

Animal rescue program among agenda at Kittrell Community Watch meeting

The Kittrell Community Watch Association met in the Kittrell Community House on July 19 at 7 p.m. A total of 48 people attended. After ice cream refreshments, Edward Woodlief, president, called the meeting to order and Patricia Fuller provided the invocation. Sgt. Lloyd Watkins represented the Vance County Sheriff's department and Lt. Irvin Robinson, Community Watch coordinator, represented the Henderson Police Department and Crime Stoppers.

Local resident Jay Fuller discussed the recent burglary at his home on Rocky Ford Road. He showed photographs of the damage and described how the teenage robbers were later apprehended by the Vance County Sheriff's Department. Watkins explained the legal process where criminals, particularly young ones, are so quickly released. Several attendees expressed frustration with this "catch and release" process and subsequent minimal sentences.

Watkins recommended that citizens express concerns to their state legislators and local judges; he also advised acting on concerns through the ballot box. This brought a long, spontaneous round of applause from attendees. Woodlief said the new North Carolina law, which makes a fourth misdemeanor a felony, may help.

Woodlief announced the National Night Out Against Crime will be held at the Henderson Events Plaza on Aug. 7, from 6-8:30 p.m. For more information see: cityofhenderson.com/police/national_night_out_2012.php.

The main program for the evening was the Ruin Creek Animal Protection Society of Henderson, a non-profit (501C3) volunteer organization. Angie Rowland, rescue coordinator, described how the society rescues adoptable pets. Vance County Animal Control is required to accept every animal that is caught or brought in; so whenever a new animal arrives, another must be killed to make room. Historically, 90 percent of all animals in the shelter are killed, usually in the gas chamber. The society works with animal control to rescue pets before they must be killed.

Using internet tools and a mas-



(From left) Charles Boyd, Dawn Hedgepeth, Diane Bullock, Angie Rowland, Edward Woodlief and Ann Hanson were all in attendance during the most recent meeting of the Kittrell Community Watch back on July 19. The main topic on the agenda was the Ruin Creek Animal Protection Society of Henderson and its positive effect on Vance County Animal Control. From 2010 to 2011, the kill rate at the shelter has dropped from 82 percent to 35 percent.

sive number of volunteer hours, the society developed processes to find good homes for these unwanted pets. Since the society began operation in 2010, the kill rate at the Vance County Animal Shelter decreased from 82 percent in 2010 to 35 percent in 2011. Rowland emphasized that people who have lost their pets should check at Animal Control, and quickly. Also, people who want to adopt purebred pets should go to Animal Control because 25 percent of the animals there are purebred.

In many cases, the society finds new homes in northern states where strict laws create a shortage of adoptable pets. Society volunteer Ann Hanson described the weekly delivery trips where dozens of adoptable pets are delivered to affiliated rescue groups from Virginia to New York using the organization's "Big Red Freedom Van." It follows up on these adoptions to ensure the process really provides good homes for these pets.

The society does not own any kennels so some volunteers "foster" pets until new homes are found. Every fostered pet creates an opening so Animal Control can accept an animal without having to kill another. Dawn Hedgepeth, another society volunteer, described some of the many dogs she has fostered. She also made a compelling case for spaying and neutering pets as the only long-term solution to the animal over-



Diane Bullock (left) was introduced as the new Kittrell Community Watch treasurer by Edward Woodlief, president (right) at the group's meeting on July 19.

population problem here in Vance County.

The Ruin Creek Animal Protection Society of Henderson has no facilities, no paid employees, and no government funding; everything is donated. They have found homes for thousands of adoptable pets using only their volunteers' time, donations from individuals, and a few corporate donations, such as Iams pet foods and Charles Boyd Chevrolet-Cadillac-Buick-GMC.

To learn more about Ruin Creek Animal Protection Society of Henderson, visit their web site at rcapsofhenderson.webs.com/ to find links to their Facebook page of adoptable animals.

Before adjourning the meeting, Woodlief introduced Diane A. Bullock, the new Kittrell Community Watch treasurer. The next Community Watch meeting will be Sept. 21.