



Department of Animal Services

MAYOR
Dee Margo

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee
Minutes
March 11, 2020

CITY COUNCIL

District 1
Peter Svarzbein

District 2
Alexsandra Anello

District 3
Cassandra Hernandez

District 4
Dr. Sam Morgan

District 5
Isabel Salcido

District 6
Claudia L. Rodriguez

District 7
Henry Rivera

District 8
Cissy Lizarraga

CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

1. Call to Order- Establish Quorum

A meeting of the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee was held at the Humane Society of El Paso conference room at 6:05 p.m. by Vice Chair Julie Rutledge.

Board Member A.S.A.C.	Present	Absent
Regina Wagner	X	
Celeste Varela	X	
Sandra DiFrancesco	X	
Mary Kay Rosenkranz	X	
Yansi Parent	X	
Barbara Candelaria	X	
Yvonne Rosales		X
Elvira Stephanie Frias	X	
Dr. Jayne Causey		X
Julie Rutledge	X	
Vacant		

Animal Services staff present: Paula Powell, Maribel Karisch, Ramon Herrera, Michele Anderson, Adan Parra and Ana Schumacher
Public present: List of attendees available upon request.

The meeting started with the introduction of members:

Sandra DiFrancesco- District 3
Mary Kay Rosenkranz-District 4
Stephanie Frias-District 8
Yansi Parent-District 5
Regina Wagner-District 1

2. Approval of Minute

Discussion and action on the approval of the February 12, 2020 minutes.

Regina Wagner motioned to accept the February 12, 2020 minutes with approved corrections; Yansi Parent seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.

Paula Powell – Director

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DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES



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

A. Free Roaming Cats-Cruelty towards free-roaming cats: signs and prevention

Regina Wagner reported on how not everyone is kind to cats and how cruelty towards them is very common. She explained that cats that live or spend unsupervised time outside are more at risk for abuse. Sometimes it's difficult to determine whether a cat is being abused because they might be aggressive, timid or fearful, therefore, it's necessary to look for clues in their environment. She expressed that suspicions should arise when a person keeps changing their story about a cat's injury, the cat's chronic conditions; such as hair loss, matted fur, extreme thinness, repeated injuries or lame. She offered suggestions on how to help stop cruelty. She suggested teaching the younger generation on how to care for animals through a humane school curriculum and by enforcing strong protection laws. This would also address the connection between human violence and animal abuse where the law would mandate cross reporting with adult and child protection services. She gave several examples of animal cruelty. She added that April is the Prevention of Animal Cruelty month and encouraged everyone to report cruelty and neglect by calling 311 or 911.

B. County Report on the update of the County's communication with Congresswoman Escobar's office regarding 2021 appropriations

Celeste Varela explained that the President of the United States is considering cutting the Loan Repayment Program for the veterinarian school loans. She met with Eric Bohm to discuss the judge's appropriations to continue fully funding the program, and if not, they would fully fund a greater amount as an incentive for veterinarians. Besides the consideration on cutting the funding, people that are applying for the program are not qualifying because the requirements are very restrictive. She added that the community can use this program as an incentive for veterinarians and if it's cut then the recruitment process will be more challenging.

C. Department of Animals Services Center-Update on February's Statistics

Paula Powell recapped on the Strategic Goals that are the guide for achieving no kill by 2020. She explained that the February intake decreased from 1,700 to 1,615. The outcome was 1,520 compared to 1,775 for February 2019. There were 429 adoptions, however due to having only one veterinarian and a backlog of pending adoptions, the number of adoptions are 181 more. Paula mentioned that Animal Services has funding to bring in veterinarians to help with surgeries. There were 753 fosters out in February. The euthanasia history had 44 infectious,

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37 behavioral, 22 trauma and 20 non-infectious. The died-in-care breakdown for at home fosters had 1 non-infectious, 3 infectious and 3 failure-to-thrive. The shelter breakdown had 2 non-infectious, 2 infectious, 3 trauma and 6 failure-to-thrive. The LRR for February was 90.73%. The LRR for dogs was 90.27% and 91.82% for cats. The Calendar Year LRR was 90.63% and for the Fiscal Year LRR was 88.29%. The Shelter Animal Count LRR was 90.73% and the euthanasia rate was 7.62% for February 2020 compared to 90.23% LRR and euthanasia rate at 8.00% in February 2019. Julie Rutledge suggested bring in year-to-date statistics. Paula explained that statistics in that format were difficult to pull. Yansi Parent inquired about where can the public watch the Animal Services PAW Cast. Paula explained that the PAW Cast can be seen on the Animal Services website, City TV and You Tube. The Animal Services weekly segment with media and PAW Casts will be emailed to ASAC.

4. Call to the public

None

Julie Rutledge introduced the New Humane Society CEO, Deb Benedict.

5. Main Agenda

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

A1. **Discussion and action on the election of a new chair**

Julie Rutledge opened the floor for nominations for the Chair.

Regina Wagner motioned to have Julie Rutledge as chair and Celeste Varela as vice-chair; Sandy Defrancesco seconded the motion; all members voted in favor; and the motion passed unanimously. Both members accepted.

