



Mayor
Oscar Leoser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee

Minutes January 11, 2017

City Council

District 1
Peter Svarzbein

District 2
Jim Tolbert

District 3
Emma Acosta

District 4
Carl L. Robinson

District 5
Dr. Michiel R. Noe

District 6
Claudia Ordaz

District 7
Lily Limón

District 8
Cortney C. Niland

City Manager
Tommy Gonzalez

1. A meeting of the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee was held at the City Council Chambers and was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Dr. Guy Johnsen-Chairperson.

Board Member A.S.A.C.	Present	Absent
Peggy Edman		x
Dr. Guy Johnsen	x	
Cecilia Carpio	x	
Betty Hoover		x
Catherine Fagan	x	
Marcia Margherio	x	
Robert Melson	x	
Rep. Dr. Michiel Noe	x	
Regina Wagner	x	
Barbara Candelaria	x	
Janet Nutt	x	

Animal Services staff present: Kurt Fenstermacher, Michelle Anderson, Gina Ramirez and Maribel Karisch

Public present: List of attendees available upon request.

2. **Reading and approval of minutes**
Discussion and action on the approval of ASAC December 14, 2016 minutes.

Committee members were asked if there were any questions or revisions.

Motion made by Robert Melson and seconded by Dr. Michiel Noe to accept the December 14, 2016 minutes with corrections

Kurt Fenstermacher – Interim Director
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"Delivering Outstanding Services"



Ayes: Dr. Guy Johnsen, Cecilia Carpio, Marcia Margherio, Regina Wagner, Barbara Candelaria, Dr. Michiel Noe, Robert Melson Janice Nutt

Nays: None

Abstain: Catherine Fagan

3. Chairman Remarks

Dr. Guy Johnsen mentioned that speakers will be allowed to comment on any of new business agenda items. They will be limited to speak for 3 minutes per topic. The time can be extended if one of the committee members wants to ask questions or have a conversation. The chairman has the right to interrupt and redirect the conversation if it goes off topic.

The letter of invitation from the ASAC was sent to the rescue groups to attend verbally or non-verbally to the meetings. The rescue groups in attendance were given the opportunity to speak.

4. Reports of Special Committees, Animal Services, Rescue Groups and Shelters

Dr. Johnsen mentioned that the section for Rescue Group was added in order to give the rescue groups the opportunity to voice their concerns.

a. Free Roaming Cats-

Regina Wagner gave some great news on the approval from the CEO of the Housing Authority of City of El Paso to allow the implementation of TNR to all Housing Authority properties in which Sun City Cats' volunteers will assist. With the supplies donated by the public, a high school woodworking class will be building shelters for colonies throughout the city. Sun City Cats thanked volunteers and businesses for their donations of styrofoam boxes and straw used to build shelters for cats during winter.

Sun City Cats recognized the several accomplishments they have made in the last year: People from all over the city are becoming part of the TNR solution; their goal is to empower and educate the community, whether by taking part in TNR or receiving community cats' information. Regina also mentioned that the public is happy to see healthier cats without their annoying habits and Sun City Cats believes it's due to the public participating in TNR. Regina Wagner clarified that the registering of colony managers is not recommended by such groups as *Alley Cat Allies* and *For All Animals*. Registration of a colony manager has nothing to do with whether a community cat colony exists or not, she added. The good Samaritans are the ones helping



to limit the colony by spaying and neutering. Making registration a policy requirement could ruin the programs progress, however by having a community group, like Sun City Cats, have voluntary registration could be good resource.

Two TNR events were held in December in which over 125 cats were spayed or neutered. Regina gave Kudos to everyone that participated in the events in spite of the cold winds. She thanked Dr. Christensen and her staff for all their work. Sun City cats will have their next event in 2 weeks. Sun City has scheduled meetings with EPPD to speak about animal cruelty. A power point presentation on the importance of investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty cases is being developed by *For All Animals* and *Sun City Cats*.

