



El Paso Animal Services

MAYOR
Oscar Leoser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee Minutes July 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

CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

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	
Patricia Y. Riley	X	
Julie Rutledge	X	
Alexandra Annello	X	

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

2. Approval of Minutes

Discussion and action on approval of minutes for June 9, 2021

Representative Alexsandra Annello motioned to accept the June 9, 2021; Dr. Gina Gagen 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. Chair Report

Julie Rutledge mentioned that she was informed about the expiration of unexpired terms for a few members. Some of the members have already contacted their Representatives about continuing with ASAC. Julie is still working on wrapping things with The Humane Society of El Paso which will be at the end of July. Edgar Armendariz was named as the new Director of Programs.

Ramon Herrera – Interim Director

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

O: (915) 212-7297 | Email: EPAS@elpasotexas.gov



DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES



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B. El Paso Animal Services June update and statistics

With the high number of animals at the shelters during the peak season, Ramon Herrera mentioned that the theme for last month was to get as many animals out; Animal Services had a historical transport sponsored by the Bissell Pet Foundation. There are plans to update the Animal Services Strategic Plan sometime in November and it will include the input from staff and the ASAC. One of the items to be added is the services provided to the community outside the shelter. The intake for June was 1,222 compared to 2,806 in 2019. From the 1,222, 329 were kittens. A large number of cats from hoarding cases requiring immediate attention, added to the intake number. Currently the Socorro Rd facility is being used as emergency housing for several dogs. This created staffing challenges due to splitting staff between the two locations. There were 1,119 outcomes which included 268 adoptions in June. The shelter opened up again with its regular hours from 11AM to 6 PM and appointments are not required for adoptions. The public is strongly encouraged to stop by and search for their lost pets. Animal Services is striving to get everything back to normal by still following covid-19 guidelines now that 72% of the community is vaccinated with the first dose. The foster program currently has 684 animals in foster homes. There were 195 animals euthanized with 102 of them for infectious disease. Another mass vaccination clinic will take place sometime in August with The Bissell Pet Foundation providing the vaccines and microchips. The LRR for June was 80.67%, the number is a reflection of how distemper has affected the community dogs. The Fiscal Year LRR was 87.34% and the Shelter Animal Count was 80.67% compared to 87.26% in 2020.

Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program visited El Paso Animal Services from the University of Florida for an assessment. The assessment was for improvements and progress; a list of both is attached. Ramon Herrera presented the PAW CAST.

Julie Rutledge congratulated Animal Services for their life-saving efforts with the transport and their National recognition.

Karen Polanco mentioned that she would spread the word to the Real Estate Board and to Property Managers regarding assistance with pets and also would contact the Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau for assistance with arrangements to have veterinarians students visit El Paso.

C. El Paso County Animal Welfare Department June update

Lauralei Combs not present

4. Call to the public

None

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5. Main Agenda

A. Support the City of El Paso's initiative to reach and sustain a 90% or greater live-release rate by 2020.

A1. Discussion and action on the need of veterinarians to be hired for EPAS programs in order to achieve/maintain no kill

Regina Wagner explained that in order to achieve no kill, the two most important programs are: Targeted Spay/Neuter Services to reduce the number of dogs and cats entering the shelter, and Trap-Neuter-Release for community cats. She explained that the resources are currently not meeting the demands. These programs cannot be sustained with the shortage of veterinarians at Animal Services and throughout the community. She stated that the current situation calls for ASAC to show support for the animals in this community; by sending a letter to Mayor and City Council expressing the importance of bringing Veterinarians to the city by offering incentives. Ramon added that Animal Services interviewed two candidates for the position, however they declined. He also mentioned that Eric Bohm from the EPVMA informed him that the private clinics are in need of 22 veterinarians and has been working diligently on recruitment. There are future plans to have veterinarian students take a tour of El Paso during the spring and winter months before graduation. Barbara Candelaria added that the shortage is nationwide. Ramon also explained that Animal Services has budgeted for 2 veterinarians and also designated funds for contract veterinarians, however the challenge is to sell El Paso. Regina expressed that contract veterinarians also help support lifesaving programs for other organizations; this means that we are not helping additional animals, but spreading the current resources very thin. Alexsandra Annello mentioned that she could place an item on the city agenda regarding this topic and Ramon could update the ASAC on the outcome. Ramon explained that Animal Services has taken steps in finding incentives and has drastically increased their offers to bring veterinarians to El Paso. He also mentioned that he and Eric Bohm, each have a list of contacts to start organizing a stay in El Paso for these students.

Regina Wagner motioned and Celeste Varela seconded for ASAC to write a letter to Mayor and City Council to strongly support the effort, including additional incentives to encourage veterinarians to come to El Paso and work with Animal Services; all voted in favor with one nay; the motion passed.

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

B1. Discuss key take-aways from the Best Friends Conference

Julie Rutledge encouraged the ASAC to go over the Best Friends Conference sessions before the link expires at the of July.

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Julie Rutledge motioned and Kay Rosenkranz seconded to postponed items B2 and B3 for next month's meeting; all voted in favor and motion passed unanimously.

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B2. Discussion and action on draft of ASAC by laws

Tabled for next month

B3. Discussion and action on revisions to ASAC strategic plan

Tabled for next month

B4. Election of Chair

Julie Rutledge asked for nominations for Chair. Sandra Di Francesco nominated Celeste Varela however since she was not present, the nomination was not accepted.

Kay Rosenkranz nominated Representative Alexsandra Annello and she accepted. Sandra DiFrancesco seconded and all voted in favor.

6. Future Agenda Item

By-laws draft

Strategic Plan subcommittee

Ramon Herrera congratulated Julie Rutledge on her service to the El Paso Humane Society and the community.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM

Dr. Patricia Riley motioned to adjourn; Mary Kay Rosenkranz 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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El Paso Animal Services – June Assessment



UF Maddie's® Shelter Medicine Program

Improvements and progress includes but are not limited to:

- Many caring and dedicated staff and volunteers
- Excellent, creative, effective marketing
- Pets entering the shelter has steadily decreased since 2012
- Shelter pets euthanized has steadily decreased since 2012
- Many key ordinance revisions made
- Microchip scanners in all city fire stations
- Resource Rover Program
- Pet Finder map on website
- Community Cat Program in place for several years
- Community and Pet Support (CAPS) created in July 2020
- Using Adoptimize to capture better pictures of shelter dogs
- Staff veterinarian performing advanced life-saving surgeries
- Foster to Adopt program in place
- Low or no adoption fees
- New cat adoption center at the El Paso Zoo

Items to Improve / New Projects:

- Length of stay / capacity for care
- Home 2 Home – rehoming assistance
- Veterinarian recruitment / Surgery capacity
- Community Cat processing
- Spay/Neuter event
- Operational/population management processes
- Working Cat Program
- Expansion of adoption opportunities
- Foster processes
- Transports...

