30</i>
11. Advisory Board Member Comments	
12. Adjourn	

Future Meeting Dates:

December 17, 2025

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF
COLLIER COUNTY
DOMESTIC ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD WORKSHOP
Naples, Florida
September 9, 2025

LET IT BE REMEMBERED that the Collier County Domestic Animal Services Advisory Board, in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 6 p.m. for a **MEETING** at Growth Management Community Development Department Room 609/610 2800 N. Horseshoe DR. Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Allen Schantzen
Michele Antonia
Kelly Hyland
Susan Mehas
Meredith McLean
Alexandra Casanova
Sherry Reno (absent)

County Staff in Attendance

James French, Department Head, GMCD Alexandra Casanova, Manager, Domestic Animal Services

Any persons in need of the verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the audio recording from Domestic Animal Services.

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll Call- Establish a Quorum
A quorum of 4 was confirmed.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- IV. Approval of agenda

Kelly Hyland- Motion to add public comment in after Board Ordinance Review.
Before Board comments.

Motion to approve- Susan Mehas

Motion Seconded- Kelly Hyland

Motion passed unanimously.

V. Animal Services Advisory Board Ordinance Review

Meredith Mclean- There is a document to review with recommendations from the County Attorney's office.

Alan Schantzen- As the chair, I would like to take issue that this document didn't show up until this evening.

James French- The Board of County commissioners ordered the County Attorney to work on the makeup of the DAS advisory board ordinance. This information was just sent to me late this afternoon. It will be advertised and taken to the BOCC for review. Not adoption.

Alan Schantzen- Should we have rushed this workshop to address something that we didn't have. I don't know if I could call these suggested changes or a change that is coming regardless.

James French- This is the summary of the items that will be advertised to by the County Attorney's office. I want to share this with you tonight. This is not a final document, this is an advertisement, a summary of the information. There was some communication in regard to some of the board's comments at the last meeting. A summary of some of the suggestions that I carried forward to the County Attorney's office to consider. The board can still change this, but this is a summary of the information that was provided to us.

Alan Schantzen- When you say the board are you talking about the advisory board or BOCC?

James French- The board having jurisdiction is the Board of County Commissions.

Suggested Ordinance 2025-43- ***James French, Department Head, GMCD***

Repeal and replace ordinance. This ordinance reinstates and reestablishes the Domestic Animal Services Advisory Committee. It replaces ordinance 2004-6. Outlines the committee creation, purpose, function, membership procedures and authority. All recommendations go the County Manager or designee.

Section 2- Functions, power and duties.

- A. **Operational review-** Evaluates the intake of animals, fostering, adoption, return to owner, staffing, training and best practices in shelter management.
- B. **Fiscal oversight-** Review the budget on an annual basis. High level of spending and budget allocations that have been granted in the past. Fee schedule, grants for sustainability and accountability.
- C. **Veterinary and medical considerations-** Board will recognize that all medical decisions remain with licensed veterinarians. Provide input only on non-clinical aspects of veterinary operations including budget and resources.

- D. **Volunteer and Behavior programs-** Everything we encourage with our partners. Recommend strategies to recruit, train and retain volunteers.
- E. **Community outreach and branding-** Encourage participation in community events. Provide guidance on branding, marketing materials and messaging.
- F. **Accountability and reporting-** Review quarterly and annual reports. Submit annual report to the Board of County Commissioners, which is a requirement, on how you are functioning as a committee and your take based on information that has been provided to you on how things are really going.

Alan Schantzen- I don't see anything in this where we make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the facilities, is that going away?

James French- Its more streamlined and more to the point. Where you get into the overall operations of the facility which will include capital improvements as much as daily maintenance.

Section 3- Appointment and Composition

- A. **Appointment and Composition-** 5 Member board. 1 Finance and accounting, 1 Animal welfare rescue representative, 1 community outreach representative, 1 volunteer program or non-for-profit management representative, 1 Citizen at large.
- B. **Restrictions-** With the exception of Patty Baker Humane society, Individuals from rescue groups or animal agencies would not be eligible. To avoid conflict.

Kelly Hyland- The way it is written that anyone who benefits from DAS would not be able to be on the board so why is Patty Baker Humane society allowed.

James French- Patty Baker Humane society does not receive services from Collier County they are a rescue partner to the county. In the event they become a vendor that would change.

