

The City Council met in Regular Session in Council Chambers. Mayor Stadsholt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. City Clerk, Jesse Hall, called the roll and the following Alderpersons answered to their names: Denis Bryant, Bob Cooper, Dan Griffin, Christopher J. Rilea, Richard "Tayler" Shore, James Stroh, Ross McDowell and Nick Urish.

A quorum was present. The minutes were recorded by City Clerk, Jesse Hall.

The pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was repeated by all City Officials and guests.

PUBLIC COMMENT #1

DISCUSSION: None

ACTION TAKEN: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DISCUSSION: Mayor Stadsholt asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 3, 2023.

ACTION TAKEN: There being none, the minutes are approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT

DISCUSSION: Mayor Stadsholt entertained a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted. Alderperson Stroh made the motion, seconded by Alderperson Bryant.

ACTION TAKEN: Mayor Stadsholt asked if there were any questions or corrections to the Treasurer's Report. There being none, the motion passed by the following vote:

Voting Yes: Rilea, Shore, Stroh, McDowell, Urish, Bryant, Cooper and Griffin

Voting No: None

FINANCE REPORT

DISCUSSION: Mayor Stadsholt entertained a motion to approve the Finance Report as submitted. Alderperson Rilea made the motion, seconded by Alderperson Shore.

ACTION TAKEN: Mayor Stadsholt asked if there were any questions or corrections to the Finance Report. There being none, the motion passed by the following vote:

Voting Yes: Griffin, Rilea, Shore, Stroh, McDowell, Urish, Bryant and Cooper

Voting No: None

MAYOR'S REPORT

DISCUSSION: Mayor Stadsholt reported on the following items:

- I have spoken with President/CEO, Steve Kline, with The Economic Development Group, Ltd. yesterday, and our BDD agreement was submitted to the State of Illinois before the October 1st deadline. It will go into effect January 1, 2024. Steve will be coming to City Hall Friday, October 20, 2023 to talk to City Treasurer, Alex Noble, City Clerk, Jesse Hall, and myself concerning TIF II.
- The 20th President of the University of Illinois, Tim Killeen and over twenty members of his cabinet including Chancellors of the University and staff spent the day touring the Forbes Biological Station, the Illinois River Biological Station, taking a boat tour on the Illinois River and meeting with myself and Economic Development Coordinator, Brenda Davenport-Fornoff at the Riverside Club. We served cookies and water. Cammy Smith did our cookies in orange and blue so that was fun and we got to really know a lot of them and talk with them about the IRBS project. Hopefully, more information will be coming forth on that particular visit. It was a great day for Havana.
- Today we had our Third Tuesday Coffee. Dr. Mark White, from the University of Illinois Extension was our speaker. He was very well accepted. We had a larger crowd than normal. And one of his questions to get all of us talking with him was, "what would you do if I gave you \$100,000.00 right now, what project would you work on?" So that was really a great question to ask our business owners and it really helped with the discussion so it was well attended and really worthy.
- Downtown Business Trick or Treat Friday, October 27th, 2023 from 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 31st, 2023 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. to be the official Trick or Treat time in the City of Havana.

ACTION TAKEN: None

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

DISCUSSION: No report

ACTION TAKEN: None

CITY TREASURER'S REPORT

DISCUSSION: No report

ACTION TAKEN: None

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

DISCUSSION: No report

ACTION TAKEN: None

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

DISCUSSION: Economic Development Coordinator, Brenda Davenport-Fornoff, reported on the following item:

- Two of the three sets of Tivoli lights have been installed. They're not lit up yet, but they will be.
- The Havana Business Directory has been put on Facebook and the city's website. I've only had two people make additions, because there are different categories.
- As the Mayor said, U of I was here. It was really nice to have them come visit Havana.
- I came in on Friday, October 13, 2023 and submitted again, another submission for the Energy Transition Community Grant. I don't know when we're going to receive the grant money.
- There has been no decision on the murals or on the welcome signs. Our town has no welcome signs. We have one. All these other little towns have welcome signs. We actually did a trade for ground to have a welcome sign coming in on 97 and nothing has been done with it. My bids are not going to be good anymore. I did talk about digital signage with Police Chief, Jeremiah Hindahl and Public Works Director, Jewel Bucy. They do not want a digital sign coming in over the bridge. They feel it's a safety hazard. Alderperson Cooper asked what the bids for the signs were. Brenda Davenport-Fornoff said it was \$18,000.00 for three of them without the stone work.

