



TYPE OF MEETING MINUTES: Monthly  
DATE OF MEETING: February 20, 2023  
PLACE OF MEETING: Dennis Memorial Library  
TIME MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

Member Attendees: Rose Bernier, Sue Bernier, Rebecca Blair, Wes Blair, Ashley Bulger, Roberta Cote, Janet Crossman, Karen Feeney, MarilynRose Guarino, Brian Hastings, Mary Hastings, Maureen Healey, Mary Heikes, Jeff Idels, Kristina LaChance, Brian Ligamarre, Cheryl McPhillips, Susan Reiter, Colleen Sherman, Maureen Starr, Sam Starr, Regina Stoker, Anne Thomas, Amy Usowski,

### Welcome

- All members introduced themselves, with a special welcome to new members Mary Heikes and Colleen Sherman.
- We have grown to 44 members, increased our number of visits and have learned many lessons over our first year.
- We had our first annual Board Meeting at which we discussed steps we can take to protect ourselves from liability and educate our membership as we continue to grow.

### Overlap with CAP, TDI and Pet Partners

As a result of a great deal of research with regard to other therapy dog groups, we as a Board realized that we need to set up guidelines for our membership. The main points are listed below:

- New dog members cannot belong to another dog therapy/comfort group if that group does not allow dual membership (i.e Bright and Beautiful and Alliance of Therapy Dogs).
- A flow chart will be available at orientation and on the HPCD website which illustrates the different training/certification paths available for our dogs.
- Several members have gone on to obtain Therapy Certification for their dogs through Bright and Beautiful. This opportunity is available for any member. Bright and Beautiful is currently offering distance certification. This will change if there is an evaluator available within 40 miles.

### New Member Handbook

- We will be creating a handbook which will allow members to have a tool that will clarify our protocols and procedures.
- A sign off form will be created that will be signed by new and current members stating that they understand and agree to HPCD policies and procedures.
- The handbook will help ensure that all members of HPCD speak the same language.
- A Handbook Committee will be formed to create the handbook and signed agreement. Currently, Rebecca, Karen and Susan are the members of this committee. Others interested are encouraged to reach out.

### Training and Certification

- We currently have several training and certification options, ranging from manners training, CGC training, CGC Exam only and Therapy Certification. All of these will be listed on the website and discussed at orientation.
- We are looking for a member to create relationships with local trainers, and keep HPCD members apprised of local training opportunities. We will be adding links to the website of trainers that are holding classes/testing that would be of interest to our members.

### Broader Participation

- We are asking new and current members to share with HPCD any skills or special interests they have that might help with the operation of our group. Maureen has sent out a google form requesting this information.
- An google form will be forthcoming asking for help from our membership. We are growing and now is a great opportunity to get involved.

### Membership Goals

- There were a number of things that were done this year to reach out for new members, such as follow up phone calls, sign-up sheets and word of mouth.
- We are looking for ideas to help with recruiting and retaining new members.
- An Education Committee is being formed. These members will be responsible for finding guest speakers to come to our member meetings. Outside speakers offer our group a great deal of opportunity for growth and a way to keep our members engaged.
- A mentorship program is being established to help integrate new members into the group.
- Our member meetings will be held every other month rather than every month. Each committee will meet in between these member meetings, and will provide minutes to the Board.

### Events Goals

- We differentiate ourselves by participating in local events and fundraising for local nonprofits.
- After reflecting on the last year, we learned that some venues are better suited for our group than others, i.e. indoor vs. outdoor, space inside, number in attendance, length of event, etc.
- We will be reducing the number of events that we are participating in, and will focus on events that work best for us and mean the most to the community. May and June will be busy months for events and we will need volunteers.
- Below are the events that we participated in last year, and will participate in them again:
  - Hyannis House and Garden Lifestyle Show March 25<sup>th</sup> 10-5 and March 26<sup>th</sup> 10-4. The fee of \$700 has been waived.
  - Cape Cod Cares for the Troops takes place on May 28<sup>th</sup>. We will not be charged a fee and will be raising money for Rocky's Warriors.
  - Hounds of Highfield will be held on June 25<sup>th</sup>. We have been asked by the director of the program if we would like to help setup. If anyone is interested in helping, please let MarilynRose know and she will put you in contact with the director.
  - We will create a QR code that will direct potential new members to our website.
  - Training will be provided to help members create a dialog that will assist with getting our message out and attract potential new members.

### Visitation Goals

- The spotter will log each visitation, which will include the names of everyone that volunteered at site, the hours they were there, as well as any comments. This will help create a record of visits for the group.
- HPCD will be asking all sites and venues to sign a form stating that they understand the policies and procedures of HPCD as well as issues that need to be considered such as the handling of treats and taking pictures.

### Compliance Officer

- Sue Bernier has offered to take on the new role of Compliance Officer.
- Duties will include:
  - Maintain Certifications
  - Make sure dog vaccines are up to date
  - Onboarding of new members
  - Renewal for members
  - Ensure all visits are being logged.

### Scheduling Software

- We will be using new software, Visitation Scheduler Pro, to maintain our membership information, member application, visits, and for messaging members via text and email.

### Miscellaneous

- Jeff discussed the year end letter he sent to all of our supporters. This was not a fundraising letter, but we have already received two donations.
- We are working to create a membership (dog) drive in alignment with our one-year anniversary. Cheryl will contact Mashpee Commons to see if there is something we can do there.
- Each member should work on contacting dog centric businesses to share cards/brochures with them to help spread the word about our group. Maureen has brochure holders available if you need them.
- Ashley met a dog trainer, and will forward the contact information to Maureen.
- Cheryl requested that mentor and new member coordination consider where each member lives.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM