

## **Hamilton Township Animal Shelter and Adoption Center Response to State Inspection**

The Hamilton Township Animal Shelter and Adoption Center is fully committed to providing a quality facility for all of the animals that have, and will continue, to find their way to our local shelter and looks forward to demonstrating full compliance to all applicable State Laws and recommendations.

The following response highlights how each item listed in the State of New Jersey Department of Health inspection conducted on July 16, 2018, has been, or is currently in the process of, being corrected.

We acknowledge the issues cited in the State report that need to be addressed; and we are fully committed in doing so. Hamilton Township takes the findings of the report very seriously and is working aggressively to remedy any deficiencies.

While making corrections to the items noted in the report, our shelter remains open and continues its daily operations, including animal adoptions. Our shelter works cooperatively with volunteer animal advocacy groups, organizations and professionals on an ongoing basis to better serve our shelter animals, such as A.F.E.W. (Animal Friends for Education and Welfare), Res-Q-Pets, and Pet Rescue of Mercer. Additionally, as a longstanding practice, our shelter ensured that all adoptable pets received a veterinary examination within 7 – 10 days (unless health concerns warranted immediate veterinary examination), received all necessary shots and, if necessary, would be spayed or neutered.

### **Item Corrective Actions**

1.2 (b) – The certificate of inspection is now placed in the main shelter reception area, along with the existing shelter license and fire inspection that is currently displayed.

1.3 (c) – All food is now in sealed containers with secured tops. All food items have been doubled checked to ensure that any expired items have been discarded. It is important to note that one documented can of food with an expired date was never opened or served. Additionally, while the inspection cited a table used for euthanasia that was “not easily assessable”, it should be noted that the room was temporarily storing items that were scheduled for removal.

1.3 (e) – Paper towel holders will be installed by each sink, in addition to exiting paper towel containers that were present during the inspection.

1.4 (d) – Three (3) new LED lights are being installed in the room and arranged to uniformly distribute lighting in the room. Prior to the inspection, there was an existing plan to install new LED lights throughout the entire facility.

1.4 (f) – While the shelter will continue to use proper cleaning methods of floor areas and is in the process of replacing any broken tiles, we are also researching the potential for using a new cleaning and sanitizing product that is utilized in hospitals and schools (and will confirm compliance of its possible use with State officials). Carpeted cat furniture that was soiled has been removed. Additionally, although minor paint peeling has occurred, the areas are currently being prepared for painting.

1.5 (e) – Similar to the above section, although minor paint peeling has occurred, the areas are currently being prepared for painting.

1.6 (a) – Further review found that the fallen galvanized bolt that was cited in the report came from a fence. New tables have been installed for dog carriers to be placed on top of (for small breed dogs only). Any unused carriers

will be stored underneath the tables until needed. Again, as noted in the prior two sections, although minor paint peeling has occurred, the areas are currently being prepared for painting.

1.7 (e) and (h) – Food and water receptacles have been, and will continue to be, washed, rinsed, sanitized with bleach and air-dried once a day. The unoccupied bird cage has been cleaned and remains on-site for possible, future use.

1.8 (a) – The portal doors are being reinstalled in the cat enclosure area. During the cleaning process, cats will be temporarily placed in appropriate cat carriers and subsequently return to their cat enclosures following completion. Previously, cats were moved into a different section of shelter to enjoy exercise when cleaning operations took place.

1.8 (c) – In the cited instance, the cats were adopted on a Saturday. Routine Sunday cleaning that occurred addressed fecal and urine from the areas where shelter animals reside, as opposed to the empty carriers of the previously adopted cats. To address this cited matter, the shelter will begin immediately cleaning empty carriers following adoption. New container bottles have been purchased with new labels so that cleaning supplies and bleach solutions are clearly identified. Since the inspection, all cleaning supplies are being moved to a storage rooms that will exclusively be used to store such supplies. Additionally, plans are in place to have written procedures for all products and cleaning protocols, which will be documented. Finally, we are also awaiting State approval for a new cleaning and disinfectant product system, which is used in hospitals and schools.

1.8 (d) – Similar to multiple sections above, although minor paint peeling has occurred, the areas are currently being scraped and painted. We are working to research and confirm the exact sealant used. Again, as noted in prior sections, areas exhibiting minor paint peeling are currently being prepared for painting.

1.9 (a) -- Medical visit records were previously kept at the veterinarian when any animal was taken for treatment; however, euthanasia records will be retained at the shelter for at least one year. Following two separate checks, any expired medications have been removed and disposed of for the proper discarding of medication. Further investigation is ongoing regarding medication (used and unused) without documentation: In the case of dog #116 (a dog that was subsequently adopted), why not all of the medication was used; and in the case of kitten #213, why logs were not kept to document the administration of eye drops. Additionally, the shelter is currently working with the Hamilton Township Department of Technology to employ electronic forms to document all medication administered.

1.9 (b) – The VPH-20 was provided by the veterinarian.

1.9 (g) – While the shelter does not have an “isolation area” for dogs, the shelter used an “in-take” for the examination of newly arrived dogs; and during examination, if any dog demonstrated signs of possible communicable disease, the dog was immediately taken to a veterinarian as a routine protocol. Additionally, as a longstanding practice, our shelter ensured that all adoptable pets received a veterinary examination within 7 – 10 days (unless health concerns warranted immediate veterinary examination), received all necessary shots and, if necessary, would be spayed or neutered.

1.9 (h) – Plans are being made to bring the cat isolation room into compliance regarding the exhaust system.

1.10 (a) and N.J.S.A. 4:19-15.16 – Shortly after the State inspection, the shelter made the decision to discontinue the offered public service of humanely putting down terminally ill animals at the request of owners. In the case of a badly injured animal called in after hours, those animals are immediately and directly brought to a veterinarian.

1.11 (c) – While the State officials performing the inspection recommend preferred procedures for euthanasia when necessary (which the shelter will be transitioning to), it is important to note that the methods used were permissible. In fact, all animals were heavily sedated, in accordance with State regulations, before being humanely put down and followed training from a veterinarian. However, the shelter will use recommended methods whenever possible.

1.11 (e) – Employees took a course regarding the administration of euthanasia that was based upon the Humane Society of the United States' Euthanasia Reference Manual and which was believed to be recognized across the entire country; however, upon State officials clarifying that the course was not recognized by the State of New Jersey, the employees immediately took training from a New Jersey veterinarian in order to conform with State Law. Certificates were subsequently issued to document the training and are on-site at the shelter. Again, as mentioned in the above section, the shelter will use recommended methods whenever possible.

1.11 (f) – One scale on site at the time of the State inspection needed a battery to be replaced for the scale to function (which has since be resolved). Additionally, a new scale to accommodate larger-breed dogs is now on site at the facility. With regard to the animal logs in question, the shelter is currently working with the Hamilton Township Department of Technology to employ electronic forms with functionality to allow for storage, duplicative copies and review. Even the State report acknowledges that some questions may have resulted from numbers logged in the incorrect column, which electronic forms should help to solve. Similarly, again as listed in section 1.8 (c) - plans are in place to have written procedures for medication/prescription protocols (including for storage), which will be documented.

1.13 (a) – Again, as noted in the above section, the shelter is currently working with the Hamilton Township Department of Technology to employ electronic forms that should rectify any issues documentation.

1.13 (b) – As clearly noted in this section, Hamilton Township's ongoing commitment to fulfilling the significant increase in Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests accounted for records not being available to the State officials at the time of the inspection.

(N.J.S.A. 4:19-15:23 – The shelter will be complying with scanning for microchips three (3) times, rather than only scanning at intake.

## **In Conclusion**

We once again would like to remind residents that while making corrections to the items noted in the report, our shelter remains open and continues its daily operations, including animal adoptions. We acknowledge the issues cited in the State report that need to be addressed; and we are fully committed in doing so. Hamilton Township takes the findings of the report very seriously and is working aggressively to remedy any deficiencies.