ACTION TAKEN: None

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

DISCUSSION: Public Works Director, Jewel Bucy, reported on the following items:

- Mike Pedigo is asking for us to get the MFT program turned into him right away.
- I gave Alderperson Bryant an inspection report from Pittsburgh Tower and Paint that was done back in 2018 and an inspection report from Maguire Iron, Inc. KLM wants to charge us \$80,000.00 to oversee everything. We're going to figure out what needs to be done to the towers and then we'll have a committee meeting.
- Alderperson Cooper asked, if we could continue the water meter discussion. Alderperson McDowell recommended buying 100-200 new water meters. Alderperson Urish said, based on what I've just heard for 400 meters and all of the equipment it would cost \$137,100.00.

ACTION TAKEN: None

POLICE CHIEF REPORT

DISCUSSION: No report

ACTION TAKEN: None

FIRE MARSHAL/ZONING OFFICER REPORT

DISCUSSION: No report

ACTION TAKEN: None

FINANCE AND PURCHASING

DISCUSSION: Alderperson Cooper made a motion to allocate \$100,000.00 of the ARPA funds to purchase water meters, seconded by Alderperson Bryant.

ACTION TAKEN: Mayor Stadsholt asked if there were any questions or comments. There being none, the motion passed by the following vote:

Voting Yes: Bryant, Cooper, Griffin, Rilea, Shore, Stroh, McDowell and Urish

Voting No: None

HEALTH AND SANITATION

DISCUSSION: Alderperson Shore introduced Code Enforcement Officer, Julie Ishmael. There has been a stray cat issue in Havana since long before I started. I see reports going back more than 15 years attempting to address this problem. That problem being, there are large numbers of cats that are unowned that are a nuisance to the community. They make messes in yards and around people's homes. They reproduce at a staggering rate. They get on porches and cars. They tear up flowers and landscaping doing things that are just normal for cats.

This year I had a complaint about this that expanded into a major situation. A community member had stray cats coming onto her property and getting on her porch. They were digging in her flowers and getting on her car. She lives next door to many people that often feed the cats. They don't own them, as these cats are not friendly.

With the help of a group of citizens, I was able to help trap and they removed many of the cats, some owners were asked to keep their cats home at night, and some were taken to the shelter. However, it didn't completely fix the problem because it still exists.

Although we now have a new Mason County Animal Control Administrator, Trevor Koonce, the initial problem still exists in the City of Havana, which is nuisance feral cats. I've created this to try and explain the problem and explain a potential solution.

What has been presented as options to animal control does not resolve the issue and is not a reasonable means to take care of the cats in the City of Havana. Catching and killing all of the stray cats in town would be unethical, expensive, and would turn the citizens of Havana away from what the goal is in Animal Control. There is a difference in putting down an animal that is injured or suffering and a perfectly healthy animal that just happens to not have a home through no fault of their own.

We do not have the room to house all of the stray cats. We do not have the funds available to hire someone to come in Saturday and Sunday and feed and water cats. We cannot expect our police department to take time away from their duties to maintain so many animals at once. We cannot afford the cost of veterinary care, food, water, electricity, cleaning chemicals, shelter equipment, and manpower just to put the animals down in the end, which would be a whole other bill. The taxpayers do not want to pay to mass euthanize animals. I don't feel anyone on the council would want that either.

