



Atlantic County

DL-81-18

Executive Office

Dennis Levinson
County Executive

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April 18, 2018

Atlantic County
Board of Chosen Freeholders
201 S. Shore Road
Northfield, NJ 08225

Dear Freeholders,

As most of you are aware, the Atlantic County Animal Shelter has endured several years of public scrutiny during which many unflattering allegations have been presented including those related to the treatment of animals.

These allegations are routinely reviewed and investigated as are suggestions for improvements in the operation of the facility. Many of you have visited the shelter, either on your own or as part of a group, to ensure its proper adherence to established policies and procedures. As Freeholders you have, and have always had, the ability to oversee the operation and performance of our facilities.

To my knowledge, all of you who have visited the shelter have found it to be in full compliance and the allegations to be unsubstantiated. Yet, the shelter continues to be the subject of negative comments and assertions made by a small group of misguided individuals, some of whom have never set foot in our shelter.

In New Jersey, county prosecutors have full responsibility for animal welfare. We are fortunate that our county prosecutor, Damon Tyner, takes this responsibility seriously and is committed to prosecuting those who violate animal cruelty laws.

In addition to Prosecutor Tyner, the SPCA and the Atlantic County Humane Society advocate for the humane treatment and protection of animals and help provide community oversight of those who accept responsibility for their care. The Atlantic County Animal Shelter also comes under the guidance of state and local public health departments and has served as a refuge for abused animals confiscated by the SPCA.

I am proud of the performance of the Atlantic County Animal Shelter and have great respect for our employees who are not highly paid for jobs many would consider thankless, except for those who share the dedication and compassion demonstrated by our staff.

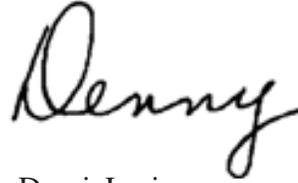


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As public officials, we have an obligation to our taxpayers to address wrongdoings by employees, which we do through disciplinary actions as well as training. But we should be equally willing to support and defend our employees when they are unfairly criticized and the subject of repeated, unsubstantiated accusations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Dennis Levinson
County Executive

c: County Prosecutor Damon Tyner
Kathy Kelsey, Animal Shelter Manager
Atlantic County Animal Shelter staff