

COLUMBUS ANIMAL CONTROL ADVISORY BOARD

September 18, 2026

Columbus City Hall Annex,
420 E 10th Street, Columbus GA 31901

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Ethelyn Riley, Chair, Presiding

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Ethelyn Riley (Chair), Karen Gaskins (Asst. Chair), Kirven Boyce, Dr. Jo Brown, Matt Gilbert, Donna McGinnis (Internal Auditor / Compliance Officer; Contract Administrator), Danielle Saunders (Cols. Department of Public Health; Non-Voting Member),

ABSENT: Courtney Pierce (Executive Director of Paws Human, Inc.; Non-Voting member),

GUESTS: Councilor Toyia Tucker, Michele Mastrean (PAWS), Lt. John Wray (ASO Officer)

CHAIR'S AGENDA - Chairwoman Riley read the agenda items into the record.

1. Approval of minutes from the April 2 , 2026, and the July 21, 2026 meetings of the Animal Control Advisory Board. The motion was made by Kirven Boyce, seconded by Matt Gilbert and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

2. Courtney Pierce – Georgetown Update. Courtney was unable to attend so Lt. John Wray gave the update that complaints have been addressed and deterrants have been offered. There is ongoing communication with the Georgetown residents on the part of PAWS Animal Services.

Chairwoman Riley reminded those in attendance that ASAB is an ADVISORY board. We can inform and educate but has no authority to enforce. The TNR Program is run by Paws Humane and they should have a spreadsheet with a registry.

Public comments were as follows:

1. Michelle Mastrean stated she has been a part of the TNR program for 25 years
2. A citizen from Moye Estates said she could not get anyone from PAWS to answer the phone
3. Robbie Culpepper said the city needs a spay/neuter law
4. Carlton Brandon, a resident of Georgetown, said he was the one who brought attention to this matter and he had not seen PAWS in Georgetown until he called them about the issue.
5. Kirven Boyce asked Michele Mastrean if the public could attend Paws Humane Board meetings. Michele stated only if invited to the meeting
6. Nina Gomez, a citizen, shared her work with TNR since 2023. She stated more education and funds were needed. It is important for those designated caretakers to understand the parameters of the program.
7. Deborah Coleman, a citizen of Georgetown, said Georgetown has an additional colony.
8. Allie Johnson, a citizen, said the cat colonies are multiplying.
9. Charles Walker, a citizen, said he does TNR and that it can work. He respectfully requested funds to help.

10. A citizen who also works with *Best Friends Animal Society* said she would be glad to help with training.
11. Councilor Tucker said she is supportive of everyone's feelings. She understands the need for responsible cat ownership and the frustration of those impacted by irresponsible ownership. She feels the citizens can come to a resolution to make it work.
12. Chairwoman Riley said it comes back to a responsible caretaker.
13. Karen Gaskins suggested law enforcement get involved.
14. David, a citizen from Old Town said he has a cat colony problem. Several pit bulls were killing cats. Lt Wray told him this case is going to court.
15. A lengthy discussion followed between several citizens about the procedures around impounding an aggressive dog.
16. Allie Johnson stated she is concerned about how ASAB is being run'
17. Raquel Forrand agreed that the problem centers around responsible owners and caretakers.
18. Another citizen thanked the board for listening – her animal had been killed by a roaming dog

NEW BUSINESS

Karen Gaskins, Assistant Chair – Microchipping

1. She would like the board to research and be prepared to vote on mandatory microchipping
2. Dr Jo Brown sated there are some "first-come, first-served" microchipping programs. There is also a free registry. Go to: freepetregistry.com

The Board also discussed enforcement of state kennel laws and concerns regarding individuals allegedly boarding large numbers of animals without a kennel license. Courtney explained that enforcement is complaint-based and may involve investigation. Members noted that illegal boarding activity may fall under the authority of the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

Discussion continued regarding animal abuse and neglect enforcement. Assistant Chair Gaskins commended the recent training and emphasized the need for stronger law

ADJOURNMENT:

Matt Gilbert made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Dr Jo Brown and passed unanimously

*****The next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2026, 3:00 PM, Columbus GA City Hall Annex. 420 E 10th Street, Columbus GA 31901**