Citizens in Havana spend a lot of time caring for these stray cats. People feed them. They enjoy them from a distance. They name them. They take in their babies. They love them. Not all people. We respect the fact that some people do not appreciate the mess from them. Unfortunately, stray cats is a nationwide problem. It is estimated that there are between 50-70 million feral cats in the United States. (Advanced Care Veterinary Hospital-2022) This is neither a unique problem nor an easily solved problem. The City of Havana has its own circumstances when dealing with feral and stray animals.

One of the problems is that these cats are not owned. Our Ordinance is specific to owned domestic animals. Feral cats do not fall into that. I cannot cite an owner as they have none. According to the state laws, if you feed, water, and shelter an animal, it's yours. However, these are not animals that people are intentionally sheltering. There are people intentionally setting out food but it's not necessarily specific to certain animals. They can't touch these animals and they don't live within their homes. They are providing a comfort feature for any random cat that happens to come along, which is not illegal. There is no way to penalize someone just for having a blanket sitting on a box in their carport and enforcement of that would be almost impossible. And you cannot issue a citation for someone for having a bowl of food on their back porch as our ordinance clearly states you can. (City of Havana Ordinance-6.08.050, sec B). And again, even if it was not an ordinance, people would still do it. People would feed them at night when nobody could see. They would do it in secret. At least as things stand, I know who is feeding and can speak with them regarding the ferals and other cats in their community.

The City of Havana does not have the resources available to take in the animals. Even if we had a holding pen that was up to state standards, we could not accommodate the feral cats. Not only do we not have the money for all of the care they would need, but we just don't have the staff. These are not the cute and friendly kittens at rescues. These are animals that could hurt you and that don't want to be handled or cleaned up after. They are extremely messy because they're not a housecat. Their kennels need cleaned daily, sometimes multiple times daily because they don't know how to use litterboxes and they will upend food and water. They can be expensive as they will carry diseases like Feline Leukemia, Feline AIDS and parasites like fleas and mites. Because of this, kennels have to remain clean or you could potentially create a major problem within the community and create a dangerous situation for other animals coming into the holding facility.

When I pick up a cat with Animal Control, it is required by the State of Illinois that the cats have a holding period. Regardless of the condition of the animal or the type of animal. By law and local ordinance, these animals must be held for a period of no less than 3 days. If the animal is sick or injured, I'm required by law to treat it, even a feral. If it is in a life threatening situation, we have to put it down. That's the law. I cannot just put these animals in cages for three days and do nothing with them. They have to be housed with the same care that I would one of your own pets for three days before they can move on to whatever fate there is. After that holding period, the cats are either euthanized or they are spayed, neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. Again, that's the law. You cannot adopt an animal out of a shelter or rescue in the State of Illinois without it having met that standard. This applies to even the feral animals. (225 ILCS 605/3.6) (City of Havana Ordinance-6.08.160)

There is no low cost options around the Mason County for animal control to seek low cost care. Occasionally, there will be a clinic in a nearby County for spay and neuter or vaccines, but a lot of times those clinics are open only to the residents of that County. The closest places we have for low cost spay and neuter is TAPS in Peoria and the APL in Springfield. Currently, both of those clinics are only working at a private and individual basis with owners and not operating with Cities. If I took the cats to any local veterinarian, I am going to pay at cost. We do not have a contract existing with any veterinary clinic for low cost options and we never have. It has not been for lack of trying on my part to get this. With the change of Mason County Animal Control Administrator this may become an option, it is currently not. Veterinary Care for animals that are feral is the same price as animals that are friendly. It is expensive.

Euthanasia methods in Illinois is expensive. The only legal means of euthanasia for an animal is by chemical means by a person that is licensed to do so. (AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals 2020 edition) Animals must be sedated or tranquilized prior to euthanasia. This is governed by the American Veterinary Medical Association. The goal is to put animals down in a way they do not suffer. Again, this can be expensive. I have seen a lot of "shortcuts" in regards to animal euthanasia and I can assure you that you would not want to be a part of it. Watching an already suffering animal suffer for even longer because it was not done correctly is one of the most heartbreaking things I've ever seen. Because of that, there are just some clinics I will not go to in the event of animal euthanasia. I've also seen a lot of kindness in regards to animal euthanasia. I even had a veterinarian from Greenhaven Animal Hospital put down a family dog for free because the family was homeless and could not afford the care for their elderly dog. That was kindness. The City of Havana does not have a staff member that can perform euthanasia. It requires a license. Once you have the license, it requires chemical, which we can only get from a veterinarian. We do not have a veterinarian who would give us that chemical. In short, doing things the right way matters. However, doing things the right way can be expensive. If you put 100s of feral animals down every year, you will be paying for it to be done by the standards of the State of Illinois, and you probably will not get someone to do it for a reduced cost.

