IALC MEETING MINUTES

November 30, 2016

Attendees:
1. Marcy Stras
2. Judy Evans
3. Mayra Cavazos Calvillo
4. Laura Schierhoff
5. Jenna Baranko
6. Linda Lowson
7. Richard Angelo
8. Rajesh Reddy
9. Gilda Mariani

Reminders & Updates (Marcy):
- Need ideas for Miami – program proposals for the fall meeting in Miami in 2017
- The program subcommittee submitted a proposal for South Africa entitled: "What is Being Done to Combat Illegal Animal Trafficking in Africa"
  - We already have some potential speakers from animal rescue organizations in Africa.
- Please pass along anyone you would like to be a guest on our meeting calls

Report on Caracas Zoo (Mayra):
- Mayra & Linda (and subcommittee) have been working on ensuring the starving animals at the Caracas Zoo are getting the care/food they need
- They have been in contact with a government official who is willing to talk about the situation with the animals
  - The zoo is in desperate need of medicine for the animals and meat to feed them
- We sent conditions for working with the Caracas Zoo to the government official, including access to the animals and funding.
  - Have not heard back from anyone yet, but they are lining up people who can do an assessment of the animals and their needs

Special Presentation on Best Friends Animal Society (Lee Greenwood):
- Lee is a lawyer and lobbyist for best friends, who focuses mainly on dog issues.
- Best Friends (BF) is the only national welfare organization focused on the no-kill
  - BF runs the largest no-kill shelter (located in Utah)
  - Their mission is to bring about a time when there are No More Homeless Pets
  - Their moto is “save them all”
  - BF has set out to make America a no-kill country by 2025
- The sanctuary in Utah (right by Zion National Park) cares for around 1600/1700 animals per year & is the heart of the organization
  - Anyone can tour or volunteer at the sanctuary
  - BF also has locations in Atlanta and New York (grand opening soon)
• BF works with rescues and shelters around the country and have a network of over 1600 partners they work with on rescues, marketing, and legislative work
• Lee is a part of the Legislative Team, which works on 3 different initiatives
  • (1) Puppy Mill Initiatives
  • (2) Pitbull Terrier Initiatives
  • (3) Cat Initiatives
• (1) Puppy Mill Initiatives:
  • Work at the local and State-level on puppy mill issues – trying to make them a thing of the past through retail sale restrictions, breeding regulations, and pet lemon laws.
  • Retail sale restrictions are passed on the municipal level and restricts where an animal may come from in order to be sold at a pet store
    • Over 200 municipalities have passed retail pet store restriction laws
    • 16 States have some form of the law
• (2) Cat Initiatives:
  • Work at local and State-level to focus on TNR (Trap Neuter Vaccinate Release) & RTF (Return to Field) offensive and defensive laws
  • Have had successes on State level in Utah, Arizona, and Illinois
  • These community cats are returned to where they reside and it is a vast improvement over the failed trap and kill approach
  • Mostly this work is defensive – don’t necessarily need to pass TNR laws (often allowed) – but some municipalities & cities try to ban it
• (3) Pitbull Terrier Initiatives:
  • This is the initiative Lee works on primarily
  • This initiative focusses on fighting BDL (Breed Discrimination Legislation)/ BSL (Breed Specific Legislation), which involves banning certain breeds of dogs through an outright ban, or designating dogs as “vicious” “dangerous” “potentially dangerous” etc.
  • Also includes laws that require muzzling & insurance for certain breeds of dogs
  • This is not an effective way to keep communities safe
  • The laws also violate basic property rights, have been proven ineffective in keeping anyone safer, and expensive to implement and enforce
  • Public opinion also believes that the government should not tell them what animals to own (by 84%)
  • Also have scientific peer-reviewed studies that show that a breed is not a reliable way to show whether a dog has a propensity to bite or be aggressive
  • The ABA has even passed a resolution against BDL/BSL
  • Many courts have thrown out these laws as unconstitutional (which is a great change from the 1980’s, where courts almost always upheld the laws)
  • BDL/BSL also touches on other Federal laws & issues, including the ADA and the Fair Housing Act (these Federal laws pre-empt)
  • Many policy makers don’t want to just repeal a law – they want to replace it, so work on breed-neutral laws
  • Also work on laws dealing with dog fighting dogs
    • Often, dogs that come out of these terrible situations are treated differently
    • Cities like Boston require that any dog seized from a dog fight be put to death
Another area that Lee works on is Shelter Transparency Laws, which would require private and municipal shelters to have more reliable and up-to-date information available to the public (e.g., how many dogs there, how many dogs killed & why they were killed)
  - Follows the “Shelter Animals Count” rubric

Questions:
  - For the Shelter Transparency Laws, where would the information be reported?
    - Lee: Up for discussion – if there was central reporting within a municipality’s government, that would require funding legislation; seems more likely it would take place at the local level – on the shelter’s website if they have one, or another 3rd party
  - Any work on legislation requiring shelter standards or SOPs?
    - Lee: BF is not focused on that legislation, but offer expertise to their hundreds of shelters and anyone who may need help
  - In DC, have legislation that could be harmful to TNR & community cats, what is BF doing to combat this legislation?
    - Lee/Richard: DC is usually the model for a city that does TNR & community cats well, but now the Dept. of Environment has said they are going to re-assess whether they want to allow TNR – the new legislation would reclassify cats as pests (which could be read to include domestic cats as well). The law is up for it’s second reading on Tuesday at the DC City Council and if it goes on, the Mayor will have an opportunity to sign it. Hopeful that they were successful in getting the pest language out, but here are other bad provisions.
  - Does BF work on insurance discrimination as well when it comes to landlords?
    - Insurance is a huge problem that BF is working on
    - States like Michigan and Pennsylvania are state that don’t allow breed discrimination in insurance policies and would like to have more States model this approach
    - Going to try more legislation on this next year
    - Studies show that tenants who have pets are actually better tenants and more likely to stay in their apartments
  - PG County has a terrible BSL/BDL law, what is BF doing to overturn it?
    - BF is aware of the law and continues to try to work to repeal it
    - PG County is one of 3 of the largest counties in the Country, so this law affects many people