

Cloudy

0°, Delhi, N.Y.
Full Forecast ()

Catskills Today


THE REPORTER



Article Search



Advanced search (/search.html)

 My account (/account/)

 Log out (/login.html?action=logout)

Main Menu



A Quiet Crusade, and a Public Thank You, in Walton



Walton Mayor Bjorn Eilertsen presented Adrienne McMillan with the Austin Lincoln award at a Jan. 6 meeting.
LILLIAN BROWNE/THE REPORTER

Posted Tuesday, January 13, 2026 1:08 pm

By Lillian Browne

WALTON — What began as an update on cats ended as a moment of civic recognition. At the Jan. 6 meeting of Walton trustees, Mayor Bjorn Eilertsen paused the agenda after a presentation by Adrienne McMillan to honor her with the Austin Lincoln Award, citing her sustained, volunteer-driven work to humanely reduce the village’s stray and feral cat population.

McMillan had just finished describing the pace — and scale — of the effort.

“This week’s been a whirlwind,” she said.

Since late November, she said, 26 cats had been spayed or neutered, with 22 removed from Walton’s streets and placed in sanctuary shelters or adopted into homes. One cat, long cared for by a resident, was neutered, temporarily taken into McMillan’s home for litter-box training, and

returned the next day.

The work, she explained, is accelerating.

“Within two hours we had five cats, and within a half hour of putting traps out, we had a cat in a trap,” she said, recounting a recent Sunday outing. Another 44 appointments are already scheduled, with trapping set to expand into larger colonies in the coming weeks.

The logistics, however, are demanding. Feral cats must recover before being released, and during winter that recovery often happens indoors.

“Yesterday, I think I had six cats in my house – between my porch, my basement landing, and my bathroom,” McMillan said. “I had a cat living in my shower for a week in a cage. There’s one back in there now.”

She credited neighbors and volunteers for stepping in to transport cats, assist with trapping, and help spread the word door to door. “People are asking, ‘Where can I help?’” she said. “And I’m like, ‘Can you transport for me?’”

It was after that account that Mayor Eilertsen rose to present the new Austin Lincoln award, meant to recognize “the old-fashioned virtues of honor, generosity and curiosity,” as he described them.

The citation praised McMillan’s “outstanding dedication to animal welfare through the humane use of trap-neuter-return,” noting her care for sick cats and the successful relocation of more than 30 domesticated cats in recent months. Her work, the mayor said, demonstrated how “responsible, volunteer-driven solutions can reduce the need for government intervention while creating lasting, positive change.”

McMillan smiled at the tally. “By next week, we’ll cover it,” she said.

For a village grappling with a persistent problem, the recognition underscored something else as well: how much of the work has happened quietly, one trap, one ride, and sometimes one shower at a time.

OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

[Trash to Treasure: Creative Play Returns to the Catskill Water Discovery Center \(/stories/trash-to-treasure-creative-play-returns-to-the-catskill-water-discovery-center,231600\)](#)

[Behind the Scenes of Walton’s Infrastructure Year \(/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-waltons-infrastructure-year,231599\)](#)