Mason County Pets Without Parents cannot accommodate all of the feral cats either. Their shelter is set up for the adoption of friendly animals, not ferals. They do not have a place to house them either. They are stuck with animals that are completely spayed, neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated that will never leave a small kennel. The animals suffer in this environment and the only option is to put them down. We cannot overcrowd the rescue system as a means to end our own problems. If we do, they will not be able to take in our friendly animals that can be adopted. Passing the problem on to someone else does not fix the issue but only creates hostility where it doesn't need to exist.

When there is a barn cat program, which is a program designed to take in fixed feral cats, it quickly becomes exhausted because the truth of the matter is, nobody wants cats. Occasionally we will get someone who wants one or two, but not the mass numbers of cats that we would accumulate under a program like this. According to the state of Illinois, we could do this type of program, but the animals MUST be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped before they can be released into it. That's a high cost for a program that is free. This year, I have only received 2 calls for people wanting barn cats. Both of those people were directed to the locals I had mentioned earlier that were taking care of some feral cat colonies. They were able to get the cats they wanted privately, eliminating only six cats from the City of Havana. Farmers do not want mass amounts of feral cats on their properties any more than the people in town do. The ones that do want those cats will not be seeking us out because they do not want cats that are spayed and neutered.

Currently, this is the method that I use for the City of Havana. When I have a call come in about stray cats, my first question is, are you feeding them. I ask this because it helps me establish if this is a random cat that might move on or is this a cat that has just showed up. If they are in fact feeding them, then I will have them reach out to rescues that have barn cat programs on a private basis as I can't get the animals into those programs. Remember, once I pick up that feral cat, it's mine to care for.

If they are not feeding the cat, then I ask if someone around them is. If there is someone, I will go talk to the people feeding. I will try and negotiate with them to either find a service or methods to keep the cats

contained, help them clean up the area if need be. I will lend them traps if they need to try and help remove the animals to a more suitable place or to a rescue. These are not easy things to find or do as they are just not locally available options. Additionally, as I said earlier, people that have barns for cats do not normally call animal control looking for them.

I will continue to work with the person so long as they are cooperative with me. Most of the people feeding these animals are not your typical "crazy cat people". These could be any of your neighbors.

At the same time, I do like to educate people on deterrents for their yards. There are commercially available yard sprays, natural deterrents, and even motion activated sprinklers and humane spike systems for garden beds that are available to help keep these cats out (Alley Cat Allies-How to Live With Cats in Your Neighborhood). I DO NOT expect someone to have to change their yard to keep the cats out nor do I ask them to do so. However, prevention sometimes helps and some people are extremely receptive to it. They don't want to see the animals harmed, they just don't want them in their yard.

If all else fails, I will pick up the cat by means of setting up humane traps. The chances of catching a cat in them is literally 50/50. Feral cats are extremely sensitive to new stimulus in their environment. If a cat has seen another cat get caught in a trap, they might not go into it. If a trap doesn't smell right, they might not go into it. Cats are cautious by nature and sometimes they just won't go into it. I trapped for two straight weeks over the summer in an area known to have feral cats and caught two cats out of dozens. Unfortunately, that is just the case sometimes. In that instance, you have to learn when to let it go and go back to the unhappy complainant to further offer more advice. I can't kill these animals. I can't catch these animals. I don't have an owner for these animals. What can we do at your house that can make it so these cats are staying out of it? That's not the answer people want but it is unfortunately the answer that might be offered. Animal Control is not an exact science and sometimes it literally relies on luck. The only time I have had a 100% guaranteed catch is when I caught Lonnie Engledow's cat, Ozzie, who went into the same trap 6 times, ate the food, and then patiently waited for somebody to let him out so he could do it all over again when I reset the trap. I had to hold him at the shelter for several days in order to catch the feral cat that I was trying for.

