



## **Saving Paws Constitution**

**Name:** Saving Paws, Inc.

**Physical Location:** 311 Murdock Avenue Meriden, CT 06450

**Official Legal Location:** 70 Highview Ave Wethersfield, CT 06109

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 1740 Meriden, CT 06450

**AIM:** Saving Paws' mission is to aid the homeless and neglected animal population of both Meriden and the State of Connecticut. Saving Paws works to nurture, adopt, educate and support the animals in our care as well as the individuals and organizations that rescue them.

Saving Paws, originally called The M.A.C. Pack, was founded in 2011. Initially it was a dedicated group of private citizens helping the animals in the Meriden pound to get extra vet care and visibility via Facebook and Petfinder to promote adoptions. This successful group has flourished and recently reorganized as a 501(c)(3) Public Charity under the new name of Saving Paws. The new name reflects the future plans to support not only Meriden's animals and community but all Connecticut based municipalities and rescue organizations. Saving Paw's efforts have helped save and re-home close to a 2000 animals in just five years! Saving Paws also created a new pound environment that is comforting and friendly to both animals and adopters. The group continues to provide all adoption support, extra vet care, training and fundraising for the pound animals of Meriden.

Saving Paws is extremely dedicated to promoting and funding spay/neuter in our communities. We are always willing to work together and partner with other groups and individuals for the greater good of the animals! **WORKING TOGETHER SAVES LIVES!**

## **Main Purpose we are here to provide**

1. Providing the best quality of life for the homeless animals in our care
2. Adopting to appropriate homes, providing necessary support to help keep animals in their homes, educating and providing resources to the public
3. Spay/Neuter access for all

## **Broad Objectives of Organization in 2016 going forward**

1. Become a full-fledged rescue
2. Clinic in our building
3. Improved facility. services and accommodations for the cats. dogs etc.

4. Food pantry program
5. TNR
6. Spay/Neuter subsidies for public

### **Carrying out the Purpose**

In order to carry out the charitable purposes, the members have the power to:

- (1) raise funds, receive grants and donations
- (2) apply funds to carry out the work of the charity
- (3) co-operate with and support other charities with similar purposes
- (4) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the purposes

### **Money and Property**

- (1) Money and property must only be used for the charity's purposes.
- (2) Treasurer must keep accounts. The most recent annual accounting reports can be seen by anybody on request. Annual reports will be issued by January 30<sup>th</sup> of every New Year for the previous year.
- (3) BOD Members cannot receive any money or property from the charity, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- (4) Money must be held in the charity's bank account except for event cash/change
- (5) Financial report is given at every BOD meeting
- (6) All financial decision over \$150 require majority vote approval
- (7) Treasurer and President preside over the bank account and all daily transactions

### **Membership (BOD)**

There are 5 officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Chairperson of the Board, these are elected positions. Each term is for one year and is renewable if so voted on per the by-laws of Saving Paws.

The charity shall have a membership/Board of Directors (BOD). People who support the work of the charity and are aged 21 or over, can be asked by the BOD to become a member of the board. Once accepted by the BOD, membership lasts for 1 year and may be renewed. The BOD will keep an up-to-date membership list.

The BOD may remove a person's membership if they believe it is in the best interests of the charity. The member has the right to be heard by the BOD before the decision is made and can be accompanied by a friend.

All other individuals wanting to work with and support the group will be known as volunteers and will not be required to be elected. They will fill out a volunteer form,

receive SP approval to volunteer, sign liability releases, receive training in the aspect of work they will be volunteering for and will have no say in the business dealing of the charity or its BOD. They will be free to come and go as they wish, no terms will be applied to volunteers. Should a volunteer's actions or attitude conflict with the Saving Paws core beliefs or pose a danger in any way to the animals, they will be forbidden to volunteer any further. No notice is required for this termination of volunteer services.

