



El Paso Animal Services

MAYOR

Oscar Leeser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee Minutes

March 9, 2022

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 at the Animal Services Shelter by Chair Representative Alexsandra Anello 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 Anello	X	

Animal Services staff present: Ramon Herrera, Maribel Karisch, Michele Anderson, Adan Parra and Esty Molina.

CITY MANAGER

Tommy Gonzalez

2. Approval of Minutes

Discussion and action on approval of minutes for February 9, 2022

Kay Rosencrantz motioned to accept the February 9, 2022 minutes; Sandra DiFrancesco seconded; 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

Terry Kebschull – Director

El Paso Animal Services | 5001 Fred Wilson | El Paso, TX 79906

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DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES



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B. El Paso Animal Services February 2022 update and statistics

Ramon Herrera presented the February statistics. The intake was 1,226 compared to 1,041 in 2021. Even though the month was short, the outcome was 1,235 compared to 937. Ramon credited staff and contract veterinarians for the 448 adoptions and the 215 TNR cats. The LRR was 83.52%, a 4% increase from January. The spay/neuters definitely helped with the LRR increase Ramon added. Animal Services will continue to contract veterinarians. The main reason for euthanasia in February was behavior, with 62. Ramon explained that these dogs were involved in several incidents by either biting and/or lounging at staff and others had mental health deterioration. He stressed that having a safe environment for staff and potential adopters is essential. The Calendar LRR was 81.14%, a 5% increase from 2021. With litter season starting in the months of April, May and June, the shelter will have challenges with disease during those months. The Shelter Animal Count LRR was 83.52% compared to 92.96% last year.

Michele Anderson presented the PAW Cast.

Alexsandra Annello inquired about the national search firm contract for veterinarians. Ramon explained that the search continues however, he found that national search firms were not beneficial in the search for veterinarians, but found that building relationships works best.

Sandra DiFrancesco pointed out discrepancies on the statistics report and Ramon will give an update at next month's meeting.

Kay Rosencrantz asked what *lost* means in the outcome comparatives of the statistic report. Ramon explained that *lost* is for the animals that either escaped while being loaded onto the trucks and/or unloading at the shelter.

Barbara Candelaria inquired whether Animal Services visits universities throughout the United States for veterinarian recruitment. Ramon explained that Animal Services and EPVMA are collaborating on recruitment. Eric Boehm has visited universities and has conducted virtual and in-person meetings with students. Alexsandra added that it would be more impactful if Animal Services reached out since the schools are in Texas. Dr. Riley mentioned that there are only two veterinary schools in Texas.

C. El Paso County Animal Welfare Department February update.

No report

Terry Kebschull – Director

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4. Call to the public

Marcia Margherio

5. 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 the review of current Behavior Policies due to increase in euthanasia rates.

Sandra DiFrancesco inquired whether euthanasia protocols have changed and what are the changes since the most recent statistics show an increase in euthanasia. Ramon explained that Animal Services has seen this increase of animals even though El Paso County Animal Welfare has done a good job in placing adoptable dogs in foster homes, however there are still animals that are impounded that have medical or behavior needs. The protocol change was to include staff members from shelter operations to the euthanasia meetings, where they can make their comments on what they are experiencing while caring for the animals. Managers are asking and finding that bites and/or lounes from animals had not been reported. Ramon expressed that he does not want to put any staff or the public at risk, so hard decisions on these type of incidents have to be made.

Loretta Hyde asked about training for officers on how to determine behavior and the timeline before evaluation. Ramon explained that the enrichment coordinators get best practices behavior training and help from other animal welfare organizations. The Animal Protection Officers do not get this type of training, but will provide intake information. The animals are given three to five days to decompress and two behavior assessments.

Regina Wagner inquired about the data of the 6 euthanized cats that was requested at last month's meeting. Ramon explained that two feral cats bit and there was no vaccination history. Another was an adopted cat that attacked three family members. Regina added that previously, these cats would have been quarantined. Ramon made a clarification on the six cats: two cats approached property owners and bit, one was an adoption and three were owner surrenders. He added that he appreciates and supports his medical team and live-saving is still his goal. Dr Riley expanded on the determination whether an animal should be euthanized and tested. She explained that it has to do with the circumstances of an provoked or unprovoked exposure, the severity of the bite and vaccination status. Regina and Alexsandra requested a breakdown of the data provided by age and circumstances in order to answer the committee's questions. Ramon will sent that information to the ASAC.

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Barabra Candelaria mentioned that she has been receiving concerning calls regarding the quarantine and euthanasia of puppies and kittens. The continuation of transparency from Animal Services will prevent the public from losing trust., she added. She also suggested finding veterinarians that are on board with the ASAC Strategic Plan and asked who are the participants in the euthanasia meetings. Ramon mentioned that the participants are the Director, representatives from Community Programs, Rescues, Medical, Population, Shelter Operation and Marketing. Barbara also asked what needs to be done to decrease behavioral euthanasia. Ramon explained that the animals are constantly being placed in different environments for decompressing. The decisions are tough, however health and safety is still a concern as is live-saving; it's about finding that balance, he added.

A2. Discussion and action on addressing any TNR changes.

Sandra DiFrancesco inquired whether there are barriers preventing the TNR Program from moving forward and how can the ASAC assist.

Ramon explained that the challenge for the TNR program is coordinating the surgical availability of the contract and current veterinarian. Animal Services is also talking to local veterinarians about assisting with surgeries and will be working with Far East Animal Care Center. Animal Services is also working with Sun City Cats on reserving surgical slots. The TNR Program is very important to the city. The community wants to participate, but the problem is having the surgeries. Esty Molina went over the current TNR process. Ramon added that one of the adjustment to the process is that the public can drop off without an appointment. Regina suggested educating the public on TNR and to inform them not to trap without a plan. Alexandra mentioned that the public has been very unhappy with the program and would like for Animal Services to find ways to make it successful again.

A3. Discussion and action on bringing back the "Avoid the Spring Fling" campaign.

Barabra Candelaria mentioned that several local veterinarians are participating in the Spring Fling campaign. She also inquired whether Animal Services could start up the radio spots with 92.3 the Fox. Ramon will have Michele Anderson also reach out to KLAQ. He also mentioned that he is collaborating with the EPVMA and posters were made accessible for pricing. Animal Protection Officer will be distributing the posters to the veterinarian offices and to pet stores. The message was also shared on social media.

6. Future Agenda Item

Continue with Item A1

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7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM

Barbara Candelaria motioned to adjourn; Dr. Patricia Riley 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 black ink, appearing to be "A. S. A. C.", written over a horizontal line.

Terry Kebschull – Director

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