If I do pick up the cat, I hold them as I had explained briefly earlier. I place them in a kennel with a carrier inside. I provide food, water, and a litter box. I assess the health of the animal and it's temperament. Some feral cats that are fearful will stay in the carrier inside of the kennel and never leave. Some of them that are aggressive will try and scratch and bite and hiss every chance they get. I have been bit once by a pregnant female cat and I still have scars on my finger from the bite that went down to the bone. These are not animals to take a chance with.

At the end of their hold, I will make arrangements with a shelter to take the cat to. There is a possibility when the cat leaves that it will be put down. Unfortunately, that is the reality of the situation. When people ask me that as I'm picking up the animal, because again, nobody wants the cats put down, just not in their yard, I am honest with them. I'm not going to sugar coat the situation. The chances of a feral cat being put down in a shelter setting is extremely high. It's estimated to be at approximately 72% nationwide. (Havahart-The Benefits of Feral Cat TNR Programs VS Euthanasia)

This process is long and can be expensive. As I have stated over and over, these cats must be cared for in a humane manner. They must be vetted when it's needed.

In the instance that we pick up a stray cat that is friendly or shows traits that could possibly make it a good cat in a home, the shelter will do everything it can to tame that cat down or bring it up to an adoptable standard. I've picked up many cats that I believed to be feral that turned out to just be lost or abandoned friendly cats. I try to get these cats home but if I can't, I get it to a shelter or rescue that can adopt it out. It will get spayed or neutered and will receive its vaccinations and microchip and it has a chance.

As I've already stated, the majority of the people in the City of Havana, do not want to see the cats dead, but they want the cats gone from their yards and that is a valid complaint. However, the feral cat problem is not just an animal control problem but a community problem. It is something that has to have a check and balance on both the sides of the people taking care of the feral cats and the people who don't want them. It is not a problem that I can simply trap away and it's gone. It's something that has to be continuous and ongoing and it will require communication and partnering with our community members as a whole as well. It will take time but it's something that has been studied and end results have been positive.

Outside of the obvious financial problem with the catch and euthanize method is that it has been continuously proven to be ineffective in the long run. If nobody is effectively sterilizing animals then they will continue to breed and you will forever be in a cycle of catching the ferals and euthanizing them. Cats live in groups called colonies. These colonies consist of a hierarchy. You have the females that lead the cats to food and resources, have kittens, and teach and raise the kittens. You have the males that protect the colonies that keep other cats from coming into the area and obviously aid in having babies as well.

In unsterilized and unvaccinated colonies, female cats can breed several times a year. The kittens will often be sick because of disease and inbreeding. The male cats will display dominance by spraying and fighting other male cats. Kittens will be born everywhere. Several years ago, we had an area that was unchecked for many years with a large unsterilized and unvaccinated colony of cats. A woman had a garage that had an opening and every female cat had kittens in it. I removed over 30 cats from that garage on my own. It was such a large project that I even came in on the weekend to catch kittens of various ages. It was an extreme project. There will be more details on this situation later.

There is something that researchers have called a vacuum effect to describe the effects of the catch and euthanize method. (Alley Cat Allies-The Vacuum Effect). What this means is that because cats are in colonies, if you remove one cat, another will take its place. Unless you entirely remove every single cat in the colony, more cats will move into it. And if you remove the colony completely, another colony will take its place as it's obviously a hospitable environment. It is something that has been seen over and over. Only today I had someone talk to me about this phenomenon when they said that approximately 5 years ago we removed the majority of the cats from around the area at his home but now they have more cats than ever from just one female kitten that was left and a bunch of other cats that have moved in. This is not a method that is practical on a long-term basis.

