



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 21-1951A, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Proposed ratification of initiation of litigation in the case of Pinellas County v. Ralph Heath; County Court Case No. 21-007057-CO-41 - animal seizure.

Recommended Action:

Ratification of the Chair's approval of authority to initiate litigation against Ralph Heath.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Summary:

On September 13, 2021, in response to a call regarding animal cruelty, Pinellas County Animal Services' employees responded to a warehouse owned by the defendant. The following animals were discovered alive at the property: 15 turtles, 28 chickens, 26 ducks, hens, a stray pit bull, and an estimated 50 doves and 200 pigeons. All but the doves and pigeons were removed by other agencies with the consent of the caretaker. Animal Services has reason to believe the animals had been subject to incidents of cruelty and cannot be safely maintained by the defendant.

Animal Services is not equipped to house these animals and, as a result, approval to initiate litigation from the Board of County Commissioner's Chair was sought pursuant to Resolution No. 21-23. Pinellas County has now filed an action to take custody and ownership of these birds, which will be accomplished through a rescue organization, and to enjoin the defendant from owning animals or, in the alternative, for the Court to enter an Order to Provide Care for the birds.

Background Information:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Staff Member Responsible:

Jewel White, County Attorney

Christy Donovan Pemberton, Managing Assistant County Attorney

Partners:

N/A

Attachments:

N/A