



Department of Animal Services

Mayor
Dee Margo

City Council

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District 2
Alexandra Annello

District 3
Cassandra Hernandez

District 4
Dr. Sam Morgan

District 5
Isabel Salcido

District 6
Claudia Ordaz Perez

District 7
Henry Rivera

District 8
Cissy Lizarraga

City Manager
Tommy Gonzalez

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee

Minutes March 21, 2019

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 and was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Chair Ken Margherio.

Board Member A.S.A.C.	Present	Absent
Barbara Candelaria		X
Amanda Herrera		X
Dr. Guy Johnsen	X	
Ken Margherio	X	
Charlie Moreno	X	
Claudia Ordaz Perez	X	
Edith Prado	X	
Vacant		
Julie Rutledge	X	
G. Eric Stoltz		X
Regina Wagner	X	

Animal Services staff present: Paula Powell, Maribel Karisch, Michele Anderson and Ana Schumacher

Public present: List of attendees available upon request.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

Discussion and action on the approval of the February 13, 2019 minutes.

Guy Johnsen motioned to accept the February 13, 2019 minutes; Charlie Moreno seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.

3. **Chairman Remarks**

Ken Margherio will be in Austin from March 28 through April 3. He can be reached by text.

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



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A. Member- Free Roaming Cats-

Regina Wagner spoke on how the best chance of survival for a litter of kitten is with their mother. She gave several tips on how to tell whether kittens are actually abandoned. She explained that a kitten needs to be rescued if it is out on its own; most likely, it has been abandoned. Sometimes a litter of kittens might look abandoned, but it could possibly be that the mother is out looking for food or scared off by the finder's presence. Another thing to keep in mind before removing kittens is that mothers also go frantic looking for their kittens and it is painful for the nursing mothers. By taking the kittens away from their mothers, it is not helping, since the mother will immediately go into heat and she will have another litter. If the kittens are in imminent danger, wait and observe them from a distance for an hour or two. They can be placed in a litter box with a soda bottle or something similar, full of hot water if worried about them being cold. A mother will not "reject" kittens that have been touched by humans. A circle of flour can be placed around the kittens (not on them) and leaving the area for a while. Look for paw prints upon returning. Clean kittens who are sleeping soundly are probably not abandoned. Dirty, crying kittens are probably hungry and MAY have been abandoned and need rescue. Although it is important to remember that as soon as kittens wake up, they start crying and want to eat. Kittens should only be removed from their nest if there is no evidence of a mother cat after several hours, or if the kittens are in imminent danger or distress. If they are truly abandoned, they will need urgent care, including keeping them warm and feeding them kitten formula. Regina recommended that if kittens are found, to please google the "Kitten Lady", her YouTube videos will give step by step instructions on how to properly care for kittens.

B. Subcommittee- Title 7 Task Force

Ken Margherio inquired whether there were plans for a subcommittee meeting. Paula explained that there are no plans for a meeting, however she is ¾ through the Title 7 rewrite. Her goal is to have it completed by March 22. The rewrite will run by legal first and then subcommittee meetings on specific topics will start in April. She will present the Title 7 rewrite to the subcommittee including the grooming changes and then the subcommittee will create a game plan for the public meetings.

C. Rescue Agency/ Limited Shelter Report

None

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Paula Powell presented the Calendar Year review of what is happening and what is approaching at Animal Services. The historical live release rates from 2013-2018 has increased from 21.93% to 84.46%. Animal services is moving in the right direction in reaching the 90% LRR considering the LRR goal for 2018 was 70% from the original reform plan. Intake has been one of Animal Services biggest challenges, however after the development of the Strategic Plan in September



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2018, the intake numbers have been decreasing. Adoptions continue to increase since 2016 in spite of distemper in the late summer months of 2018. There were 5,902 adoptions in 2016, 7,789 in 2017 and 9,341 in 2018.

Animal Services volunteers are a very important key component to the overall mission. They have done an amazing job with enrichment by making sure that every pet has great care during their stay. The 27,551 volunteer hours could have not been done without them.