It is a quick fix to a long term problem. The only way to make it effective is to constantly catch cats. This is extremely expensive as euthanasia can be hundreds of dollars per animal if you do it according to AVMA guidelines. It's also disheartening for the community members that do love the animals. It creates distrust among the community and people will go even more out of their way to hide animal feeding, which means it's now a secret issue and hard to track down a source of. Distrust between animal control and citizens means they don't call when there is a problem and they don't seek us out. Sick animals are left to themselves and not cared for. Animal bites are not reported. Feral animals are hoarded inside of homes so they are not put down.

Distrust of previous animal control has led one of our citizens to taking her entire colony of feral cats she was feeding into her home and not going to us when a feral tom cat of hers was injured. She won't allow me in to see her animals but I can assure you the conditions of her home is bad. You can smell it is bad from the outside. She has an animal that she did not seek care for because she didn't have the money to do it and she was scared that I would take her animals away and put them down. It took a long time to convince her to allow me to help. Her injured cat received care. She's doing better and now, she will call me if she needs help and doesn't fear me taking pets from her to put down. I can't create that kind of tension within my community and expect to effectively do my job.

TNR stands for Trap, Neuter, and Return. It is a method that has been used for several years now with positive results. It works with the community and reduces euthanasia and places the responsibilities of the care of the community cats on volunteer groups instead of on the local government. Animal Control is an assistant to the groups and aids them when it can.

How it works is that feral cats in a colony are caught in humane traps, taken to a veterinarian and spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and are given an ear tip on their left ear. This indicates the cat is sterilized. After a 24 hour recovery, the cats are released back into the area that they were in.

This might sound like it's contradictive of the nuisance cat problems but it's not. After being sterilized, the cats no longer reproduce, so the numbers stay consistent. If new cats come in, you catch them and give them the same treatment. Kittens would be caught and taken to a shelter. If a cat is sick, you either treat it or you euthanize it. Cats then live out their lives. The behaviors involved with cats breeding are no longer there. There isn't the noise and spraying like you expect from breeding animals. Tom cats are not drawn to the area of female cats in heat. There's no kittens. Yes, the cats will still be in the area but the numbers would not be constantly increasing.

I had mentioned earlier the garage that had all of the kittens in it. We used TNR on the cats in this area. We caught 6 females and 2 male cats and all were spayed and neutered and then released back into the area. Mother cats stayed with their kittens until they were weaning age and after that, they were also spayed and released back into their colony. These animals are consistent in the neighborhood and there is only occasionally a new cat in the area since. These cats have a consistent routine of what they do during the day. The same people feed them every night. They all have been named. What could have potentially been hundreds of cats by now from this area (each female kitten that we removed producing kittens as well as the adult female cats) is still fairly consistent. The neutered male cats still keep new tom cats out of the area. And what is the most surprising is that these cats are healthier than before. There is less disease in these animals, which leads to less chances a neighbor's house cat getting out and becoming ill.

This was done at a time when the APL still had a pickup in Havana. This is no longer the case so this method, despite working, has slowed down. We cannot afford to pay the entire cost of spay and neuter for cats

in our community. However, the community has had a positive reaction to it. A lot of people want this for the cats and because of that, they have continued with it on their own. There is a group of people who are centered around the library who use this method still. They borrow traps and catch the cats, spay and neuter them through donations, and then release them back or find a place for them outside of town. There are still a huge number of cats in the area, but I think this really shows that people will work with us on this if we work with them as well to assist.

I propose that the best method of doing this would be to allocate a portion of the animal control budget towards this purpose. Set a number aside for TNR, say 50 cats a year. We could work with these groups and help get cats spayed and neutered in our communities. We could offer a 50/50 cost of TNR price for these groups so that it would be low cost for the community as well as half the price of spay and neuter for the City of Havana.

