



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

COREY JOHNSON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

February 6, 2013

Thomas A. Farley, M.D., MPH
Commissioner
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
125 Worth Street
New York, NY 10002

Dear Commissioner Farley,

At its meeting on January 17, 2013, Manhattan Community Board 4's Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee (HH&HS) reviewed a report from Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer calling for reform of the Animal Care & Control (AC&C), a non-profit corporation which runs New York City's animal shelter system.

AC&C, under contract with NYC's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), is responsible for rescuing, caring for, and finding homes for New York City's homeless and abandoned animals. The Borough President's report claims that AC&C's performance has fallen woefully short of its mission and structural changes in the organization are called for.

CB4's HH&H Committee found a number of the report's recommendations for re-structuring AC&C sensible. At its meeting on February 6, 2013, Community Board 4 recommended by a vote of in favor, opposed, to urge the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to work with the Borough President's office and the City Council to ensure the AC&C is adequately funded and optimally operated to care for abandoned animals in Community District 4, and throughout the City.

Going To The Dogs?

The Borough President's report, "Led Astray: Reforming New York City's Animal Care and Control," claims that AC&C is "failing to provide humane conditions for the animals in its care." The report says adoptions are down 37% over six years while during the same period the agency's reliance on shifting responsibility for animals to outside rescuers has increased dramatically. The report also points out that AC&C has been without a full-time Medical Director since 2010 and has had eight Executive Directors in the last ten years.

In light of this, the Borough President's report calls for financial and managerial reforms of AC&C. Recommendations in the report include:

1. Restructure AC&C into an independent not-for-profit modeled after the Central Park

Conservancy.

The report says AC&C's Executive Director should have complete authority over shelter operations and an independent board, with board members who know how to fundraise. The Central Park Conservancy might serve as a model — the Conservancy raises 85% of Central Park's annual budget (\$38 million last year); but the Parks Department controls Park policy.

2. Increase revenue by aggressive private fund-raising.

The AC&C raised only \$56,276 from outside donors in FY2012 — "a paltry sum," according to the report, "given the City's passionate and highly vocal philanthropic community devoted to animal welfare." The Borough President's office says that in same period, Stray From The Heart, run by part-time volunteers, raised \$156,780 from private funds.

3. Increase pet licensing and compliance.

The report wants New York State to transfer licensing enforcement from the DOHMH to the AC&C. This would insure that revenue can go directly to funding shelter operations. The State should also raise licensing fees. And compliance should be raised to 30%, which, according to the report, could generate close to \$20 million annually in revenue.

A Moral Imperative

A representative from the Mayor's Alliance for New York City's Animals also attended the HH&HS Committee meeting on January 17th. While not endorsing all aspects of the Borough President's report, the representative was in concurrence with the critical need to restructure the AC&C Board and gain full independence to select their chair and fill vacant public seats. The budget needs be increased to achieve the AC&C's core responsibilities.

Something needs to be done.

CB4 agrees. The care of homeless and abandoned animals in our city is not only a legal charge; it is considered by many to be a moral imperative. CB4 urges the Department Of Health to work with the Borough President and the City Council to bring the Animal Care and Control agency up to the highest standards of animal care.

Thank you,



Corey Johnson
Chair

[signed 2/6/2013]
Barbara Davis, Co-Chair
Housing, Health
& Human Services Committee



Joe Restuccia, Co-Chair
Housing, Health
& Human Services Committee