



**City of East Orange**  
**Department of Health & Human Resources**  
**143 New Street**  
**East Orange, New Jersey 07017**

**EAST ORANGE BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**APRIL 19, 2016**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting call to Order @ 5:38 PM**

Board President Christine Harris read the following **Sunshine Law**: This meeting, which conforms to the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter **231**, Public Law of **1975** is a regular meeting of the City of East Orange Board of Health. Notices have been filed with our official newspaper, with the City Clerk and posted on regular bulletin boards. The public is permitted to participate at this meeting.

After the roll call, it was determined there was a quorum to convene the meeting.

**Board Members Present:**

Christine Harris, President  
Tobbia M. Corbitt  
Horace H. Henry arrived @ 5:50 pm  
Reverend Jean E. Maurice  
Cynthia Barnes  
Rosemarie Brown arrived @ 5:48 pm  
Ryan Linder, Attorney

**Mayoral Staff/Health Department Staff/Animal Control:**

Victor Kuteyi, Acting Health Officer (HO)  
Ajah Baldwin, Aide to Mayor Lester E. Taylor, III  
Satryaranjan Besra, Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS)  
Karen LaRussa-Johnson, RN, Health Educator  
Michael Burton, Animal Control Officer (ACO)  
Michael Spinella, Animal Control Officer (ACO)

**Guest Speakers:**

Mr. John Saccenti, Career Development Institute, member of Sustainable Jersey Task Force Committee on the International Fund for Animal Wildlife and former President NJLBHA.  
Attorney Michael Richmond, New Jersey Bar Association, member of Sustainable Jersey Task Force Committee on the International Fund for Animal Wildlife and Animal Law Committee.

**Public in attendance:**

None

**Approval of March 15, 2016 Minutes**

Motion made by Board Member Tobbia Corbitt and seconded by Board Member Cynthia Barnes to accept the March 15, 2016 minutes. Approved by unanimous vote.



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**Introductions**

Board President Harris introduced Ajah Baldwin, Aide to Mayor Lester E. Taylor, III. Guest speakers: Mr. John Saccenti and Attorney Michael Richmond. Ms. Sala Small, new BOH Recording Secretary, as previous secretary Ms. Hazel B. Lucas resigned for personal reasons.

**Old Business**

Board President Harris requested a motion on the final passage of "Ordinance Amending.... Fixing Fees .... Services provided by.... Animal Control Officers". Motion made by member Rev. Maurice and seconded by member Corbitt. Approved by unanimous vote.

**Announcements**

Board President Harris announced that Business Administrator William Senande is recruiting for a part-time Animal Control Officer. Mr. Saccenti stated that they place a notice about the vacancy to their graduates from the Career Development Institute, which will reach 1200 graduates.

**Updates:**

Health Department Staff:

Nurse Karen LaRussa announced the Health and Wellness activities are taking place throughout the city through the fall 2016. The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual BJ's Walk for Asthma Awareness is scheduled for May 7, 2016 and rain date is Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Nassan's Place is having a "Walk for Autism" that will take place on Saturday, May 23, 2016 starting at Elmwood Park. Nassan's Place is an organization that provides activities for autistic children and their families, provides family support, host fundraisers, and engage in public awareness.

The AIDS Awareness Walk will take place on Sunday, May 1, 2016 starting from NJCRI on Central Avenue in Newark. The Health Department in early May will attend the Health Fair in Orange as a regional event, as well as, various health events throughout the East Orange School District.

Nurse LaRussa announced that the Essex County Council for Young Children, Essex County Teen Youth Council and East Orange/Orange Council for Young Children Youth Councils are starting their activities. Additionally, the Rape Care program is active and working.

The East Orange Recreation program is having a health fair on North Arlington this spring. In the fall there will be a Safe Day in Play against domestic, sexual and other violence which is going to take place at Rowley Park on Saturday, October 8, 2016 in collaboration with the East Orange/Orange Breast Cancer. The East Orange Farmer's Market will take place on Tuesdays at Auto Zone between the corner of Central Avenue and Halsted Street during the months of July thru October. Nurse LaRussa stated that she is continuously trying to connect



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schools and community together. Board President Harris asked Acting Health Officer Victor Kuteyi to discuss his inquiries about establishing a Regional Animal Shelter.