Kelly Hyland- What would be the reason that individuals from other rescue groups or animal agencies are not eligible.

James French- Because they receive benefits such as spay and neuter services.

Kelly Hyland- What if they don't

James French- Then they would be eligible.

Section 4- Terms of office

- A. Three members will serve a term of four years.
- B. Two members will serve a term of three years
- C. Thereafter each appointment will be for a term of four years

Alan Schantzen- Would we be electing and voting for additional members or are they going to be appointed.

James French- Appointments are made and serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners.

Susan Mehas- Why are there term limits now, 4 years and out.

James French- To offset two-three which is inline with our other committees. If it is a comment of the board, we will provide your comments to the BOCC.

Section 5- Attendance requirements, Removal from office.

Any member of the committee may be removed from office with or without cause by a majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners.

James French- Attendance is governed by ordinance 2011-55 which is consistent with all of the other committees.

Section 6-Officers, quorum, rules of procedure

Chairman, Vice chairman and secretary will serve 1-year terms and will be elected by the committee.

The presence of 3 or more members shall constitute a quorum. 3 affirmative votes needed

Section 7- Reimbursement of expenses

Members of the committee shall serve without compensation but can be reimbursed for pre-approved expenses related to engagement of certification courses or attend a course on animal welfare.

Susan Mehas- If there is another document that is going to filter out of this can we see it before it goes to the commission.

James French- Ms. McLean will send that to you. This is scheduled for “advertisement” only in two weeks with the Board of County Commissioners.

Susan Mehas- I still think Meredith should have the ability to keep an eye on the veterinarian. Making sure everything is ok. She should have some oversight.

James French- That’s an administrative decision with the County Managers office and is not the role of this committee.

Alan Schantzen- It says the committee may advise only on non-clinical matters.

James French- We have hired a licensed professional veterinarian that is regulated only by the State of Florida. Not by the DAS director, Growth Management Community Development Head or the County Manager. State law says that position shall do their job without interference.

Susan Mehas- Can you tell us who it is

James French- Dr. Erica Unz. She worked for UF, ASPCA and Miami Dade. We have had her as a contractor, and she serves now as the Chief Veterinarian for Collier County.

Alan Schantz- This came from the County Attorney’s office. Has the County Manager had a chance to preview this?

James French- This was forwarded to us from the County Manager originally from the County Attorney’s office. The document has been completed and filed with clerk for advertisement. This will go before the board in two weeks.

Michelle Antonia- Under Function power and duties, it says we can advise on non-clinical matters, what would be an example of a resource.

James French- It could be a piece of equipment or more staff.

VI. Public comment

No Public comment.

VII. Advisory Board Member comments

Susan Mehas- Where are we on the social media for the cats. I thought we hired someone for the cats.

Meredith McLean- There is a cat page that is run by volunteers, it is not run by DAS staff. A staff member has been tasked with creating a schedule of posts to make sure we are balancing out cat and dog posts, events we are hosting and educational information.

Alan Schantzen- In reference to timely information being sent to the board, I would really like to see a draft agenda at least a day before our meeting. When I have questions about the agenda please respond to my emails.

VIII. Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

IX. Adjourn

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was concluded at 7:30 pm.

Collier County Domestic Animal Services

Allen Schantzen- Chairman

These minutes were approved by the Committee/Chairman on _____ (check one) as presented _____, or as amended _____.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF
COLLIER COUNTY

DOMESTIC ANIMAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Naples, Florida
October 15, 2025

LET IT BE REMEMBERED that the Collier County Domestic Animal Services Advisory Board, in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 6 p.m. for a **MEETING** at Growth Management Community Development Department Room 609/610 2800 N. Horseshoe DR. Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Allen Schantzen
Michele Antonia
Kelly Hyland
Susan Mehas
Meredith McLean
Alexandra Casanova
Sherry Reno (absent)

County Staff in Attendance

James French, Department Head, GMCD

Alexandra Casanova, Manager, Domestic Animal Services

Any persons in need of the verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the audio recording from Domestic Animal Services.

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll Call- Establish a Quorum
A quorum of 4 was confirmed.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- IV. Approval of agenda

Motion to approve- Susan Mehas

Motion seconded- Michelle Antonia

Motion passed unanimously.