We could target areas with large cat populations such as the area around the library and North Plum where there are large colonies. We could spay and neuter as many as possible and allow the people that are already feeding them to continue to take care of them. Because these groups would have better financial assistance from the City of Havana, they would be able to do TNR on more colonies of cats and not limit themselves to just the ones they could afford around the library. In addition, they could work on their own to find homes outside of town for them, just as they have already been doing. If not, I would be able to work with them directly to help keep them contained. They would be able to tell us if there is a sick or injured animal in the area without fear of repercussion from ordinance citations.

These groups could work with us if new cats move in to assess if the cat is a feral or a friendly and we can provide the animal with the care it needs. And as always, kittens could be removed. It's much easier to catch wild kittens if you know where they are eating and spending their time. If centralized locations were there to help us, it would make it so much easier to catch the kittens and their mother so she could be spayed.

We could cover the cost of 10-20 cats a year completely for those in true need of this service that can't afford to pay for it. Again, this is a community service. We cannot exclude people from our services simply because they are poor. Animals don't know money and so we should be helping out the owners or caretakers of the animals as much as possible to ensure these animals are cared for, even if their owners are having hard times.

Additionally, I propose we allow the citizens to establish feral cat areas that they maintain under our own standards and supervision. I'm not talking large areas, but areas for feral cat houses and feeding centers. This would keep some of the feral cats from going onto porches and into other people's yards. This would be at the cost of the keeper of that colony and not on the City. They would need to be maintained and registered with animal control so that we can ensure they are not becoming a nuisance. These types of areas would ensure that if they are working and cooperating with the City as a feral colony caretaker, they would not be cited for some of the local ordinance rules pertaining to domestic house pets such as leash laws or ownership laws. These areas would not be housing for pets but sanctuary for cats that don't have a home through no fault of their own.

Creating a program like this would cost less than traditional catch and euthanize programs as it's going to cost us half of the price of euthanasia. Euthanasia for a cat is approximately \$107.20 (Spoon River Veterinary Clinic). Spay and Neuter only covering half of the price and the owner or caretakers meeting us half way would be approximately \$87 (Spoon River Veterinary Clinic) per cat (172.50 total after the community meets us half way.) It would be less cats in the long run after the first few years of spay and neuter. It would reduce the cost of sheltering and supplies associated with it. It would allow the communities to continue to enjoy the cats they have been feeding without fear of the cats being put down, which would build a better relationship between animal control and the community. It would allow animals that exist through no fault of their own to continue to live without having to raise young. At the end of its life, there will simply be one less animal in the area.

Although you're talking \$107 one time per cat, you are talking about the additional cost of sheltering the cat as well. And, this is a process that will continue to come in due to the vacuum effect that I described earlier. It is a never-ending process of paying that same amount to essentially kill animals that have done nothing wrong except existed. These cats will continue to exist as there will always be a female having kittens somewhere or a stray house cat that gets loose and has an accidental litter.

Even \$87 may seem expensive, however, you have to consider the fact that these animals are not going to be sheltered. They're not going to require constant care from the City of Havana. Eventually, once the colonies have all received TNR treatment, it's only maintenance issues and the occasional stray that you are spaying and neutering. The people already caring for them would be able to continue to care for them and remove them as they already have been.

The pricing I included above does not take into account the possibility of perhaps partnering with APL or another clinic that might be cheaper. If I made several large drop offs at the APL every year it would be approximately \$25-50 per cat, which would be even cheaper. However, the APL does not have that information without having actual numbers set up. Another group like Rescued Hearts in Pekin Illinois also offers TNR for only \$45 per cat but it would have to be set up through private parties and could not be applied to a municipality. Another win in regards to the cost.

Additionally, if there are problems with a feral cat and it needs to be removed, we know where the cats are and can work with groups to try and trap them instead of putting out a random trap and hoping for that 50/50 shot to work. It takes out some of the randomization that I see as a person not familiar with the cats and gives assistance to trapping.

We could work with neighbors to help with any problems such as using commercial deterrents in the areas and having items available to help deter them from their yards. Adding commercial sprinklers and spray repellents that could be loaned out or used around properties would help ease tension between the people feeding and the people that don't want the cats. These are not things that animal control would normally have, but it's something that we should consider having regardless of what we choose to do with the animals.

