



El Paso Animal Services

MAYOR
Oscar Leeser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee Minutes

February 9, 2022

CITY COUNCIL

District 1
Peter Svarzbein

District 2
Alexsandra Annello

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 at the Animal Services Shelter by Chair Representative Alexsandra Annello at 6:01.

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	
Patricia Y. Riley	X	
Loretta Hyde		X
Alexsandra Annello	X	

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

CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

2. Approval of Minutes

Discussion and action on approval of minutes for January 12, 2022

Kay Rosencrantz motioned to accept the January 12, 2022; Stephanie Frias seconded; Regina Wagner sustained; all members voted in favor, none opposed 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. Chair Report

No Report

B. El Paso Animal Services January update and statistics

Ramon Herrera explained that the intake for the start of the year has definitely

Ramon Herrera – Interim Director

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stayed higher than last year. There were more animals taken in from both the field the shelter. The intake for January 2022 was 1,225 compared to 1,105 in 2021 and the outcome was 1,077 in 2022 compared to 1,186 in 2021. The outcome number included a transfer flight out to Canada with grant funds from Best Friends, PetSmart charities and the Bissell Pet Foundation. The life-saving efforts continue at the shelter by having adoption events. One of the events was *Pits Bulls and Pajamas* in the efforts of having pit bulls introduced to the public; 60 dog were adopted, which included pit bulls. The next adoption event is *Tails and Tailgates* and for every couple of weeks Animal Services will find an adoption event to get the word out. There are 1,775 fosters and of those, several are pending surgery to complete the adoption. The top euthanasia reasons for January were behavior 76, infectious 61, trauma 27, non-infectious 22 and owner-requested 15. Animal Services is taking precautions when handling dogs off the trucks that are showing signs of distemper in the efforts of preserving the housing population and for public safety. The LRR was 78.76% for January 2022 in spite of a challenging month. The calendar year LRR was 78.76% and the Shelter Animals Count was 78.76%. The Community and Pet Support Program continues to create found reports for those pets that the public brings to the shelter. There were 176 for January and there were 81 pets that the community returned to owners. Animal Services is looking into enhancing the microchip scanning capabilities in the public. For the last two years, the El Paso Fire Department has been scanning found pets for the public and has now become a best practice across multiple communities. With several staff out due to covid-19, January was a challenging month, so a shift of staff was necessary to assist in handling other duties in regards to animal care. There was not a PAW Cast this month, however Animal Services was busy communicating on their social media channels about the Save Outdoor Act. The channels were able to inform and clarify misconception about the new law in Texas.

Regina Wagner inquired about the increase in euthanasia of cats due to behavior and one cat/kitten being euthanized and sent out as a lab specimen. She expressed her concerns that the public needs to be aware that if cats/kittens are not getting TNRed quickly, it puts them in danger of euthanasia by going into the City shelter. The cats should not be in the shelter if the staff is unable to care for them safely which would put the cats at risk for euthanasia. In addition, she explained that without the Community Cat Program to include both TNR and SNR, there is no way that the City can increase its live release rate. She further explained the importance of the Community Cat Program and how it's the key to a no kill shelter and/or reaching a 90 percent live release rate.

Ramon explained that the cat was euthanized due to a potential risk for disease exposure and the change about euthanizing cats was done by the new veterinarian and medical staff who are taking a different approach to these cases.

Regina would like to know the specifics of the euthanasia of these cats.

Alexsandra Annello pointed out that there is not a clarification on the background

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of these cats and Ramon will provide an update on the specifics at next month's meeting.

Gina Gagen inquired about the PVC pipe feeders where food is falling on the floor that is full of urine and feces and about housing unneutered male dogs and females together.

Ramon explained that the purpose of the PVC pipe feeders are to provide food to animals 24/7 when they arrive to the shelter very emaciated. The feeders also address the staff shortage while working to feed and clean more than 700 animals. He also added that Animal Services co-houses whether it's for health or behavior and some of these animals have medical conditions that staff doesn't know about including pregnancy.

Regina inquired about how the large dogs that are in the outside kennel were taken care of during the low temperatures.

Ramon explained that 40 dogs were taken to the Socorro facility that is temperature controlled, the other kennels were covered with tarps and a staff member stayed overnight to keep watch over the dogs and heaters.

C. El Paso County Animal Welfare Department January update.

Lauralei Combs explained that in 2021 there were 1,500 impounded animals at Animal Services compared to 3,300 in 2019. There were also 275 pets returned to owners that included dogs, cats, livestock, ponies and horses. The county also had 700 animals either transferred to rescue groups and/or adopted. In 2021, the county clinic administered 557 rabies vaccinations, 927 distemper/parvo, 470 pets were microchipped and 385 owned pets were sterilized. Lauralei added that they are looking forward to improvements in 2022 with the addition of three new officers and are currently trying to get veterinarians to their clinic. They are also in the process of getting new kennels next to the PAWS program in which the inmates will be cleaning. They also started their own Facebook page: *El Paso County Animal Welfare*, it's informational only, but an email has been posted for questions or comments. The El Paso County Animal Welfare will be participating at the El Paso Marathon and have informed the public about keeping their pets restrained.

4. Call to the public

None

5. Main Agenda

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

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A1. Presentation on the update of the funding for Animal Services

Ramon Herrera mentioned that Animal Services staff has been very excited about the new projects that will be taking place at the shelter. The projects include the Animal Shelter Dog Kennels, Animal Hospital and the HVAC Improvements. The dog kennels will house large dogs and the hospital will be for animal isolation and treatment. The hospital will have medical offices

to allow for closer observation of these animals. The HVAC system will also be replaced to improve the air quality and prevent the spread of disease. The construction will start next year since the contract was approved at the last City Council. The project will be challenging with the movement and housing of the animals, however the Socorro Facility will be used as temporary housing throughout the project. The HVAC project will address not only the kennels, but the entire shelter. The dog kennels and the medical suite will be built on the employee parking lot and the new employee parking lot will be on the west side of the shelter. El Paso Water will be working to expand the ponding area behind the Humane Society to make room for additional visitor parking. Ramon also mentioned the other projects that the Capital Improvements Department has assisted with in previous years. He also gave credit to Maintenance and Facilities and the El Paso Fire Department for installing the canopies to help with the hot temperatures. The ponding project with El Paso Water will start sometime in the spring and the timeline is from nine months to a year. Alexsandra Annello would like an update once the project has materialized.

6. Future Agenda Item

Update on the euthanasia of cats

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM

Kay Rosencrantz motioned to adjourn; Gina Gagen seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.

Prepared by: Maribel Karisch

Approved by A.S.A.C. Chairman

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