The euthanasia numbers also moving in the right direction with a total of 3,478 with reasons of behavior, trauma, non-infectious and infectious. Animal Services will concentrate on the infectious and behavioral pets to increase the LRR. Medical staff participate in medical discussion before considering euthanasia. Animal Services implemented a new euthanasia policy, which has been duplicated across the country. Paula will share the policy at next month's meeting. She has asked for budget to open a behavior center for those pets that the community has failed them and for behaviors, the shelter has caused. The reasons for owner requested euthanasia are infectious disease and behavior.

The number for fosters was astounding for 2018 with 3864. There were 4,292 pets return to owners for 2018. The number of RTOs have been increasing since July 2018. The county, Ft. Bliss and Tiguas are also returning pets to their owners. By returning the pets to their owners, the city avoided a cost of \$944,240.00.

Animal Services hit above 90% three times: February 2018 at 91.26%, March 2018 at 91.1% and February 2019 at 90.23%.

Some of the highlights from enforcement for 2018 are 21% reduction in animals not confined, 14% reduction in animals not vaccinated nor microchipped, and 10% reduction in animals not registered. The Enforcement report is presented to City Council yearly and Animal Services is seeing a positive community trend with enforcement.

The Animal Services developed the Strategic Plan during the 2018 calendar year, Paula Powell reported the Strategic Plan Progress by goal:

Goal 1: Reduce the number of pets entering Animal Services. In the efforts to reach this goal, there were 3,256 spayed and neutered pets including the surgeries from the mobile unit and reunited 1,772 pets with their families out in field.

Goal 2: Provide healthier pets. Animal Services spayed/neutered 15,274 pets and vaccinated 1,778 community pets. In order to increase the number of services provided to the community, Animal Services will open the Socorro Clinic, the spay/neuter van will be mobilized; Michele Anderson and staff will provide more events. Local veterinarians are helping with spay and neuter surgeries; PIMA institute students are taking x-rays and blood work. Animal Services is providing medical care in ways that were not done before. The Community Cat Program had 4,627 cats. Fifty-three thousand six hundred and seven enrichment activities were provided for 27,000 pets.

Goal 3: Provide safe comfortable living conditions for pets in our care and in the community. Enrichment activities are happening and tracked. Forty-eight outdoor kennels were completed which include lighting and misters. All kennels have a doghouse and swimming pool.



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Goal 4: Increase positive outcomes for pets in our community. There were 9,356 adoptions and 3,626 pets were transported to rescue groups. Seven transports are lined up for May. Animal Services transports only to almost no kill and no kill shelters.

Goal 5: Increase social awareness of animal welfare in our community. Volunteers donated 27,551 hours that saved \$371,938.00. The total of grants awarded was \$228,350.00. The launch of the new website was in December 2018.

Goal 6: Provide a safe environment for employees and opportunities for professional development. The development of a peer Support program to help employees deal with the shelter environment. The new employee-training program helps employees understand the strategic plan. A new employee recognition award was developed to recognize an employee's outstanding work. Valentin Garcia was the PURR award winner for January 2019.

A Population Manager was added to the internal support and for external support, Animal Services is part of the Community Foundation.

Capital Projects to be completed in Fiscal Year 2019 are a new walk-in freezer, Zoo catio, construction will start next month on the shelter catio and the design of 50 large dog kennels and new employee parking lot.

The intake for February have gone down from 1,862 to 1,700 in 2019. Owner surrenders have also decreased and the Pet Retention program staff is helping owners with alternate ways before surrendering. Animal Services will open a food pantry, a fencing company will assist pet owners with gate troubles and grants will help with medical care. The Pet Retention program works by appointment and it could be a 6 to 8 week wait; however, they will assist in emergency cases. Adoption decreased from 638 to 561 compared to last year. Return to Owners increased from 280 to 328. Paula will present the euthanasia history chart at every meeting for transparency. There are currently 313 fosters. The LRR for February was 90.23%. The LRR for dogs was 88.16% and 93.90% for cats. The calendar year LRR for February was 87.98% and the Fiscal year was 83.79%

In order to attain and sustain a 90% LRR, Ken Margherio recommended for Animal Services to tackle the disease issue by adding more capacity to handle the overcrowding, sufficient veterinarian support, a new ventilation system and a comprehensive disease control vaccination program. Regina Wagner expressed that it seems that the community has a misconception of Animal Services and she cannot understand why the community is not looking for their pets. Animal Services is doing an amazing job, she added. Dr. Johnsen agreed and recommended having public education to clarify the message. Paula explained that on Monday, Pet's Alive visited Animal Services on how to improve the disease issue.

