**Animal Companions October Zoom Meeting**

**October 18, 2021**

Attending: Dawn Duncan, Mike Marquez, Linda Mandel, Ramiro Puentas, Bart Polin & Denice Middlestaedt, Judy Bosland

1. Since the release of the article in the Las Cruces Bulletin, interest in our work has picked up.
   1. April Anaya, Executive Director of the Dona Ana Community Humane Society (DACHS) and Candis Stern, former DACHS board member, have spoken with Dawn, and are completely in favor of our work. April informed Dawn of the Animal Relief Fund, which we now point others too from our website thanks to the quick work of Miguel. The Relief Fund provides help to pet owners who cannot afford veterinary care.
   2. At 10:30am Tuesday (October 19, 2021), Dawn will meet with Terra (Van Winter) of the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico (CFSNM) to discuss how the Foundation could help our (possible) non-profit get up and running.
   3. Frances Sowers, Director of the New Mexico Board of Veterinary Medicine (NMBVM), has asked Dawn to talk at their meeting on Friday (October 22, 2021). Fran agrees there is a crisis for emergency animal care in New Mexico at this time.
2. After these two meetings (CFSNM and NMBVM), Dawn is hopeful we will have sufficient information to decide if Animal Companions should go down the path of becoming a nonprofit or remain a civic action group.
3. Dawn attended a two-day zoom conference for non-profits.
   1. If we wanted to raise any funds, we must be an approved non-profit.
   2. Several people have already asked about making a donation.
   3. Denice talked about setting up a non-profit, and the need for a board with president, secretary, treasurer, etc.
   4. Dawn explained that costs are involved, with a minimum cost of $630, and it would take from 80 to 100 days to get approval.
   5. As a civic action group, we can receive donations but the donors cannot claim tax deductions. It is also critical to keep accurate records and to be very transparent.
4. Dawn highlighted two options for management of an emergency animal hospital. For either option, New Mexico requires a licensed veterinarian as the responsible party; however, we could be a co-owner.
   1. Consortium – managed by the local veterinarians. With this option, we would need to become a non-profit to adequately support the hospital.
   2. Corporate – managed by a business (such as Blue Pearl). We would not have to go the non-profit route.
   3. Linda mentioned that from her experience with Blue Pearl in Chicago, Blue Pearl has a model that seems to work.
   4. Judy will look into adding a question to our vet clinic survey regarding the veterinarians’ preference for consortium versus corporate.
   5. Once Dawn speaks with the NMBVM, she would like to meet with our local veterinarians to get their feedback.
5. In closing, Dawn said she wants to inform everyone who could not attend tonight of what we’ve discussed. Denise would like for us to form a board even if we remain a civic action group. A first step will be to have someone volunteer to make a record of each meeting (could be a different volunteer each time).