- V. Agenda and Minutes
 - A. February 16, 2025, DASAB Meeting minutes

Allen already signed.

B. March 19, 2025, DASAB Meeting minutes

Allen already signed.

C. April 16, 2025, DASAB Meeting minutes

Motion to approve- Michelle Antonia

Motion Seconded- Susan Mehas

Motion approved unanimously.

D. August 27, 2025, DASAB Meeting minutes

Motion to approve- Michelle Antonia

Motion seconded- Susan Mehas

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Public comment- Items not addressed on this agenda

Tom Kapp- Happy that enforcement is not responsibility of this board. Boards' only responsibility is what happens inside of the shelter. Policies and procedures, welfare of animals. Asked about Policies and procedures manual. We need to strengthen policies on return to owner. Discussed a recent case where a sick animal was returned to the owner with no follow up.

Allen Schantzen- Conversation is already happening. Working on reporting up the ladder and quality of care. I will follow up on that.

VII. Public comment- Agenda Items in Sequence

VIII. Staff Updates

A. Leadership report

September statistics-

Meredith McLean

Currently 43 staff members. 28 are full-time county employees. 15 are Key staff. Administrative Support II- with HR. New positions as of October 1, 2025- Operations Support Specialist and 3 Customer service representatives.

Current- 323 Animals, 242 Cats and 78 dogs and 3 other animals.

9/2025- Intake 372 Cats, 132 dogs and 17 other. Total of 521 Animals.

Outcomes- 283 Adoptions, 150 Transfers. 50% increase YOY. Due to increase in partnerships and veterinary care.

Foster- 163 animals that are true foster.

3 Animals- Ambassador programs.

ACO- 226 Cases open, 130 Closed, 68 Citations issued.

Building- Will be shutting down 3 at the end of this month.

Allen Schantzen- Regarding building 3- Coordinate and map out areas to limit interaction between staff and residents visiting. Please put that in place and bring it back for review.

Susan Mehas- The 131 Cats transferred out, is that part of the total considered to be adopted.

Meredith McLean- No that is a different number. Adoptions and transfers out are two different numbers.

Susan Mehas- For the euthanasia number, that is strictly medical correct **Meredith McLean-** Medical and behavioral. Behavioral is rare. Majority are medical.

Kelly Hyland- When the cats are being released, who is handling that.

Meredith McLean- FTR- Finder to returns. Could be a rescue group. If cats come in that don't have either of those options staff will put them back where they came from.

Kelly Hyland- Do we have a list of transfer/rescue organizations DAS uses.

Meredith McLean- Yes, I can send that to you.

Kelly Hyland- There is two different reports and the numbers don't match. I want to confirm who is in charge of the numbers on these reports and why they don't match, confirm fosters on hand.

Meredith McLean- There are two different reports. The one you have in front of you is what we call the State Mandated report which is required by law. The report in your email is a chameleon report. Only true intakes are reported on the state report.

Kelly Hyland- What is the true number for fosters on hand.

Meredith McLean- The numbers on the report are from June. If you want breakdowns for the current month, I will have to get that back to you.

Michelle Antonia- When an animal care specialist returns a cat, is there a caretaker.

Meredith McLean- There is because they have asked for the cat back even if they don't return it or pick it up themselves.

. FY26 DAS Budget

Allen Schantzen- Annual proposed draft of the budget. I will request a summation be done on a quarterly basis. If the board agrees. What is the process for internal transfers and how we execute them. Would transfer be something the board needs to oversee.

Meredith McLean- That would be done with finance. I will get an answer for the second part of the question and get back with you.

Kelly Hyland- If this is for Domestic Animal Services, under appropriations by program it says Domestical Animal Control. Page 73.

Meredith McLean- I can look into that program number and get back with you.

Susan Mehas- Page 73, are the donations dollars only?

Meredith McLean- Yes.

IX. Old Business

A. Ordinance Sub Committee Update

Meredith McLean- This relates to items that revolve around animal control. We have to move this off our agenda because a lot of this would be very specific to animal control.

Allen Schantzen- Not that we can't discuss it, but this group is related to the campus.

Meredith McLean- A lot of the items that were discussed revolve around what happens in the field.