Dr. Noe introduced Boy Scout's Troop 613 from the Westside. He mentioned that they are working on their citizenship batch. He invited them to stay and ask questions, if any, during the meeting.

b. *Public Education, Outreach and Responsible Ownership*

Barbara Candelaria passed out the Valentine's "Make a Love Connection" posters and flyers to committee members. Dr. Noe requested to have the electronic form of the flyer emailed to him to place in their newsletter.

c. *Animal Services Monthly Operations and Statistics Report*

Kurt Fenstermacher went over the live release rate goal for FY2017 which is 60%. The rate has gone from 50.90% in September 2016 to 73.13 in December 2016. The cat release rate was nearly 80% in the month of December, thanks to the Community Cats Program, partnership with Sun City Cats and adoptions.

Animal Services has new contracts and agreements: County Shelter, Ft. Bliss Shelter, Field Service-incorporated municipalities and Shelter-incorporated municipalities.

Animal Service has been selected for a Site Visit on January 23-27 by *Best Friends* for the Community Cat Apprenticeship Grant.

Animal Services is looking to create a High Volume Partner and a Coalition building concept with a Planning Grant from Maddie's Fund (Humane Network)

Animal Services was selected to be a certified Service Enterprise facility Interviews will be conducted on Friday January 13th for Veterinarian. Animal Services is looking into Externship opportunities with the University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program. Visit is expected next week. New Logo for the New Year and is being added to the building on Monday, January 16th. The shelter has recently been painted in purple and orange by staff.



The January Paw Cast has the introduction of Michele Anderson
The Firefighters and Furry Friends Calendars will be sent to the printers next week.
Socorro Clinic currently has Dr. Christensen as the full-time vet, vet techs and 2 front staff members answering calls and scheduling appointments.
Animal Services is currently not charging a fee for owner surrenders

d. *Rescue Shelter Reports*

Dr. Johnsen introduced Janay and Trent Rittgers from Bull Terrier Rescue. She mentioned that she is glad to see that the City of El Paso is addressing the pet over-population issue as this is also a major concern for the Bull Terrier Rescue. They are concerned that so many bull terriers are being bred and thrown in the backyards without socializing. It takes about a year to rehab one of these dogs. They get many dogs during the holidays. The group has many advocates against over-population around the world. She requested information on spayed/neuter, micro-chipping, vaccinations to share with the community. They can be found in their Facebook page *Panda's Pals* (Borderland Bull Terrier Rescue). They are foster based and the group tries to get many families involved in the adoption process. They have traveled as far as West Virginia and California to rescue these dogs.

5. Call to the public
None

6. New Business-Main Discussion of Meeting

e. Discussion and action on having a member of the EPPD and EPAS to talk about the process of how a member of the public should report a suspected case of animal abuse/neglect.

Catherine Fagan asked Animal Services Supervisor Gina Ramirez and Detective Acosta, what and to whom the public should report incidents on animal abuse. Residents in Mission Hills and Kern neighborhoods recently received flyers that there were cats abused in those neighborhoods, but it was unclear how members of the public should report suspicious incidents. Gina Ramirez went over the differences between Animal Cruelty and Animal Neglect. Animal Cruelty can be either deliberate abuse or the failure to take of the animal. Animal Neglect is not providing food, water, shelter and vet care when in some cases can result in injury or death of the animal. Under the City of El Paso Ordinance Title 7 Standards for Animal Care section 7.08.050 states that every person within the city that owns an animal must provide food, water, shelter and shall not neglect the animal. The ordinance can be found at bit.ly/AS_StandardsofCare



Under section 7.08.030 a dog can be restraint in the owner's premises chained or tethered to a leash or harness with 10 ft. of access and not fall under animal cruelty. While Texas criminal laws apply only to domesticated animals, individuals can still be held liable for their actions under the civil laws of the Texas Health Safety Code for cruelly treating an animal. Detective Acosta with EPPD mentioned they are researching animal cruelty cases throughout the city to be better informed. The only time they receive these cases is when Animal Services files them. Once a case is filed, it's assigned to a Detective for further investigation. She also mentioned that animal related cases are difficult to solve. Animal Services is usually called to assist since some of citizens who file the reports don't want to provide a statement for fear of retaliation.

To report animal related incidents, citizens can call 311 or visit the Animal Services Operations office located at 4501 Hondo Pass B.

Ken Margherio inquired whether there are currently efforts for a better working relationship between EPPD and Animal Services on animal abuse. Detective Acosta explained that EPPD is trying to establish a better relationship with Animal Services. They are currently conducting research on developing a plan to present to the EPPD chief on creating a specialize unit to focus on animal related cases. This relationship can also help educate new Police officers on what Animal Services Officers are limited to do lawfully. Barbara Candelaria inquired about the man in Kern neighborhood that was accused of animal abuse and recently released from jail.

