

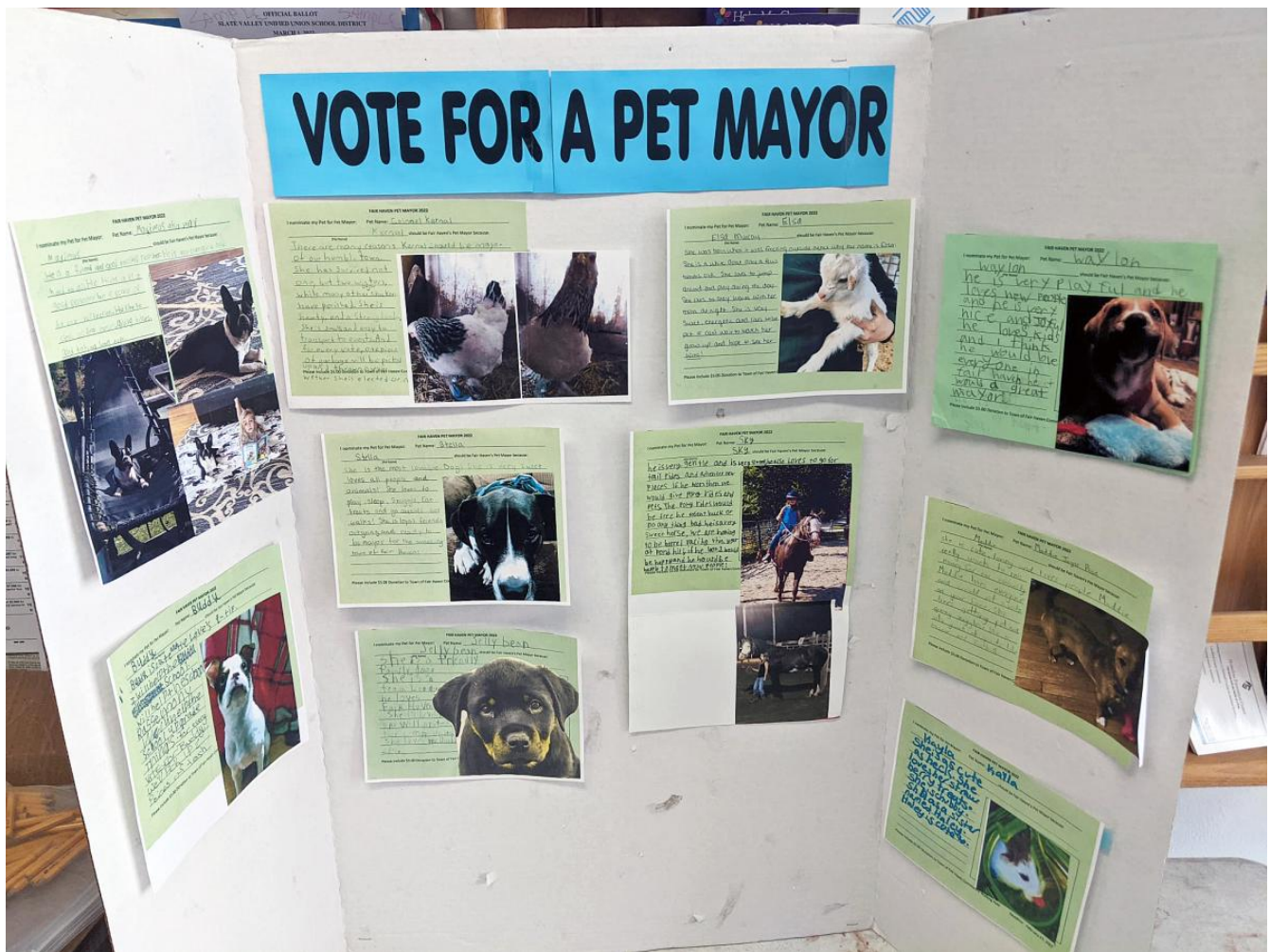
The Pet Mayor of Fair Haven

May 10, 2022

No, the Town of Fair Haven is *not* going to the dogs, no matter six of the town's ten candidates for the honorary position of Pet Mayor last March *were* of the canine persuasion. Because even with that sixty percent advantage over the other contenders – the chicken, the goat, the horse, the guinea pig – Elsa the Goat came out on top. (Editor's note: The goat pictured above is *not* Elsa, who was busy tending to pressing mayoral duties.)

The following year, Murfee, the springer spaniel – pooch-o-philes will prefer the proper term, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel – won the election and, along with **his human, Linda Barker, helped raise \$33,000 to replace the town's playground equipment.**

The pet mayor project, now in its fourth year, began as a way to fundraise for playground equipment for the town, a task the first pet mayor – Lincoln, the Nubian goat – achieved with a calm aplomb. The following year, Murfee, the springer spaniel – pooch-o-philes will prefer the proper term, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel – won the election and, along with his human, Linda Barker, helped raise \$33,000 to replace the town's playground equipment. Murfee was elected Pet Mayor in 2021, too, defeating a bearded dragon, a chicken, a small bird of anonymous pedigree, and an American paint horse, along with the usual collection of Rovers and Fidos. He continued his indefatigable work for the good of the town by raising money and kibble to build the Fur Haven Dog Park. The certified therapy dog and Canine Good Citizen declined to run for a third term, paving the way for Elsa's win this year. She and her human are mulling over how to help the town this year, however improving the playground, such as adding a walking path and exercise equipment, is presently top of mind.



2022 Pet Mayor display
 (Image courtesy of Fair Haven Town Manager Joe Gunter)

“The pet mayor program is intended to help get kids interested in local politics,” writes Town Manager Joe Gunter in an email. “The original goal was to get our younger residents interested in and accustomed to voting. Many times, the items on the local ballot have a larger impact on our lives than voting for the president or a congressional rep. Like many districts, voter turnout in Fair Haven in local elections is very low. We want to change that.

“The program has been successful [in] bringing the community together and raising cash for grassroots-driven projects. It is my favorite program the town operates!” writes Gunter.

In an absolutely *amazing* instance of serendipity, VLCT recently added pet health insurance (from PetPartners) to its insurance portfolio, thereby allowing Murfee and his doggy pals’

humans to fret less when making those unexpected trips to the veterinarian. [Click this link](#) to learn lots more.

As of now, PetPartners only covers canines and felines. So, Elsa and Lincoln – not to mention Colonel Kernal (the chicken), Sky (the horse), and Kayla (the guinea pig) – will have to remain uninsured for a while longer. Perhaps this is an issue for Fair Haven's *next* Pet Mayor to tackle!