5. **Call to the public**
Patricia Johnsen - Disease at Shelter
Suzy Graham – Disease at Animal Services
Marcia Margherio- Disease Prevention



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Linda Krasowski- Infectious Disease/Socorro Clinic

Ron Conveau – Behavior Dogs/Quarantine Holds/ Rescue group mix-up

6. **Main Agenda**

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

A1. Discussion and action on ASAC by-laws.

Dr. Johnsen suggested making a couple of more changes to the ASAC bylaws. Under Article V, section 6, subsection f, he suggested adding the word *the* after ASAC on the first sentence. He also asked for clarification on the committee's approval of the written annual report before submitting to City Council. Ken Margherio had questions on why the report was submitted in April. The report is submitted in April due to the Chapter 823 shelter inspections.

After discussion, the committee suggested adding a December deadline for submitting suggestions as to the content of the annual report to the chair, the approval as to the content will be no later than the February meeting and the submission of the annual report to City Council will be no later than the end of March.

The last sentence, under Article VII, section 4 will change to, Members of the committee may engage the speaker providing public comment *on the main agenda*. The time for public comment was changed to 3 minutes instead of five, under the same section.

Julie Rutledge motioned to approve as to comments on record; Charlie Moreno seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.

A2. Discussion and action on what to do as a Humane Education Subcommittee
Item tabled

Charlie Moreno motioned to table the Human Education subcommittee item; Julie Rutledge seconded; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.

B. Promote Education and Engagement in Animal Health and Welfare

B1. Pooch Patio Presentation

Robert Resendez gave a presentation on the development of Pooch Patios for the the City of El Paso, where pets could have dinner with their owners. The patios are specially designed for restaurants so that El Paso can become more pet friendly. Since animals are not allowed in restaurants, the city will have to pass an ordinance. The Health Department would perform inspections to make sure the patios have the correct design and are run properly. Recommendations for the patio design would include an enclosed area, non-porous chairs and floors, good signage, a cleaning schedule, an outdoor storage for cleaning supplies, outdoor sink with hot water and a self-closing gate. Other recommendation were keeping pets on a leash and wearing



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their rabies tags, one pet per customer, not feeding people food to pets and not touching pets. In order to assist with the cleaning procedures, Animal Services would offer a training program to managers. The committee agreed with the recommendations presented.

B2. Informational: State Legislature Bill, Pet Leasing, Tethering

Ken Margherio shared some information acquired from a Community Foundation meeting where Laura Donahue from the Texas Humane Legislation Network and Representative Joe Moody also attended. He mentioned that some of the changes that Laura Donahue and Joe Moody are promoting are, doubling the tether and having immediate access to free pets left in hot cars. They are also promoting a prohibition Bill on Pet Leasing, which has increased commercial breeding, the retail pet industry, and is conflicting with the goals of shelters and rescue groups. Since the legislative process is complex, Laura Donahue and Representative Joe Moody advised to reach out to legislative support on animal welfare issues now.

Dr. Johnsen announced his resignation, but will be until December 2019. He will inform the mayor of his resignation. He also informed the EPMVA in case someone is interested.

Charlie Moreno also announced his resignation, but he will serve until school starts.

7. **Future Agenda Items**
Animal Services Euthanasia Policy
Community Foundation Campaign
Disclosures by Shelters

8. **Adjournment**
Meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM

Charlie Moreno motioned to adjourn; Julie Rutledge 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, likely belonging to the A.S.A.C. Chairman, is written over the "Approved by" line.