A2. **Discussion and action on the ASAC Annual Report's final draft and the approval for submission to City Council**

Celeste Varela explained that she made format and grammatical corrections to the Annual Report. She explained that she had questions regarding the statistical numbers and the National Euthanasia Rate. She added that each statistic needs to have their own citation and she was not able to verify the statewide statistics on the websites. Julie Rutledge added she would contact Ken Margherio for his sources and/or link and if the numbers cannot be verified, the information will be deleted from the report with the committee's approval. Regina Wagner mentioned that under *Shelter Capacity* and *Veterinary Support* corrections that were

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discussed at last month's meeting need to be made as well. After much discussion, the list of shelters that compliance reminder letters were sent to, will be added under *Compliance*. Julie also suggested deleting the sentence *There is evidence that off-site/low-cost vaccination programs work*, under *Vaccination Programs*. Celeste Varela recommended using Department of Animal Services once and then using DAS through out the rest of the report. Julie will make other grammatical corrections and place it in letter format, sign and sent to City Council and Mayor.

Kay Rosenkranz motioned to accept the report with changes and then submit it; Barbara Candelaria seconded the motion; all members in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

A3. Discussion and action on amending the time allotted for the Call to the Public in the by-laws

Julie Rutledge mentioned that the item was placed by Edith Prado. She read article VII, section 4 of the ASAC by-laws. Julie explained that the reason for the item was because members of the public had concerns that the 3 minutes was not sufficient time to speak. She added that the way the by-laws are written, the committee can grant additional time if needed. She also mentioned that in the event the by-laws need to be amended, Article XIII of the by-laws explains the amendment process. Celeste added that 3 minutes is sufficient time. Julie further explained that in case a member of the public seems to need more time, any member can make a motion and then the committee votes on it. Ana Schmacher recommended allowing (X) amount of time, if time is granted. Julie also explained that if a quorum is not established, action cannot be taken. Yansi Parent inquired about public comment engagement. Julie explained that there is no engagement, however if the public's comment is of interest to any committee member, they can propose for it to be a future agenda item. The committee will keep the 3 minutes allotted for public comment per the by-laws.

A4. Presentation on ASAC's duties pursuant to Section 7.28.060 of the El Paso Municipal Code

Ana Schumacher mentioned that the item is part of the educational sessions that Edith Prado and Paula Powell recommended for new ASAC members. Ana read from the city ordinance *Title 7 section 7.23.060-Duties (A)*. She explained that the ASAC is a statutory committee and their duties are specified in Chapter 823 of the Texas Health and Safety Code. She also explained that section 823.005 defines an advisory committee in which

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assist is the key word for complying with the requirements of the chapter. She continued to explain that the main section that the ASAC should consider is section 823.003 which addresses that each animal shelter in the state of Texas shall comply with the standards for: (1) Housing and sanitation as provided in Chapter 826 for quarantine impoundment facilities. She referred to Chapter 826, subchapter F, section 826.051. She also referred to the Texas Administrator Code, Title 25 Health Services, section 159.26. Ana referred back to section 823.003 (2): Animal control officers training adopted under Chapter 29 and she read from Title 10, section 829.002. The department that offers this training is the Department of State Health Services. She mentioned that section 829.003 lists the courses the department offers. She continued to read from *Title 7, section 7.28.060-Duties* (B) and read section 823.001 from Chapter 823 which defines an animal shelter as a facility that keeps or legally impounds strays, homeless, abandoned or unwanted animals. The other provisions where the ASAC shall assist is when the city has contracted with the County of El Paso or other municipalities through an inter-local agreement. They shall also assist with the annual veterinarian inspections of each shelter and comply by section 823.003 (b) and (c). She also explained that according to section 7.28.060 (C), the ASAC shall annually prepare and provide a written report of their statutory duties to City Council. In section 7.28.060 (E), the committee may annually prepare and provide a report which includes the non-statutory activities recommendations to City Council. Ana added that part (D) of the same section refers to the items discussed and recommendations to City Council. She expressed that ASAC cannot make recommendations to Animal Services. Any recommendation by the committee shall be directed to City Council and then the City Manager will direct recommendation to Animal Services. She added that the ASAC can only recommend changes to the city's ordinance related to their duties and not the entire Title 7 and City Council may also request for ASAC to perform other duties in the efforts of increasing public awareness, addressing the needs and the welfare of animals.

Regina Wager inquired whether the committee had to address issue until the annual report was written. Julie Rutledge recommended speaking to their Representative about the issue. Ana Schumacher suggested placing an item that needs urgent attention on the City Council agenda.

B. Promote Education and Engagement of Animal Health and Welfare

B1. Discussion and action on how to increase public awareness of the need to clean after your dog

Item was tabled

Regina Wagner motioned to table item B1; Celeste Varela seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.

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6. Future Agenda Item

Discussion and action on how to increase public awareness of the need to clean after your dog.

Sample survey- Bring awareness on spay and neuter

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM

Celeste Varela motioned to adjourn; Regina Wagner seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.

Prepared by: Maribel Karisch

Approved by A.S.A.C. Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Julie R. Rutledge", written over a horizontal line.

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