Acting HO Kuteyi stated that municipalities are operating their own shelters and others have gone back to the American Humane Society. Board member Corbitt states that since there are 21 municipalities in Essex County, how many are operating their own shelters? Acting HO Kuteyi stated that he will find out by the next meeting. Board President Harris recommended that HO Kuteyi keep track of the municipalities that he has discussed establishing the regional animal shelter and to expand his inquiry.

Board President Harris inquiries about the animal shelter, animal control issues and resolutions. Acting HO Kuteyi, stated that new plastic filters were inserted into the drains in the animal shelter to capture debris.

Board President Harris inquired about any outstanding legal issues. ACO Michael Burton stated that a case is still in litigation; summons has been issued and that one dog is still in custody at the animal shelter. Additionally, ACO Burton stated that repairs are on-going in the shelter; that the quotes for the floor repairs were received and within the next three weeks the floor will be repaired.

Board President Harris inquired about the animal pick-up rate this month. ACO Michael Spinella stated that there have been 103 combined complaints of wildlife, stray cats and stray dogs and to date 70 animals were picked up. Board President Harris inquired if there is a way to parse out the number of cats and the number of dogs that have been picked-up? ACO Spinella stated that this could not be done with the present system. Board President Harris also stated to Acting HO Kuteyi that an RFP is needed for veterinary services by the next meeting, to review.

Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) Satyaranjan Besra, reported that of the 219 CDRSS cases from 2015, only 30-40 cases remain to be completed. And the 117 cases reported to date in 2016, are being worked on, however there is only one person. REHS Besra stated that the New Jersey Department of Health will hold a conference in East Orange on Infectious Control Assessment Response (ICAR) at the Windsor Gardens Nursing Home on May 17, 2016.

Board member Horace inquired if communicable disease is class 1 or class 2 reportable? RHES Besra reported that in the City of East Orange they are mostly Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B and the two cases of Zika virus in New Jersey are not in East Orange. Board member Horace inquired if the Zika virus is replacing the Ebola virus? Acting HO Kuteyi reported that they are about even in their regions of the world: Zika from South America and the Islands and Ebola from Africa.



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Board President Harris asked the board members to refer to the e-mail that was sent regarding the Trap Neuter Vaccinate Manage (TNVM) Program and Enhanced License Compliance Program, then turned the meeting over to Mr. John Saccenti.

Mr. Saccenti stated that Board of Health Officers, Animal Control Officers, Veterinarians and Health Directors are on the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) Sustainable Jersey Task Force committee, such as, Dr. Colin Campbell, NJ Department of Health; Dianna Lachman, NJ Local Boards of Health; Michael Richmond, Esq., NJ Bar Association, Animal Law Committee; Kathleen Schatzmann, The Humane Society of the United States; Jill Van Tuyl, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Mr. Saccenti stated that Animal Control stems from public health issues because communities have concerns about zoonotic diseases. Particularly, since there are approximately 600,000 to 1.4 million feral cats in New Jersey. The huge problem in high density areas is that people live closer to each other and close to feral cats on other people's properties. The IFAW has tried to come up with a plan that address and approaches this issue humanely.

Mr. Saccenti provided an in-depth discussion on the Trap Neuter Vaccinate Manage Program, feral cat colonies, colony maintenance, colony caretaker's responsibilities, municipal government responsibilities and community partnership. Mr. Saccenti also stated that a IFAW board member is trying to put together a license package.

Attorney Michael Richmond discussed in-depth the legal issues associated with the TNVM program. Issues such as identifying responsible parties for: the cost of veterinarian services (neutering, medical maintenance and ear tipping); and, providing shelter and food to the feral cat colony. The municipality must: identify areas available to establish a colony; create municipal ordinances regulating the colonies, non-profit vs individual status; identify licensing provisions, create procedures to ensure caregivers compliance with ordinances and other state laws through oversight and monitoring by designated municipal staff. The City of East Orange with a population 67,000, has approximately 11,000 feral cats. Cat reproduction can occur every six weeks per ovary and in one lifetime a cat can reproduce 247,000 offspring. The number of feral cats and zoonotic diseases, such as, toxoplasmosis in stool can be very dangerous to infants and others. What can't be ignored is that issues with feral cats need to be addressed, particularly in a densely populated urban areas.