B. September 23, 2025, Board of County Commissioners Meeting items

. DAS Board Restructure

Meredith McLean- Items 3 and 4 were approved. The fee schedule was approved yesterday. The board restructure is the original copy from the BOCC meeting. Changes were made at approval. It is no longer a board, it was changed to a committee, 7 members, 1 appointed from each district. We will take applications and the BOCC will approve those seats. With 2 At-large members. It did take the quorum down to 3. It has been signed; I will email you a copy tomorrow.

Allen Schantzen- We can put this on as an agenda item to discuss each one, take everyone's input. The last meeting the draft was given to us the same night, this meeting the signed ordinance is given to us the night of the meeting. I don't feel this is anyway to run a board. This has already been signed into law, the only way we are going to make changes is to make this an agenda item for the next meeting.

James French- The BOCC was fully aware of the interests of this board. They worked with the county attorney on this. Changing the ordinance is not on your agenda, if you want to bring it up at another meeting you can. Right now you have a brand-new ordinance. How are we putting it in place.

Kelly Hyland- We need communication to be more open. No one comes to us to ask our advice. No one is asking for our input. We have never taken anything to the commissioners.

Allen Schantzen- We need to visit the shelter more often. We need to be giving constructive input on the immediate needs.

James French- There is a great deal of work to be done. Communication is key to any successful organization. I never want to take an action item to the BOCC that I haven't run by you. Many of these things may be within my purview, but I still want you to know.

. DAS Fee Schedule

Allen Schantzen- That was passed at yesterday's meeting. Any changes.

Meredith Mclean- Yes and no changes.

. DAS Ordinance 2013-33

Allen Schantzen- Just need to clarify the 3–5-day hold.

Meredith McLean- It was written that it is a minimum of 3 days, we are currently at 5 days.

Susan Mehas- The information I found was that cats are given a 5-day stray hold as well as dogs.

Meredith McLean- Cats that have a microchip are held for 5 days. Dogs are held for 5 days either way.

Susan Mehas- That is not right. The wording on this bothers me. It is not fair to say the cats have to have a microchip and dogs don't.

Kelly Hyland- Do you want to make a motion to try to get it amended.

Meredith McLean- We can bring it back for discussion. But I will be submitting information to show why it is not recommended to hold every stray cat for 5 days.

. DAS Ordinance 2013-55

Kelly Hyland- On Page 3 Section 14- We made it clear that it was not a good idea to give a 24 hour notice in advance of inspections. Page 6 we suggested that a notice "will" be issued not "could" be issued. We were advised to review and give this more teeth. We did that and now it was changed back and none of our suggestions were added.

Allen Schantzen- But it is not directly related to the campus. It's not part of our responsibilities. We are governed by our ordinance.

James French- The order came down from the chairman to move forward. They did not seek the input of staff or the committee.

C. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Update

Meredith McLean- One completed to review with the board. Call out rules. Many more are under draft. I should be able to present them at the December meeting.

Allen Schantzen- You are mirroring this off other counties.

Meredith McLean- A combination of other animal organizations and county level.

X. New Business

A. Microchips Code Section 14-41-Microchip

Meredith McLean- Microchip is considered a legal identification for an animal.

Kelly Hyland- Is there a time limit if an animal comes to DAS that an animal isn't returned to the registered owner.

Meredith McLean- When we scan the chip, we have to go with what is legal which is contacting the registered owner on the microchip.

B. Foster and Foster to adopt program update.

Meredith McLean- We currently have 84 currently in Foster to Adopt. We have 163 animals in actual foster. Larger portion is underage kittens.

XI. Advisory Board Member comments

Michelle Antonia- Made contact with the Immokalee Technical College- Department Chair. She is currently out but we she returns we are going to set up a meeting to discuss community outreach and education for spay and neuter.

Susan Mehas- Reviewed potential marketing in Spanish newsletter and Yellow pages. Reviewed need for specific scripts for shelter staff regarding education. DAS should be a return for life shelter. If someone adopts a pet from DAS and needs to return it for any reason they should be able to return to DAS. Current return policy is only 30 days. **Allen Shantzen-** Website for board is missing the applicant link for open seats **Meredith McLean-** After definition for committee changed it was temporarily removed. **Allen Shantzen-** Staging work areas during building closure is imperative, to limit interaction between the public and employees. Need to look into CAT bus stations for marketing opportunities. School sport field fences are great places for advertisement.

XII. Next Meeting
Wednesday November 19, 2025

XIII. Adjourn

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was concluded at 8:21pm.

