**Sedgwick County Animal Care Advisory Board Meeting**

Animal Control
*Sedgwick County Health Department*
1015 Stillwell, Wichita, KS 67213 - www.sedgwickcounty.org - TEL: 316-660-7078 - FAX: 316-383-7553

Nika Orebaugh, Animal Control Supervisor

Program Supervisor

**Of May 13, 2021**

**Attendance:**

**Advisory Board**

**Members**- Susan Erlenwein, Debbie Miller, Simone Ward, Laura Adkins, Shanti Leiker, Dr. Julie Evans, Shelley Seidl and Patricia Miller. Members attended in person, and by WebEx.

**Absent-** None

**Public**- Matt Fouts, Stephanie Jeter, Scott Newland and Carli Ward.

**Sedgwick County Staff**- Mitch Waegener and Dakota Kidd

**1. Old Business:**

**A. Minutes:** Discussion and approval of April 2021 minutes. Moved and second by Simone Ward and Debbie Miller. Approved by majority vote.

**2.** **New Business:**

**A. Exotic Animals –** We invited Matt Fouts, Director of Tanganyika Wildlife Park, Stephanie Jeter, Animal Curator at Tanganyika Wildlife Park, and Scott Newland, Deputy Director of Animals at Sedgwick County Zoo, to help the Board through their discussions on exotic animal ownership by individuals. Board members were able to ask questions of our guests and receive their answers, suggestions and recommendations on ownership of exotic animals. The following is a recap of these discussions:

* Question: If pet kangaroos escape or are released, can they survive? Answer: May not survive the winter. It will be hard to find proper food. Would be picked off by local wildlife.
* Q: Can altering a kangaroo change its behavior? A: Their behavior will change with sexual maturity and usually becomes less aggressive as they get older. They have two responses to a threat, fight or flight. Can be aggressive if protecting territory and will defend itself. Typically not their “go to” response. Wallaroos can be aggressive and can be a hand full.
* Q: Are wallaroos and wallabies dangerous? Are they easy to care for? A: Wallabies walk around the zoo with guests and are easy to care for. They are herbivores.
* Q: What kind of environment do they need to survive? Can they catch anything from humans? A: Nothing from humans. Some macropodidae live in trees or on rocks. The back yard is okay. All animals can bite, it depends on how they were raised.
* Q: Your opinion on people owning exotic animals. A: Although some may not be dangerous, they may not make a great pet. May want to limit it to a maximum of three. More than that would be hard to take care of. No one should own primates, bears, wolves, wolf-hybrids, large cats, certain reptiles and birds. People do it, but often they do it wrong. However, I do not want to say that no one can have venomous reptiles or exotic birds. We would not be in business today if there were laws preventing ownership of exotic animals in the past.
* Q: Certain animals, like boas or alligators would have trouble with our winter, so they won’t take over. A: If one gets loose, it will not destroy the ecosystem. I advocate for proper ownership by being responsible.
* Q: What about extra vet care? A: We outsource to local vets who specialize in certain animals and large animal care. Specialized knowledge comes with the individual.
* Recommendation: USDA has permits and rules that cover exotic animals. Follow USDA rules and use them as a default. Their license includes inspections, care, fencing, etc. Could write into rules that the County can inspect. Don’t go too deep with the regulations, people will just go underground.
	+ It was pointed out that people can buy anything online. Many scams are also out there.
	+ We could require they register their pets with the County so we know where they are, or can help if they get loose. Maybe keep track by species and not individuals.
	+ USDA has a fee, but lack staff. We could follow their protocols.
	+ USDA also has exceptions for accredited traveling circuses.
	+ Need mechanism to take animals away from owners who are not properly taking care of them.
	+ But do not restrict ownership.
	+ AZA also has guidelines for animal care.
* Q: What exotic cats are banned? A: Kansas defined them as tigers, leopards, lions, cougars, and cheetahs. Also you cannot have wolves, wolf-hybrids, venomous snakes, and animals on an inherently dangerous list (includes great apes, chimps).

**A. Staff Update-** Mitch Waegener advised members of the following activities:

* Mitch mentioned that Nika was currently on vacation. She has been busy working with rescue work.
* The new Animal Control officer, Dakota Kidd, was introduced to the Board.
* Mitch has been busy with shelter runs.
* They have five officers in the field.

**4. Public –**None

**5. Adjournment –** The Board agreed to adjourn and have our next meeting devoted to Exotic animals and review USDA regulations.