Attorney Linder inquired about instances of municipalities being sued over TNVR programs failing or being inadequate? Attorney Richmond states that to the best of his knowledge there has not been any lawsuits for inadequate programs, however, that is why it is good for



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the city to be the licensing entity and not the provider. ACO Spinella asks what happens if someone

is injured by a feral cat, who picks up the hospital bill? Attorney Richmond stated that the victim is responsible and it is important to determine, in the ordinance, how the colony will be treated regarding ownership or considered to be gratuitous.

Board member Henry asked about requiring insurance for the colony. Attorney Richmond stated that licensing provisions, such as: property damage and personal injury, etc. should be considered. Attorney Linder stated that the City of East Orange, is not going to fund a municipal line of coverage for that activity. However, Attorneys Linder and Richmond stated that this can be covered under the Charitable Immunity Doctrine for Non-Profits.

In response to BOH members concerns about cat nuisance, Mr. Saccenti stated that in the booklet, "A Municipal Approach to a Trap, Neuter, and Vaccinate & Manage Program: A guide to Animals in the Community Feral Cat Program" (p.8)-Nuisance Abatement states:

*"If cats in a managed colony create a nuisance on another person's property, however, that is "interfering with enjoyment of property" and if not resolved, subjects the cat to impoundment under state law. It is therefore very important that TNVM programs have strong nuisance abatement components."*

Board President Harris stated that this is a lot to consider, and what is the likelihood of success of feral cat colonies in urban areas? Attorney Richmond stated that the committee found that there are 4 or 5 urban communities where there has been success. And, that a great resource is the website [neighborhoodcats.org/resource](http://neighborhoodcats.org/resource) ordinance, which has examples of different ordinances throughout the state. Mr. Saccenti stated that there is a pilot program example where this worked in an urban community in Southern New Jersey.

Board member Brown, inquiries about disturbances, tampering, and postal workers feeding feral cats. ACO Spinella states that it is illegal to feed the feral.

Board President Harris inquired, is the TNVM the best program? Attorney Richmond responded that this program is good for addressing major concerns especially from a public health perspective and for naturally reducing reproductive rates; to lessen the desire of having scavengers for food; for reducing bad behavior with spay and neuter; as well as, naturally reducing the stray population. Board member Henry inquired about micro-chipping. Attorney Richmond stated that it is costly, but can be done as long as there is scanning capabilities and access to the micro-chipped cat database.



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Board President Harris inquired about organizations that can help defray the cost of micro-chipping and euthanasia. Attorney Richmond stated that there are no organizations that can help with microchipping; and for euthanasia, the state does not help. Board President Harris

asked about the cost of euthanasia. Mr. Saccenti stated that the cost is about \$110.00. ACO Spinella states that East Orange charges \$100.00 dollars to euthanize. Board President Harris,

inquired that if the issue is a statewide problem will they consider funding municipalities? Attorney Richmond, stated no, that is not happening anytime soon. However, PetCo and PetSmart have grants, as well as, Spay NJ which can help with low-cost spay/neuter and in turn this can assist low-income citizens to spay/neuter and inoculate their cats, which is another alternative way to get compliance. Board President Harris inquired if the BOH can apply for the grants and also request food which will help the colony. The City can apply for these grants.

Board President Harris thanks Mr. John Saccenti, Attorney Michael Richmond, Attorney Linder, Ms. Ajah Baldwin, Nurse Karen LaRussa, Acting Health Officer Victor Kuteyi, REHS Satyaranjan Besra, Animal Control Officers Michael Burton and Mike Spinella, and Board of Health members for attending this meeting.

**Adjournment**

Board President Harris requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made by board member Jean E. Maurice and seconded by board member Cynthia Barnes meeting adjourned at 7:14 pm.

Submitted by,

Sala S. Small  
Recording Clerk