Collier County Domestic Animal Services

Allen Schantzen- Chairman

These minutes were approved by the Committee/ Chairman on _____ (check one) as presented _____, or as amended _____.



Animal Intakes from 10/01/2025 to 10/31/2025

	Cats	Dogs	Other	Total
Surrendered by Owner	9	14	13	36
Stray	481	128	11	620
Confiscated	1	6	0	7
Transferred from within Florida	0	1	0	1
Born in Shelter	5	5	0	10
Total	496	154	24	674

Animal Outcomes from 10/01/2025 to 10/31/2025

	Cats	Dogs	Other	Total
Adoption	122	76	1	199
Reclamation by Owner	5	44	0	49
Died in Care	6	3	0	9
Euthanasia at Owner's Request	2	4	0	6
Euthanasia by Court Order	0	0	0	0
Transfer to another public or private animal shelter	123	26	5	154
Euthanasia	14	3	1	18
Returned in Field/Trapped, Neutered, Returned (TNR)	32	0	0	32
Lost in Care/Missing Animals	1	0	0	1
Total	305	156	6	467

Sec. 14-41. - Disposition of Impounded Animals.

1. Impounded animals with identification not suspected of having an infectious or contagious disease shall be held for a minimum of three full days (72 hours) to provide time for the animal's owner to notify staff of intent to recover the animal. Upon the owner's acknowledgement of an impounded animal, the animal will be held for a minimum of five full days (120 hours) from the date of impoundment, after which time the animal shall be considered abandoned and shall become the property of the Division. All animals other than dogs, cats with identification, or livestock, for which an owner has not been identified or deemed to have an owner by an identification tag or other identification, shall immediately be considered abandoned and shall become the property of the Division. The Division may, at its discretion, place such animal(s) for adoption, place in foster care, transfer the animal(s) to another shelter, transfer the animal(s) to rescue or make disposition pursuant to law at the time, but shall not euthanize these animals for a minimum of five full days (120 hours).
2. If an impounded animal is suffering from or suspected to have an infectious or contagious disease, or is injured or debilitated to such an extent that it is experiencing pain or suffering as determined by a veterinarian or competent designee(s), or the animal poses an immediate substantial risk to staff or visitors to the shelter, the animal may be euthanized prior to the expiration of the three day (72 hour) hold.
3. Impoundment of cattle require legal notifications as specified in F.S. § 588.17.
4. The County Manager or designee shall make at least three attempts to contact the owner of an impounded animal, if the owner's identity is known or easily ascertained, before the animal's humane disposition. Dogs, identified cats, and other animals not claimed within the specified hold period, may be adopted, transferred, or may be euthanized by any method specified in F.S. § 828.058.
5. Animals that are impounded for safe keeping at the request of a first-responding agency due to the death or medical emergency or incarceration of its owner or caretaker, shall be held for a minimum of five days (120 hours). After five days (120 hours) the Division will hold the animals for an additional five days (120 hours) and the County Manager or designee shall make at least three attempts to contact the owner during this time. Animals not claimed after this ten-day (240-hour) period, may be adopted, transferred, placed with a qualified foster, or may be euthanized, at the discretion of the County Manager or designee.
6. Animals shall be released to owners on presentation of proof of ownership and payment of costs and fees. Proof of ownership may include a County rabies/license tag, veterinary records, tattoo, bill of sale, adoption contract, registered (RFID) microchip, affidavits from two separate neighbors, other reliable documentary or anecdotal evidence deemed reliable by the County Manager or designee;

along with a signed affidavit affirming ownership. If ownership cannot be proven, the animal must remain at Domestic Animal Services for the established hold period prior to reclaiming.

A. *Fees.*

- (1) Fees related to impoundments may include, but are not limited to; impoundment fees, advertising fees for impounded livestock, laboratory and veterinarian fees, transportation fees, and daily board.
- (2) Fees are established and revised by resolutions adopted by the board of county commissioners.