All members and volunteers will adhere to the Code of Conduct and Saving Paws Core Beliefs outlined below

## **Code of Conduct for Board Members & Officers: Three Section**

### **#1. Internal Relationships**

1. All problems are to be handled directly with the said individual
  - Ask another member for help if you are not comfortable
  - Encourage/help each other by not participating in side conversations and reiterating that we need to speak directly with that person
  - Don't go off of third hand information
2. Bring general issues to the meeting for group to address
3. Consequences:
  - 3 warnings for breaking code of conduct
  - Group can vote you out
4. Requirements:
  - Come to every meeting within your power (acceptable excuses allowed)
  - Be involved in at least 1 additional "committee"
  - Attend at least 3 events during the calendar year
  - Signed confidentiality agreement
  - 3 consecutive missed meetings = termination from group
  - 4 missed meetings in a year = termination from group

### **#2. Core Beliefs of group**

1. Compassion for animals in our care
  - All animals judged on an individual/case by case basis
  - No animal left to suffer mentally or physically within our ability
  - Decisions made with a balance between the head and the heart
2. Positive and professional experience with the public
  - Honesty, integrity and respect in all situations
  - Education
  - Providing resources
3. Promoting Spay/Neuter and Adoption

### **#3 Deal Breakers- These will not be tolerated and will result in termination of relationship with entity or person**

1. Dishonesty or lying of any kind in any situation, especially in regards to adoptions
2. The harming of animals or partnering with groups that profit off the sales of animals
3. Forced adoptions for any reason other than “it’s the best possible fit for that dog”.  
(Adopting out a dog just for the sole purpose of adopting out a dog).
4. Working with anyone who would take advantage of our purpose, or that do not align with our “core beliefs”.

### **Board of Director Meetings**

- (1) BOD must hold at least 8 meetings each year. At their first meeting after the AGM they will elect or renew terms for a BOD Chair, President, Vice President, treasurer and secretary. BOD may act by majority decision.
- (2) At least 5 BOD members must be present at the meeting to be able to take decisions. Minutes shall be kept for every meeting.
- (3) If BOD member have a conflict of interest they must declare it and leave the meeting while this matter is being discussed or decided.
- (4) The BOD members may make reasonable additional rules to help run the charity. These rules must not conflict with this constitution or the law.
- (5) Committees may be formed by BOD and volunteers. These committees will serve specific purposes, such as a fundraising event, grant writing, or other purpose or function that serves the charity mission.
  - Committees have no independent power outside of BOD
  - Committee must present report of BOD meetings and seek BOD approval for all final decision
  - Any financial matters cost or payment must be at the approval of BOD.

### **Annual General Meeting - AGM**

- (1) The AGM must be held every year, with 14 days’ notice given to all members telling them what is on the agenda. Minutes must be kept of the AGM.
- (2) There must be at least 5 members present at the AGM.
- (3) Every member has one vote.
- (4) The Officers shall present the annual report and accounts.
- (5) Any member may stand for election as an officer.
- (6) Officer positions will be reviewed and resignations and elections may take place

**Dedication of Assets following dissolution:**

- (a) The Group may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a simple two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a Special General Meeting.
- (b) If confirmed, the committee shall distribute any assets remaining after the payment of all bills to other charitable group(s) or organization(s) having aims similar to the Group or some other charitable purpose(s) as the Group may decide.

**Updating and Amending**

Constitution and by-laws can be amended at any time with a majority vote by the Board of Directors. A written description of amendment will be attached to constitution or by-laws. In January of every New Year constitution and by-laws will be updated and reprinted for compliance book. Old version will be kept and filed for historical purposes.

*This constitution was adopted on September 3, 2016 by the people whose signatures appear below. They are the first members of the charity and will be the trustees until the AGM, which must be held within one year of this date.*

Signatures/ Titles of all Officers and Board Members

**MARTHA JAKYMIW/PRESIDENT**

**BRYAN KLINE/VICE PRESIDENT**

**AMANDA BOWEN/CFO**

**SARAH BACON/SECRETARY**

**JILL BIELAWSKI/BOD MEM.**

**CHRISTINA WHITAKER/CHAIR OF BOD**

**JORDAN SCHROTH/BOD MEM.**

*Signed copy on file*