Detective Acosta explained that the individual was not prosecuted for animal abuse, but has served time for other charges and is currently on probation or parole. There are no prohibitions in his release conditions that prohibit him from being around animals. Janice Nutt inquired about the amount of time animals are kept after a seizure from by Animal Services. Gina Ramirez explained that after the animals are awarded to Animal Services; they are either placed in fosters or rescue groups.

a. Discussion and action on Ad hoc Committee on Community Cats

Dr. Johnsen mentioned that Community Cats Ad hoc Committee will continue to meet for a couple of more months. The committee will then draw their conclusion and present a report to the Regional Pet Overpopulation Committee.

b. Discussion and action on Ad hoc Committee on Rabies, Vaccinations, Microchip and Registration



Marcia Margherio mentioned that the committee's objective is to immunize all pets and to increase pet identification. The steps the committee will follow are: to partner with non-profit animal advocate professional welfare Providers, local businesses and the City of El Paso. At the recent vaccination clinics, prove of distemper/parvo vaccination records were provided to the public. Owners of puppies were also informed on the follow up vaccinations. The committee/stakeholders are offering low cost rabies at \$8.00 and free parvo/distemper vaccination to help with the fee barrier of compliance in the community. Their next meeting is on January 18, 2017 to discuss a possible collaboration with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office on having a vaccination clinic and to discuss the development of a Visual Pet Identification campaign to prevent or shorten the stay for animals impounded at the shelter.

c. Discussion and action on Ad hoc Committee on Pet Over-Population

Catherine Fagan met with committee members, Betty Hoover and Kurt Fenstermacher to talk about low-cost and no-cost spay and neuter. The committee has started the process of outlining areas for further research and development Catherine will be gone for an extended time and talked to Dr. Johnsen on finding another chair. The committee will continue, however Catherine will step down due to her extended absence from El Paso. Dr. Johnsen made a request for a new chair. Catherine also mentioned the committee will be exploring adding members outside ASAC to the committee. Robert Melson suggested having a chair from ASAC whose term extends beyond June 2017. Barbara Candelaria suggested combining the Community Cat Committee with the Regional Pet Over-Population. Janice Nutt has offered to be part of the committee. Barbara Candelaria suggested that ASAC members consider attending the *Best Friends Conference* in Atlantic City.

d. Discussion and action on status of the 501c3

Dr. Noe gave an update on the process of the 501c3. He mentioned that there was a problem with the name of *Friends of El Paso Animal Shelter* and was changed to *El Paso Animal Shelter Foundation*. Donations can be accepted as of now however tax exemptions will be until the end of the month. Dr. Johnsen suggested Dr. Noe bring something in writing to present to ASAC members.

f. Discussion and action on the details for the Avoiding the Spring Fling Campaign

Barbara Candelaria explained that the purpose of the campaign is to help reduce the intake and euthanasia rate during the summer months. The



campaign will consist of service discounts provided by local veterinarians and shelters such as dental and spay/neuter. Along with the service discounts and extended hours, the campaign will help built new relationships with the local veterinarian clinic and to promote education and awareness on animal healthcare in the community. There are currently four vets on board and meetings have been set up with five more vets. One vet requested to start spay/neuter in February.

The campaign will be advertised by flyers, t-shirts, radio (PSA) and a brochure that will contain a list of the participating veterinarians, locations, specific dates and times. Barbara has meetings with 2 TV stations. Flyers and brochures will be ready for next meeting.

Marcia Margherio suggested focusing on a specific species, sex or age group. Dr. Johnsen suggested that Marcia give Dr. Noe the prolific statistics to place in the newsletter and asked Barbara to prepare a one-page explanation of the Avoid the Spring Fling campaign to take to the EPVMA meeting. Catherine Fagan will create a check list to track outcomes during the campaign in which Barbara will distribute to the participating veterinarians.

7. Motion was made by Robert Melson and seconded by Catherine Fagan to adjourn the January 11, 2016 meeting at 7:48 pm

Prepared by: Maribel Karisch

Approved by A.S.A.C. Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the A.S.A.C. Chairman, is written over a horizontal line.