B. *Microchipping.*

- (1) Dogs and cats that have been impounded shall be implanted with a radio frequency identification devise (RFID) (microchip) by animal services' staff at the owner's expense prior to being released to the owner.
- (2) Animals that are already microchipped when impounded, must have the information on the microchip recorded by animal services. The information must be accurate and current. If the information is not current, the owner must come into compliance with this section prior to having the animal released.
- (3) At the discretion of the County Manager or designee, the animal may be released to the owner with a Notice to Comply to have the animal microchipped and applicable payment specified by resolution. The fee will be refundable within thirty (30) days if services are provided by a non-animal services licensed veterinarian. The owner will be required to submit a statement within fifteen (15) days, signed by a licensed veterinarian, confirming that the animal has been so implanted and provide the microchip number to animal services. Failure to provide proof of microchipping shall result in a penalty as specified in the penalty schedule. No microchipping is required if a licensed veterinarian certifies in writing that microchipping would endanger the animal's health.

C. *Mandatory spay/neuter.*

- (1) Dogs and cats that have been impounded shall be spayed/neutered at the owner's expense prior to being released to the owner.
- (2) No spay/neuter is required if a licensed veterinarian certifies in writing that the surgery would endanger the animal's health or if a licensed veterinarian with whom the pet owner has a previously established doctor-patient-client relationship certifies in writing that the animal is of appropriate health, conformation, and temperament to be bred. Such certification is to be made on a sworn statement provided by the County. The owner of the animal will also certify on an affidavit to be provided by the County that he or she will comply with the provisions of this Ordinance or all laws and ordinances governing the regulation of

breeders. An owner shall not use this exemption more than one (1) time per animal; mandatory sterilization is required based on a second impoundment. The animal shall only be released to the owner with a signed Notice to Comply allowing the owner fifteen (15) days to comply with and/or register as a Hobby Breeder or Commercial-Breeder. Failure to register as a Hobby Breeder or Commercial-Breeder will result in a penalty as specified in the penalty schedule.

7. *Voluntary surrender.*

- A. Person(s) wishing to surrender an animal shall be allowed to do so at the discretion of the County Manager or designee. Every person who voluntarily surrenders an animal must provide a valid photo identification that shows proof of residence and sign a form acknowledging that the surrender is voluntary and acknowledging the discretion of the animal control division to dispose of the animal. Animal services shall not be liable for the disposition of any voluntarily surrendered animal after receipt of the animal from its owner. The animal shall be immediately available for adoption, placement or other appropriate disposition once surrendered.
 - B. Person(s) surrendering animals shall be responsible for paying an intake fee.
 - C. Person(s) wishing to surrender an animal with the request for euthanasia shall be allowed to do so at the discretion of animal services. It is not the policy or practice of animal services to supply "on-demand" euthanasia procedures, but in the interest of relieving a suffering animal, or for aggressive animals that pose a safety risk, animal services may provide the service for a fee, at the County Manager's or designee's sole discretion.
 - D. No surrendered or stray animals from outside the Divisions jurisdiction shall be accepted except for humane reasons or if the animal was previously adopted from the Division; such animals shall be referred to another agency. The photo identification of the owner/person wishing to surrender an animal that shows an address outside of the Divisions jurisdiction shall be used as the current address of the animal.
 - E. An animal that has bitten a human may be surrendered to the Division for quarantine pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Florida Administrative Code 64D-3, as may be amended. An animal surrendered for quarantine to the Division is subject to all requirements Section Sixteen [§ 14-41] prior to reclaim.
 - F. It is a violation of this section for any person to falsely identify himself or herself as an owner or owner's agent.
8. Animals not claimed within the appropriate holding period may be adopted, subject to the provisions below:
- A. Adoption fees are established and revised by resolutions adopted by the board of county commissioners.

In order to adopt an animal, a person must be at least 18 years of age and provide photo identification and/or other proof of residency.

