



Steven W. Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
Veterinary Division

Christina Waggett
Assistant Commissioner
for Consumer Protection

Michael Martin, DVM
State Veterinarian

June 5, 2024

Margaret Hamilton
Ruby and Laurel Animal Rescue
3116 Boykin Bridge Road
Clinton, NC 28328

Re: Compliance with NC General Statute § 19A-26

Dear Ms. Hamilton:

The Animal Welfare Section (“AWS”) of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (“NCDA&CS”) opened an investigation into the potential operation of an unregistered animal shelter at 3116 Boykin Bridge Road, Clinton, NC.

On May 30, 2024, Animal Health Technician Tolley (“Inspector Tolley”) conducted a site visit at the Boykin Bridge Road, Clinton, NC address. She found that your rescue, Ruby and Laurel Animal Rescue (“the rescue”) had been housing a significant number of stray and foster dogs and cats at this location and conducting activities consistent with the NC Animal Welfare Act (“AWA”) definition of an animal shelter. A review of AWS records does not show an active certificate of registration for an animal shelter for the Ruby and Laurel Animal Rescue at this or any other address.

Until such a time the rescue has a valid AWS animal shelter registration, you may not operate as an animal shelter. This means that the rescue may not intake stray or unwanted animals directly from Sampson Animal Control (or any other Animal Control agency) that have not been processed through the Sampson County Animal Shelter; or house more than 9 stray or unwanted dogs or cats; or provide foster care for a shelter or other rescue for more than 9 animals.

To initiate the process to become registered as an animal shelter, you must complete the animal shelter registration application, before housing any dogs or cats. If you need a copy of the application form, it can be found on the AWS website at the following link: <https://www.ncagr.gov/veterinary/awsnewshelterapp/open>.

Failure to abide by this directive shall be considered willful disregard or violation of the NC Animal Welfare Act and the rules issued pursuant thereto. Under NC General Statute § 19A-40, violation of the NC Animal Welfare Act and the rules issued pursuant thereto may result in the assessment of a civil penalty of up to \$5,000.00 per violation.

Your immediate attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patricia Norris DVM MS".

Patricia Norris, DVM, MS
Director, Animal Welfare Section
Veterinary Division, NCDA&CS

cc:

Dr. Michael Martin, DVM, State Veterinarian, NCDA&CS
Christina Waggett, Assistant Commissioner, NCDA&CS
Jonathan Lanier, General Counsel, NCDA&CS
Christopher McLennan, Assistant Attorney General

Appendix

RELEVANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS

§ 19A-26. Certificate of registration required for animal shelter.

No person shall operate an animal shelter unless a certificate of registration for such animal shelter shall have been granted by the Director. Application for such certificate shall be made in the manner provided by the Director. No fee shall be required for such application or certificate. Certificates of registration shall be valid for a period of one year or until suspended or revoked and may be renewed for like periods upon application in the manner provided. (1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1217, s. 7; 1987, c. 827, s. 64.)

§ 19A-40. Civil Penalties.

The Director may assess a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) against any person who violates a provision of this Article or any rule promulgated thereunder. In determining the amount of the penalty, the Director shall consider the degree and extent of harm caused by the violation. The clear proceeds of civil penalties assessed pursuant to this section shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.