



El Paso Animal Services

MAYOR
Oscar Leaser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee Minutes April 13, 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 Vice-Chair Celeste Varela 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: Terry Kebschull and Maribel Karisch

CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

2. Approval of Minutes

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

Loretta Hyde motioned to accept the March 9, 2022 minutes; Patricia Riley 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

B. El Paso Animal Services March 2022 update and statistics

Terry Kebschull, the new Animal Services Director went over the March 2022 Statistics. The intake for March was 1,464, which increased from last year's

Terry Kebschull – Director

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1,361, owner surrenders were down from 166 to 60. The outcome total was 1,379 compared to 1,190 in 2021. Adoptions increased from 254 to 440, owner requested euthanasia also increased from 6 to 28 and shelter euthanasia doubled from 116 to 234. There are 1,758 foster pets out and Animal Services continues to be grateful for their support.

The euthanasia top reasons were infectious 114, behavior 65, trauma 35, owner-requested 28 and non-infectious 20. There was a total of 56 shelter and foster animals that died-in-care; 18 cats and 38 dogs. Terry added that he would like to see this number decrease.

The LRR for March was 78.83% compared to 88.78% in 2021. It was a great month for adoptions and the Return-To-Owner were 185. Terry explained that Animal Services will encourage the public on updating their pet information when selling/rehoming a pet and/or moving in the efforts of reuniting pets with their appropriate owners in a timely matter.

Loretta Hyde explained that El Paso was selected to participate in a hot spot pilot program and requested data for dogs that have either been tested and/or have been impounded at shelter with distemper/parvovirus. Terry mentioned that once these hot spots are located, Animal Services will be able to provide education and vaccination clinics in those areas.

Barbara Candelaria inquired whether treatable dogs with parvovirus are being euthanized. Terry explained that he didn't have numbers available, however the shelter is currently over capacity, leaving no space to isolate and treat these dogs therefore, Animal Services depends on fosters/rescue groups to administer treatment. Terry will provide parvovirus protocols and statistics for the next meeting. Dr. Gina Gagen inquired whether Animal Services and El Paso County Animal Welfare have seen any changes in owner-surrenders and/or live release rate since the implementation of the Safe Outdoor Dog Act. Lauralei Combs explained that she doesn't have any statistics at the moment and her officers do not accept owner surrenders. The officers provide resources such as proper tethering, igloo shelters, microchips, vaccinations and free spay/neuter to pet owners out in the field which helps owners keep their pets.

C. El Paso County Animal Welfare Department March update.

Lauralei Combs mentioned that there was a significant decrease of county impoundments at Animal Services. In March 2022 there were 99 compared to 497 2019. She is very proud of her officers and they continue finding ways on how not to take more animals to Animal Services. She has also been actively trying to open a spay/neuter clinic to prevent over capacity once the county opens their own shelter. The county is also looking into supporting the Graduate Veterinarians from Juarez, Mexico in passing the Education Commission for Foreign Veterinarians Graduate Certification Course to work as vet techs under Dr. Medina. The county clinics transferred 99 animals, returned to owner 29, 18 spays, 28 neuters, 63 rabies and 125 wellness vaccinations were administered and 42 pets were microchipped.

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The county took in 223 animals and 95 went to either a rescue group, foster and/or adopted.

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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.

A1. Continued discussion and action on the high euthanasia for behavior issues in dogs.

Barbara Candelaria gave a recap of last meeting's discussion on the high euthanasia due to behavior. She explained that Ramon emailed the animals and reasons in question to the ASAC after last month's meeting. She inquired on how the situation was going to be handled and whether more training is needed. Celeste Varela also asked whether there is accountability for these animals and if staff is appropriately trained to make the decision to euthanize.

Terry Kebschull explained that there are concerns with behavior and disease at the shelter. There are dogs that react differently towards staff and/or volunteers and certain dogs won't get along with any other dog, no matter where they are placed. Staff takes into consideration all the information provided by other staff that have handled these dogs. Animal Services also reaches out to rescue groups to assist with the mentally declining dogs. As far as he knows, cats with ringworm have not been euthanized, on the contrary, staff is currently treating kittens with ringworm. Terry added that Animal Services is considering making the best decisions for the rest of the population and community.