- C. Administration of the neuter/spay program shall remain under the control of the County Manager or designee. Accounting for the disbursement of the neuter/spay fees shall be in accordance with procedures of the county's finance department.
 - D. Dogs and cats that are adopted shall be microchipped by animal services' staff.
 - E. Dogs and cats that are adopted shall be spayed/neutered by animal services' veterinarian or a licensed veterinarian contracted by animal services prior to being released to the adopter.
 - F. If a dog or cat adopted from animal services is not sterilized prior to placement in the adopter's home, the adopter shall have the animal sterilized by a licensed veterinarian within 30 days of the adoption or prior to the animal's sexual maturity. The adopter shall enter into a written agreement with the county guaranteeing such sterilization and pay a deposit from the adopter as established by Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners, which deposit shall be refundable upon presentation to the Division or written evidence by the veterinarian performing the sterilization surgery that the animal has been sterilized as specified in F.S. § 823.15. If the subsequent sterilization is not performed by animal services' veterinarian or a licensed veterinarian contracted by animal services, the adopter shall be responsible for the expense and shall forfeit the deposit. Assumption of financial responsibility does not relieve the adopter of the requirement to provide written proof of sterilization within the specified time limit. Animal Control Officers are authorized to impound or to issue a Notice to Comply and/or citations for failure to sterilize any dog or cat adopted from the animal shelter.
 - G. The County Manager or designee has the final authority to approve the adoption of any animal. The County Manager or designee may refuse an adoption if it determines that the adoption is not in the best interest of the animal, or detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the general public.
9. No person, or on behalf of any other person or entity whatsoever, shall acquire or attempt to acquire actual or constructive possession of any animal for any use in research, testing, animal fighting, or animal sacrifice, from the actual or constructive possession of any county animal services center, or from any person or entity operating or controlling any animal custody facility, pound, or animal shelter that is then leased from the county by a lease that prohibits such use, or is then under a contract with the county which contract prohibits such use. Such use includes the immediate or eventual sale, transfer, gift, trade, donation, delivery, or any other provision of any animal for use in research, testing, and/or animal sacrifice. No employee, volunteer, worker, agent or other representative of any such entity shall knowingly release from the actual or constructive possession of any such entity, any animal for any such known or suspected use.

10. Failure to comply with the requirements of this section shall be a violation of this Ordinance and punishable as provided in Section Fifteen (§ 14-40).

(Ord. No. 2018-33, § 1; Ord. No. 2024-26, § 1; Ord. No. 2025-44, § 5)

Florida Animal Shelter List	
Organization	Stray Hold (Dog)
Example	
Lee County Domestic Animal Services	3 Days No Microchip or Identification; 5 Day Hold for Microchip or Other Identification
Polk County Animal Control	4 Days No Microchip or Identification; 7 Day Hold for Microchip or Other Identification
Charlotte County Animal Control	5 Day Hold
Pinellas County Animal Services Department	4 Days No Microchip or Identification; 7 Day Hold for Microchip or Other Identification
Sarasota County Sheriff's Office - Animal Services Shelter	5 Days No Microchip or Identification; 7 Day Hold for Microchip or Other Identification
Miami-Dade County Animal Services	3 Days No Microchip or Identification; 5 Day Hold for Microchip or Other Identification
Orange County Animal Services	3 Days No Microchip or Identification; 5 Day Hold for Microchip or Other Identification
Hillsborough Animal Control	3 Days No Microchip or Identification; 7 Day Hold for Microchip or Other Identification



Month	Stray Intakes (Cats)	Reclaimed by Owner (Cats)	Year Range
Oct 2022	172	4	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Nov 2022	156	17	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Dec 2022	116	2	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Jan 2023	125	8	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Feb 2023	121	4	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Mar 2023	187	5	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Apr 2023	331	7	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
May 2023	336	6	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Jun 2023	278	10	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Jul 2023	259	5	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Aug 2023	311	3	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Sep 2023	221	7	Oct 2022–Sep 2023
Oct 2023	208	3	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Nov 2023	203	3	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Dec 2023	128	1	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Jan 2024	157	10	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Feb 2024	130	6	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Mar 2024	174	5	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Apr 2024	318	3	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
May 2024	388	5	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Jun 2024	327	4	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Jul 2024	326	5	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Aug 2024	275	0	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Sep 2024	132	3	Oct 2023–Sep 2024
Oct 2024	320	5	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Nov 2024	233	7	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Dec 2024	228	2	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Jan 2025	223	2	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Feb 2025	227	5	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Mar 2025	264	4	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Apr 2025	419	5	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
May 2025	485	9	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Jun 2025	526	2	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Jul 2025	275	3	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Aug 2025	432	3	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
Sep 2025	338	2	Oct 2024–Sep 2025
	9349	175	
Cat	RTO	Rate	1.87%