Private groups can continue to give away the cats to farmers and people with barns which is something that I can't do because of state laws. They do not have to go through adoption standards and can give cats away at any time. I have to go through a process and it involves holding, vetting, and spaying and neutering. These groups do not have to do that as long as they are continuing to do so in the humane manner that they already have been. They are a benefit to the community, even if people don't see it.

I would like to note at this time that the library group has additionally donated, food, bedding, medical supplies, puppy pads, toys, and helped many many people in the community with their own pets privately. They are not a nuisance but an asset to our community and they care about the animals. They have been able to give away more pet food and litter to the community this year than animal control has simply through private donations. This is a group we should be working with. This is the best way to do it. These community members that aid us often go unnoticed and I do not want them to go unnoticed in this. The help they have provided me with identifying community cats and getting them home or where they need to be has been invaluable. We need to stop looking at them as the crazy cat people and start celebrating the resources they provide to us.

The feral cat problem in Havana is a problem that has existed for years. Our methods have not been effective. This is not something that can be dealt with one cat at a time but needs to be approached on a large scale. I am willing to take on this challenge but in order to win the fight against this problem, a new approach must be made. I feel like the approach I have recommended should be considered on a 3 year basis to see if it is effective. If it is not, then a new approach could be assessed and approached anew.

ACTION TAKEN: None

LICENSES, ORDINANCE AND LEGAL

DISCUSSION: Alderperson Rilea reported, that there has been a request that we look at **Ordinance 10.16.20. Unlawful parking-Where**. We have had an issue with one neighbor parking a trailer too close to an intersection and blocking the view of the intersection. Our ordinance does say within twenty feet of a crosswalk at any intersection. There are a few changes that I believe that need to be made. One part in it says any person accused of a violation of a provision of this section may settle and compromise the claim against him for such violation by paying to the city five dollars, if the payment is made within twenty-four hours of the time the alleged offense was committed. I would like to have a committee meeting next month.

ACTION TAKEN: None

PLANNING

DISCUSSION: Alderperson Urish reported, Brenda and I did speak last week with the intent of rain during harvest and to go through some of the signage and some of the other things that she reminded us on. It didn't rain, so I appreciate everyone's patience through harvest year. We are working some long hours. I am happy to put what we have today on the agenda for a vote.

ACTION TAKEN: None

PROPERTY AND ZONING

DISCUSSION: Alderperson Griffin reported, that he received a request from EnPower Solutions asking if the city could remove a tree on the corner of East Main Street and Pearl Street. I plan on having a committee meeting prior to our next council meeting.

ACTION TAKEN: None

PUBLIC SAFETY

DISCUSSION: No report

ACTION TAKEN: None

PUBLIC WORKS

DISCUSSION: Alderperson Bryant made a motion to approve moving forward with the South side of Main in the amount of \$55,000.00, seconded by Alderperson McDowell.

ACTION TAKEN: Mayor Stadsholt asked if there were any questions or comments. Alderperson Shore asked if this included doing the driveway at Vic's Place. Alderperson Bryant said yes. Alderperson Rilea asked where does this put Jewel with his budget. Public Works Director, Jewel Bucy said that the \$55,000.00 was not in his budget. There being no further questions, the motion passed by the following vote:

Voting Yes: Urish, Bryant, Cooper, Griffin, Shore, Stroh and McDowell

Voting No: Rilea

PERSONNEL

DISCUSSION: No report

ACTION TAKEN: None

PUBLIC COMMENT #2

DISCUSSION: None

ACTION TAKEN: None

ADJOURNMENT

DISCUSSION: Mayor Stadsholt entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Alderperson McDowell, and seconded by Alderperson Urish.

ACTION TAKEN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.



Brenda Stadsholt, Mayor



Jesse Hall, City Clerk

Guests: Brenda Davenport-Fornoff
Matt Fliege
Julie Ishmael
Alex Noble
Jay Sarff
Wendy Martin