



Since 1997, the Northumberland Humane Society (NHS) has been providing quality animal care and shelter services in our community with the strong support of our staff, volunteers, adoption and foster families, donors, business partners and community supporters. While NHS may be familiar to you, and the community, I would like to share a bit of the behind-the-scenes details.

For those of you who may not know me, my name is Jason Schmidt and I am currently Chair of the Board of Directors of the NHS. As a local resident and business owner within Northumberland County, my professional experience includes over twelve years as a practicing lawyer. I also have significant leadership experience having sat on the boards of several well-established, local non-profit and charitable organizations.

I joined the NHS Board as a Director in June 2021, and stepped into the role of Board Chair in May 2022, at a critical juncture of exciting change. Specifically, we had recently expanded the services NHS offered by entering into contracts with several local municipalities to provide animal and by-law services and hiring in-house by-law officers to fulfil this role.

In May 2022, NHS purchased the Municipal Animal Services building on Theatre Road where we will have a larger, greatly improved space for our shelter to increase the scope and quality of animal care in our community. Our Facilities Committee has been working diligently on this project. The design and permitting process for renovations is now complete and we anticipate a physical move to this location will occur in spring 2023.

Part of my mandate as Chair of NHS is to improve the efficiency of the organization from operational and governance perspectives. As the first step in this process, in June 2022 we created the position of Executive Director and hired Henny Venus to fulfill this role. Henny came to us with a wealth of experience in animal services, including his most recent 10-year tenure as the Executive Director of the Kawartha Lakes Humane Society. NHS is fortunate to have such an experienced and capable individual on our team, and in the short time that he has worked with us Henny has earned the full support and respect of the entire Board of Directors.

Henny has been working diligently to provide a supportive environment for our staff and to improve our operational efficiency. His extensive experience makes him an invaluable resource for both our staff and our Board.

Appointing Henny to lead NHS was just the beginning. We are in the midst of developing and implementing an updated Strategic Plan in early 2023. As the Chair of NHS my work is made easier by an incredibly dedicated, compassionate and talented Board of Directors. All Board members contribute diverse expertise, experience and knowledge; we have undertaken conscious steps related to succession planning to ensure that the Board continues to have the diversity of experience necessary to lead and continuously improve NHS - in service of animal welfare.

Under my guidance, we are in the process of undergoing a formal shift to a governance board model, which includes reviewing and updating a complete set of policies and procedures for both the Board and our operational staff. With Henny's guidance, we have been evaluating our staffing needs including the recent addition of a Public Relations Coordinator position to enhance our marketing and fundraising efforts.

Change and transition is challenging but an organization like NHS is not one person. I am proud of the amount of work that the NHS Board of Directors and staff have undertaken in less than a year to help our organization improve and expand its services. The Board is excited by the momentum that we have created in a short time. The ongoing support of our staff, volunteers, adoption and foster families, donors, business partners and community supporters cannot be understated and we are incredibly grateful. From here, NHS is poised to expand and improve its role in already high quality of animal care services it provides in our community and we look forward to you joining us in doing so.

Stay tuned!