



From:

Sent: Thursday, May 07, 2009 10:17 AM

To: Mayor David Scapicchio; Ray Perkins; Phil Tobey; Steven Rattner; Russ Tepper; Rob Greenbaum; Colleen Labow; Roman, Alex; Lashway, Lisa; Wilpert, Frank

Subject: PLEASE RECONSIDER THE TNR DECISION

Mt. Olive Officials,

Please reconsider your recent decision on trap/neuter/return, the nonlethal method of feral population control. Done right, TNR works! If the killing method the community has been using for years was successful, why do your feral cat problems still exist? Plain and simple, trap and kill fails as a long term solution and is only a simple temporary fix to feral cat issues.

Please take the time to investigate and work with Morris County communities that have reduced their feral cat populations, saved their residents money on animal control costs and kept countless kittens from clogging up their shelter system.

Generally, the people who don't support TNR are the ones that are undereducated/misinformed about it or haven't seen it's success personally. Often, long time Animal Control Officers, who were trained years ago that trap and kill is the proper method of control, are uncomfortable with trying TNR because it is unfamiliar to them and requires them to learn a new skill. Is this the case it Mt. Olive?

Denville begins spay-neuter-release program

(by Cindy Forrest - May 06, 2009)

As the sun blazed outside on an unseasonably warm April day, Inkin and Blinkin waited patiently in their crate in a cool room at the Animal Control Center in Denville. Inkin and Blinkin along with about 80 other cats from around the area were participating in 20th the trap-spay-neuter-release program sponsored by the Parsippany Animal Supporters Society (PASS). Denville Animal Control Officer Meredith Petrillo working with the Animal Control Divisions of Montville and Chester Township planned to bring a mobile hospital to the shelter in an effort to control the ever-growing feral cat community. "This would have been the first time we've done this in Denville," said Petrillo, "but Boonton has been doing it for years and they've diminished the feral cats population in that town considerably."

The best-laid plans though sometimes just don't work out. The mobile hospital that was due to arrive at around 10 a.m. in the morning broke down somewhere along the Garden State Parkway. At noon there was still some optimism that the truck would be repaired and continue on its journey north to Denville. However by 6:30 p.m. Petrillo and the PASS volunteers on hand to aid her had given up hope and were busy feeding the cats. "It was suppose to be a good thing," said PASS President Suzanne Griffin, "but it just didn't work out the way we planned." Instead volunteers will have to drive already terrified feral cats down to the town of Voorhees in southern NJ.

PASS has sponsored 14 trap-spay-neuter-release events in Boonton and surrounding areas for over 800 felines. Included in the Denville group were twelve pregnant cats taken from the Chester mansion where over 140 cats had been living in squalid conditions.

Inkin and Blinkin along with about eight of the 80 cats being held in Denville are domesticated enough to be adopted after the surgery, the other will be release back into the wild.

Feral cats are the 'wild' offspring of domestic cats and are primarily the result of pet owners' abandonment or failure to spay and neuter their animals, allowing them to breed uncontrolled. Feral cat 'colonies' can be found behind shopping areas or businesses, in alleys, parks, abandoned buildings, and rural areas. They are elusive and do not trust humans.

Many people assume their animals will survive when they move away and leave them behind. Contrary to popular belief, domestic animals do not automatically return to their 'natural' instincts and cannot fend for themselves. According to the Feral Cat Coalition U.S. animal shelters are forced to kill an estimated 15 million homeless cats and dogs annually. The alternative to humane euthanasia for almost every stray is a violent end or slow, painful death. Many 'throwaways' die mercilessly outdoors from starvation, disease, abuse, or as food to a predator.

A pair of breeding cats, which can have two or more litters per year, can exponentially produce 420,000 offspring over a seven-year period. And the overpopulation problem carries a hefty price tag. "The biggest budget issue for towns around here is dealing with feral cats and dogs," said Petrillo, "so when PASS approached me about this I was thrilled. It's a win for the towns, a win for the animals and a win for everyone involved."

Added to the considerable problem of overbreeding cats this year, was the discovery of over 140 cats in a mansion in Chester Township a few weeks ago. Twelve of those cats, all of them pregnant, were in Denville to be spayed.

Studies have proven that trap-spay-neuter-release is the single most successful method of stabilizing and maintaining healthy feral cat colonies with the least possible cost to local governments and residents, while providing the best life for the animals themselves.

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Suzanne Roman Griffin