Celeste inquired whether Animal Services reaches out to rescue groups to help distress animals displaying behavior issues. Terry explained that Animal Services does reach out for different types of situations and discloses behavior history for potential adopters.

Loretta Hyde inquired about how many dogs and breed types have been at the shelter for more than six months and were they given behavior evaluations. Terry explained that currently Animal Services has one enrichment coordinator and he would get the information requested.

Sandy DiFrancesco asked whether Animal Services would continue to transport with the Bissell Foundation and My Dog is my Copilot. Terry explained that next week he will be reaching out to reestablish partnerships and he will also be implementing protocols to send out the healthiest pets.

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Celeste suggested looking into contracting trainers to help with evaluations until new staff is hired.

Loretta Hyde mentioned that with the amount of animals at the shelter, making an accurate behavior evaluation by one person is extremely difficult. Eric Gutierrez added that he would run the discussion by purchasing, but it might be more of a budget issue.

Terry mentioned that the training goes along with the Animal Services Strategic Plan Goal 6 and will work in bringing in-house training for employees.

Barbara also suggested looking into Police and Ft. Bliss dog trainers as well, and she would like to place item A1 on next month's agenda for further discussion.

A2. Q/A for new Director from ASAC

Barbara Candelaria placed this item for ASAC members who might have questions for the new Animal Services director, Terry Kebschull.

Barbara asked several questions:

What are your goals to keep Animal Services from deviating from no-kill?

Terry explained that his goal are the six goals set in the Animal Services Strategic Plan. There is not one reason as to why animals are being euthanized rather it's about looking at the community as a whole. Animal Services is not only about the shelter or no-kill, it's also on how to get the message out on education, disease prevention, cruelty prevention, enforcement, spay/neuter, responsible pet ownership and obtaining data for interpretation.

How will you recruit more veterinarians to the El Paso area?

Terry explained the he would work with Animal Services and the City to find out what types of opportunities and incentives are available for veterinarians and reach out to universities. He would sell El Paso for its friendly community and the great quality of life.

How will you be more transparent and built trust amongst the ASAC, City Council and the public?

Terry explained that he would be more transparent through communication, he will listen, lead and make improvements where needed while focusing in the no-kill goal.

A3. Discussion and action on the final drafts of the ASAC strategic Plan and By-laws.

Regina Wagner explained that sub-committees for the By-Laws and the Strategic Plan were assembled to update the existing ones. After reaching out to the clerk's office, she was informed that both documents had not been updated on the website, therefore the ASAC had to still abide by the 2019 by-laws in which the ASAC was still not in compliance with Chapter 823 of the Health and Safety Code. Regina added that the ASAC had not offered

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guidance to the shelters for inspections. Celeste explained that she was sure that she had emailed the final draft that was approved on November 2021. Celeste will email the final draft to secretary for signatures and posting.

Regina Wagner motioned and Barbara Candelaria seconded to update the By-laws and Strategic Plan on the City website and give a copy to committee members; all members voted in favor, none opposed and motion passed unanimously

A4. Discussion and action on the ASAC Annual Report

Regina Wagner inquired whether the Annual Report was presented to City Council. Celeste mentioned that it was not. She added that she would talk to Alexsandra Annello about preparing a draft for next month's meeting.

Regina Wagner motioned and Loretta Hyde seconded for Celeste Varela to speak with Chair Annello on preparing a draft of the Annual Report for discussion at the May's meeting; all members voted in favor, none opposed and motion passed unanimously

A5. Discussion and action on the section 823 of the Texas Health and Safety Code; status of shelters Tabled for the May meeting

6. Future Agenda Item

Item A1

Item A5

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM

Dr. Patricia Riley motioned to adjourn; Karen Polanco 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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