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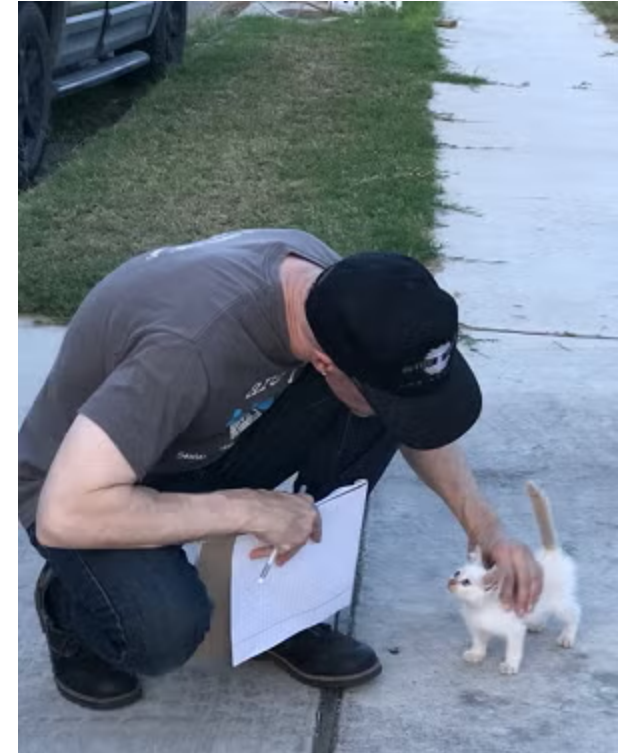
Found a free-roaming friendly cat? Put them back.

June 21, 2023

If you haven't read ["The dilemma of the friendly outdoor cat" program spotlight](#), it's worth checking out—especially if your organization struggles with the idea of returning such kitties through your trap-

neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR) program. Published in October 2020, it remains one of our most popular spotlights. It's also timely, because a community cat program can alleviate some of the strain you're feeling at this time of year (Hello kitten season!). Since you're flooded with cats and probably don't have much time to read, here are some key points about the friendly cat issue:

- **Someone made friendly cats friendly.** Someone loves them and wants them back.
- **They might be pet cats.** The 2019-2020 American Pet Products Association (APPA) National Pet Owners survey found that roughly one-third of people allow their cats some outdoor access.
- **Few pet cats are reclaimed from shelters.** Microchipping is on the rise, which facilitates returning cats but reclaim rates of 2% to 5% have persisted for decades.
- **Cats are [13 times more likely](#)** to be reunited with their families by returning home on their own (some studies cite more than 60% fall into this category) or being found by owners searching the neighborhood.
- **Healthy cats have at least one feeding station.** The APPA study found 14% of respondents care for free-roaming cats; 95% provide food and water, 43% provide shelter, 20% get the cats spayed or neutered, and 13% provide additional medical care.
- **Cats get stressed and sick in shelters**, and even the friendliest cat can appear terrified or aggressive. Such factors reduce the chance of adoption and increase the risk that they won't make it out alive.
- **Yes, outdoor cats face risks, but shelters aren't 100% safe places for cats.** Plus, [research refutes the idea](#) that outdoor cats die from a variety of illnesses.
- **Cats want their friends back.** Felines can and do form close social bonds, and some have been known to offer protection and support to other cats.



When our 2022 national dataset shows 569 cats dying every day, any cat who can stay in a good situation should. There are relinquished pets and sick cats who need your resources. Returning friendly cats is just common sense and should be a component of any TNVR program.

More resources:

- **"The unintended consequences of pulling friendly cats"** townhall
- **"Cats Outside, It's Going to be OK"** townhall
- **"What makes a home?"** podcast
- **"One million cats and counting"** podcast
- **"Returning cats" chapter**, *Community Cat Programs* handbook



Liz Finch
Senior Writer
Best Friends Network

If you enjoyed this program spotlight, you can find our complete catalog of spotlights [here](#).

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Community Cats Receive:

Consistent with common practices in the animal sheltering industry, all community cats receive the following prior to being returned to home:

- **Spay or Neuter Surgery**
 - Performed under anesthesia with appropriate pain management
- **Ear Tip**
 - The universal identifier for sterilized and vaccinated community cats.
- **Rabies Vaccination**
 - Core vaccine required by law to protect both feline and public health.
- **FVRCP Vaccination**
 - Core feline vaccine protecting against viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia.
- **Microchip**
 - To track colony management and improve data accuracy.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Other medications and services as prescribed by the doctor.