



El Paso Animal Services

MAYOR
Oscar Leaser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee
Minutes
April 14, 2021

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 virtually by Chair Julie Rutledge at 6:05 PM.

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
Vacant		
Julie Rutledge	X	
Alexandra Annello	X	

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

CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

2. Approval of Minutes

Discussion and action on approval of minutes for March 10, 2021.

Barbara Candelaria motioned to accept the March 10, 2021 minutes; Alexsandra Aneello seconded; all members voted in favor, 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. Department of Animal Services March update and statistics

Ramon Herrera explained that March was a challenging month that involved illness and disease. Animal Services will be reaching out to the community on prevention. The El Paso Animal Services Strategic Goals have served as a guide to the life

Ramon Herrera – Interim Director

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saving mission for the last three years and will soon be revisited for any updates and/or revisions this calendar year. The Animal Protection Officers have returned to the pre-pandemic priority respond system. He also explained how the Found Reports work: A report is filed for friendly strays held by the public while EPAS staff works on finding the owners. Data collected since July 2020, has identified that 38% of pets have been reunited with their owners through the found reports compared to 16%-18% by the old system. The intake for March was 1,361 compared to 1,384 while the outcome was 1,190, which were few, considering the shelter is currently housing about 700 animals. Animal Services has reached out to partner groups to assist, like Best Friends and transports are also scheduled to reduce the inventory. Ramon explained that the main goals are to get pets home and to give every animal an opportunity for a live outcome. Fosters have also stepped up to help with litters of puppies and kittens during the increase of disease. There were 17 animals with distemper that were euthanized in March. He explained that every animal is vaccinated at intake and kept in the barn before joining the rest of the population to prevent cross contamination. From the died-in-care, 14 died from failure to thrive. The LRR was 88.78% for March and Ramon credited staff for their efforts in maintaining animals healthy. The Fiscal year LRR was 91.59% and the Animal Shelter Count was 88.78% compared to 84.84% for last year.

Ramon Herrera presented the PAW Cast.

Ramon added that there's been success with the in-person adoption pilot program held Tuesday-Saturday from 1-4 pm.

Barbara Candelaria inquired about future drive-thru vaccination clinics. Ramon explained that there is currently no time frame for this type of clinics, however he would like to have one in mid summer.

B. El Paso County Animal Welfare Department March update

No report

C. Chair Report

Julie Rutledge informed the committee that the ASAC 2020 annual report was submitted to Mayor and City Council.

D. ASAC Committee Reports

a. By Laws Committee

Celeste Varela mention that the committee will meet next week and present report on next month's meeting.

b. Strategic Plan Committee

Sandra Difrancesco explained that the committee met and discussed the 7 keys areas of the Strategic Plan with possibly adding an 8th. The committee is recommending some revisions, to include a two-year plan from 2022-2024. More discussion during Item B2.

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4. Call to the public

None

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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 contact and follow-up with TXDOT and EPAS/ESD on scanning dead animals removed from the roads

Ramon Herrera, interim Director for Animal Services explained that ESD has microchip scanners and a program in place to pick up dead animals requested by owners and from city streets. Animal Services and ESD are coordinating on how to share microchip information once again. Animal Services staff will be tasked in obtaining owner information and notifying them to give owners that piece of mind. Karen Polanco asked whether pet owners can be called before taking them to the landfill and can someone make sure these pets have perished. Ramon explained that this might not be the best practice due to health and safety issues and there are also challenges in preserving these bodies due to the decomposition process. Regina added that this is a similar item that she placed on the January 2019 agenda where two motions were made: to create a data base from the dead animal reports generated by the ESD app in order to notify owners immediately and to get scanners for TXDot. Ramon explained that he would like to incorporate the ESD app with the Pet Finder Map, however trying to confirm ownership promptly will be challenging. Regina suggested adding the category of clipped ear to the data base. Julie Rutledge will continue to reach out to TXDot since they were unable to attend.

A2. Discussion and action on ordinances related to hitting an animal with a vehicle

Julie Rutledge mentioned that she has reach out to the Animal Cruelty Unit for input in city ordinances, however due to mandatory trainings, they were unable to attend.

Karen Polanco explained that she would like to know what local ordinances are related to hitting an animal and/or leaving it on the road since she was informed that there were laws in Texas and Arizona in regards to these types of situations. Alexsandra Annello added, that they need to check on misdemeanor laws in Texas since there are different involuntary vehicular traffic laws compared to Arizona.

B. Engage ASAC members on best practices in Animal Health & Welfare

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B1. Discussion and action on revisions to ASAC By-laws

Report will be presented on next month's meeting.

B2. Discussion and action on revisions to ASAC strategic plan

Sandra DiFrancesco explained that one of the subcommittee's recommendation is to have a 2-year Strategic Plan due to the uncertainty of the pandemic and they will be concentrating on the first four bullet points of the Key Focus Areas. On bullet point 1: *Support the City of El Paso's initiative to reach and sustain a 90% or greater live-release rate by 2020*, the subcommittee recommended deleting *reach* and *by 2020* and adding *working towards a no-kill community*. Regina Wagner mentioned that the revision will be contradictory since the 90% has not been reached and the ASAC Strategic Plan is supposed to be consistent with Animal Services' Strategic Plan. Ramon mentioned that EPAS measures the LRR by a 12-month period and their current fiscal year LRR is 91.59% measured from September 2020-March 2021. EPAS shares the monthly LRR for transparency and with the different challenges each month, the LRR will vary. Sandra suggested revisiting this focus area. In order to sustain the 90%, it will not only involve EPAS, but also include the community LRR, Julie Rutledge added. For bullet point 2: *Engage ASAC member on best practices in Animal health and Welfare*, the subcommittee's recommendation is to add *Technology*. Barbara Candelaria explained that it's not to hinder members that might be technologically challenged, but to offer support in learning a new form of communication. The recommendation for *Bullet point 3: Promote education and engagement in Animal Health and Welfare*, is to add *community before engagement*. Sandra explained that since the community has stepped up during these trying times, they should be included to continue the lifesaving efforts. Alexsandra Annello suggested adding the legislative part to the ASAC Strategic Plan to focus on specific items. Julie Rutledge suggested creating a legislative affairs subcommittee during the off season and Eric Gutierrez had no issues with the subcommittee creation. Celeste Varela had questions on the role of the subcommittee; Eric will follow-up with responses. Julie suggested continuing with bullet point 4 at next month's meeting.

B3. Discussion and action on educational topics for ASAC members

Julie Rutledge placed this item to bring forth future agenda items on educational topics. Item was skipped for next month's meeting.

6. Future Agenda Item

Subcommittee reports

Update to the scanning of dead animals that are removed from the roads

Update to ordinances related to hitting an animal with a vehicle

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7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM

Celeste Varela motioned to adjourn; Alexsandra Annello 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, appearing to read "John Rutledge", written over a horizontal line.

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