



El Paso Animal Services

MAYOR
Oscar Leaser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee
Minutes
February 10, 2021

CITY COUNCIL

District 1
Peter Svarzbein

District 2
Alexsandra Anello

District 3
Cassandra Hernandez

District 4
Joe Molinar

District 5
Isabel Salcido

District 6
Claudia L. Rodriguez

District 7
Henry Rivera

District 8
Cissy Lizarraga

1. Call to Order- Establish Quorum

A meeting of the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee was held virtually by Chair Julie Rutledge at 6.06 PM.

Introduction of new member Karen Polanco.

Board Members	Present	Absent
Regina Wagner		X
Celeste Varela		X
Sandra DiFrancesco	X	
Mary Kay Rosenkranz	X	
Karen Polanco	X	
Barbara Candelaria	X	
Gina Gagen	X	
Elvira Stephanie Frias	X	
Vacant		
Julie Rutledge	X	
Alexandra Anello	X	

Animal Services staff present: Ramon Herrera, Maribel Karisch, Michele Anderson, Adan Parra

CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

2. Approval of Minutes

Discussion and action on approval of minutes for December 9, 2020 and January 14, 2021.

Barbara Candelaria motioned to accept the December 9, 2020 minutes; Stephanie Frias seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.

Stephanie Frias motioned to accept the January 14, 2021 minutes, Sandra DiFrancesco seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.

3. Reports-Support the City of El Paso's Initiative to Reach and Sustain a 90% or Greater Live-Release Rate by 2020

A. Department of Animal Services January 2021 update and statistics

Ramon Herrera – Interim Director

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Ramon Herrera, Interim Director, thanked everyone for their support and added that it's been an honor to be part of the continual live saving mission. He spoke on how the strategic goals are an extremely important part of the life-saving efforts at Animal Services. The intake for January 2021 was 1,105. There was a 50% decrease of the population compared to previous years during the covid-19 closure; however, the shelter population has been increasing steadily. Historically, there has been more intakes than outcomes, but January was the first month to have more outcomes (1,186) than intakes. Foster parents continue to be an active and huge component in the live-saving goals. There are currently 443 pets out on foster. There were less than 100 animals euthanized and Ramon mentioned that now that Animal Services is saving more lives, they will take a closer look on how to help this population. The LRR for January was 93.02% with dogs at 92.76% and cats at 93.32%. The Calendar LRR was 93.02% and Fiscal year LRR was 89.69%. The Animal Shelter Count for January 2020 was 90.53% and 93.02% for January 2021.

Ramon Herrera presented the PAW Cast.

Ramon explained that Animal Services is still a participant with the HASS program. He will follow up with any updates.

B. El Paso County Animal Welfare Department January update

Lauralei Combs welcomed new ASAC member Karen Polanco and congratulated Animal Services on the 93.02% LRR. She mentioned that in January 2020 there were 261 animals taken to Animal Services compared to 76 in 2021. In the efforts of supporting Animal Services' strategic goal 1, they are continuing to follow steps in trying to find pet owners. They have nine kennels where the animals are kept for 3 days while trying to find owners, place in either foster or rescue groups. The only animals taken to Animal Services are ones with behavioral and medical issues. They also offer a free clinic once a week to the community. In January, 41 pets were spayed and/or neutered and over 200 pets were vaccinated. She also mentioned that there are plans for a county shelter.

4. Call to the public

None

Julie Rutledge introduced the new City Attorney, Wendy Vineyard, who's assigned to the ASAC.

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5. Main Agenda

A. Promote Education and Engagement of Animal Health and Welfare

A1. Presentation on an overview of the 2021 Texas Legislative Session on Animal Bills

Gina Gagen gave an overview on the Texas Humane Legislative Network for the 2021 Texas Legislative Session which monitors laws that pertain to Animals in the community. One of the many victories was to keep the Licensed Breeders Program to stop cruelty and unethical puppy mill practices. The big Bill to support is the HB 873/SB 474, which clarifies how owners can properly restrain outside dogs and keep them safe. She went over several bills briefly: *HB91*-for community supervision for defendants convicted of criminal offenses; *HB100*- allows a municipal animal control authority to manage dangerous or aggressive dogs in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the municipality; *HB337*-relates to the intake and disposition records of animal shelters and releasing agencies; *HB580*- to require a consumer warning upon sale of certain household plants that are hazardous when ingested by animals; *HB762*-relates to availability of removing certain individuals or animals from a motor vehicle. Gina explained that this bill refers to the removal of a distressed animal from a hot car. While legal protocols will continue to be followed, the bill will remove any civil liabilities for saving the animal(s).

Barbara Candelaria inquired about the status of legislation on groomers. Gina Gagen explained that there is nothing on groomer's legislation for this year. Wendy Vineyard will keep ASAC updated on which bills pass. Alexandra Anello suggested ASAC work on legislative City Council items for the 2022 Legislation Session.

B. Research and Advise on Effective Ordinances and Policies to Improve Overall, Health, Welfare and Safety for Animals

B1. Discussion and action on change in ASAC by-laws related to Article V.6.f. regarding responsibility for annual report.

Julie Rutledge explained that she placed this item for logistical awareness. She read from Article V.6.f. explaining that the by-laws are very specific when writing the annual report and her concern is the timeframe. If the same chair stays, from one year to the next, then it's not a problem. However, if a different chair is elected; the question is; who has to prepare the report., she added. She suggested coinciding the Annual report with the City's fiscal year instead of a calendar year, since the Title VII Ordinance does not specify on a timeline. Sandra DiFrancesco explained that due to the current situation, she

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suggested keeping it the same. Julie added that she wanted to bring awareness, because of the foreseen challenges.

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B2. Discussion and action on Election of Officers, Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2021 calendar year

Julie Rutledge opened the floor for nominations. Sandra DiFrancesco nominated Julie Rutledge for Chair and Gina Gagen for Vice-Chair; both accepted and Alexandra Anello seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.

B3. Discussion and action on Community Involvement and Responsibilities related to stray animals and means of getting them back to their owner.
No discussion, item was skipped.

B4. Discussion and action on draft of ASAC Annual Report to the Mayor and City Council.

Julie Rutledge presented the 2020 Annual Report outline to ASAC. The outline includes the statutory duties from Chapter 823, Texas Health & Safety Code and the El Paso City's Title 7 Ordinance. The outline also includes the following: El Paso County Animal Welfare Department changes, The HASS community initiatives and the statutory requirement status. She asked the committee for any input and also suggested creating a subcommittee within ASAC to keep track and assist with the shelters' compliance. Barbara Candelaria suggested including the collaboration between Animal Services and El Pasoans Fighting Hunger on the distribution of pet food, the community's involvement with fostering and how shelters became creative and innovative. Sandra DiFrancesco suggested including the events held to support the community throughout the COVID closure. In spite of other city facilities being closed, Animal Services found creative ways to support the community, Representative Anello added. Ramon Herrera added that COVID brought more ways of connecting to the community and opened the way for different types of sheltering technology. Julie will present the annual report draft at the March meeting.

6. Future Agenda Item

Subcommittees for the year

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:10PM

Julie Rutledge motioned to adjourn; Sandra DiFrancesco seconded; all Members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.

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Prepared by: Maribel Karisch

Approved by A.S.A.C. Chairman

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

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