



## Department of Animal Services

**Mayor**  
Dee Margo

### City Council

**District 1**  
Peter Svarzbein

**District 2**  
Alexandra Anello

**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 September 11, 2019

#### **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 6:05p.m. by Chair Ken Margherio.

Board Member A.S.A.C.	Present	Absent
Dr. Guy Johnsen	X	
Julie Rutledge	X	
Claudia Ordaz-Perez		X
Regina Wagner	X	
Yvonne Rosales	X	
Ken Margherio	X	
Mary Kay Rosenkranz	X	
Yansi Parent	X	
Barbara Candelaria	X	
Celeste Varela	X	
Edith Prado	X	

Animal Services staff present: Paula Powell, Maribel Karisch, Ramon Herrera, and Ana Schumacher

Public present: List of attendees available upon request.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes**

Discussion and action on the approval of the July 10, 2019 minutes.

**Guy Johnsen** motioned to accept the July 10, 2019 minutes; **Eydie Prado** seconded; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.

#### **3. Chairman Remarks**

welfare and expressed that it was great being part of the committee's no kill journey and was able to see the LRR go from 27% in 2014 to nearly 87% presently. He added that since the city's no kill policy in January 2016, over 70,000 animals have been saved. He wished Paula to continue with the good work that she's done so far and to sustain the 90% LRR. Ken was presented with an award for his dedicated service to ASAC. Eydie Prado took the chair and nominations for Vice-chair took place. Claudia Ordaz-Perez is the new vice-chair.



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**Motion was made by Celeste Varela to have Claudia Ordaz-Perez as vice-chair and seconded by Regina Wagner; all members voted in favor, and motion passed unanimously.**

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

**A. Member- Free Roaming Cats-**

Regina reported on how trappers have seen an increase of friendly cats. She explained that it's extremely important to educate the community on the struggles of the community cats that were once indoor cats. It's a sad and unforgiveable situation since these cats can't care for themselves and rely on human companions for food and shelter. In addition, they can be beaten up by street cats and injured by dogs. Education is vital and TNR is only part of the solution. The importance of spaying and neutering owned animals should be promoted because it doesn't matter how many free-roaming cats are TNRed, when the public is continuing to dump litters of kittens and abandon unaltered females. Sun City Cats are seeing the removal of kittens from their mothers quite often. This is unacceptable, Regina expressed; kittens should not be removed until they are age appropriate. They are also seeing the third cycle of kittens this year, so all free-roaming cats need to be TNRed. If the kittens are removed before the appropriate time, the mother cats will go into heat and the cycle begins all over again, therefore the community needs to be educated on the ramifications of removing kittens. Education on spaying/neutering is essential, not only for the TNR and community cats, but for owned animals as well. The cat population will continue to grow if owned animals aren't altered. Low cost spay/neuter services for owned animals is a critical component to a successful TNR program, because consequently community cats are the offspring of owned cats.

**B. Title 7 Subcommittee-Proposed Title 7 Amendments**

The Title 7 subcommittee held a very productive meeting which produced some changes to the first phase. There are plans to complete Phase I-Compliance by the end of the year. Phase II is the Grooming Ordinance and the Finder to Foster Program. Community meetings were previously held for the grooming ordinance and policy for the Finder to Foster program is in place. Phase III includes vicious dogs, tethering laws, and changes and/or updates to the community cats program. The subcommittee plans to hold another meeting after legal completes the changes. The updates to Phase I, will be presented at next month's ASAC meeting for final review before presenting to City Council.

**C. Rescue Agency/ Limited Shelter Report**  
**None**



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### D. County Report

Celeste Varela mentioned that county court has allocated \$193,000.00 this fiscal year towards the no kill efforts. The county is moving towards a full department while working with the sheriffs office and enforcement. The department will be placed under the Chief's administrative office for more transparency.

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Paula Powell explained how this budget year's changes are important to Animal Services and how the new fiscal year was planned around their strategic goals. Intake for August decreased to 2,379 compared to 2,556 in 2018 and 2,514 in 2017. The outcome for August was 2,562. Adoptions increased in July as they did in August with 1,020. The shelter euthanasia decreased for August at 167 compared to last year's with 253. A died-in-care increase has raised concern.

There are currently 713 fosters out. America's Pet's Alive came to the shelter and revamped the foster program for efficiency. Protocols for follow-ups and a foster page was created where fosters could post questions for quick responses. A foster parent training program was also implemented to help them have a better outcome since most of the died-in-care were from fosters.

Paula acknowledged Ken Margherio for his leadership and participation of the El Paso Animal Collaborative vaccine and microchip initiative where 1,643 vaccines and 1,262 microchips were administered from May through July. Paula added that she will be mentioning this ASAC's accomplishment at City Council.

The shelter euthanasia has decreased with 60 infectious, 43 on-infectious, 32 behavior, 25 trauma and 7 owner requested. The Director's report included a died-in-care breakdown by cat/dog died-in-shelter and died-in-foster. The died-in-shelter breakdown are 15 unknown, 13 failure to thrive, 4 contagious, 3 trauma and 1 non-contagious. The died-in-foster breakdown are 25 failure to thrive, 12 contagious, 4 trauma and 2 unknown. The died-in-care are a focal point at Animal Services to increase the LRR and staff is being more observant in reporting any medical issues to alert Dr. Canupp.

The LRR for August was the highest historically at 89.33%. The LRR for dogs was 90.96% and 87.45% for cats. The calendar year LRR was 86.56%. Paula mentioned that this September, Animal Services will be changing history; the LRR will not be below 80% ever again. DAS staff is focusing on September, ensuring that September's numbers don't decrease like in previous years. In order to improve the LRR, staff is looking at the adoption process, the died-in-care, an education program, RTO program, working with county and training Tigra with RTO's. The Fiscal year LRR is at 84.94%. The original target was 80%. DAS must focus on this fall in order to achieve the 90% by next year. The Shelter Animal Count is at 89.33% with 7.02% euthanasia rate for August compared to 88.03% last year.

Ramon Herrera presented the PAW CAST.

### 5. Call to the public

None





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### 6. Main Agenda

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

##### A1. **Presentation on Open Records and Open Meeting Act**

Ana Schumacher, assistant city attorney and assigned to ASAC, gave a presentation on Public Information Act and Open Meetings Act. She mentioned that all new members must complete the online video training within 90 days from appointment to ASAC committee. After completion, the certificate can be printed and sent to ASAC secretary. Those members that have already completed, don't have to retake the training.

She informed that there is more pressure to handle Open Records correctly through the last legislation. There are civil and criminal penalties if committee members fail to abide. She advised that in the event there is an open record request, the secretary will notify the committee, and members must immediately forward any information to ASAC secretary. Legal will determine whether the information is responsive.

Under the Open Meetings Act, a quorum consists of six members and under statutory guidelines for ASAC as well. She explained that even if there is a vacancy, the quorum is not reduced. The ASAC can have discussion, but can't take action, if a quorum is not met. She added that it's very important that members give notification of their absence to secretary.

Ana also explained that a meeting is the sharing or reporting of information and is always public. Members and the public are allowed to record the meetings. Some exceptions are social functions, ceremonial events and press conferences. She briefly went over the purpose of the agenda, which should be posted 72 hours prior to the meeting, have a date, hour, place and subjects to be discussed. The meeting place must be convenient for the public and within jurisdiction. Ana added that the ASAC agenda has to be more specific under the subjects to be discussed. The public is allowed to comment on agenda items, however, no action can be taken unless the comment is moved to a future agenda item.

##### A2. **ASAC Training and Introduction Program**

Paula Powell briefly explained that she has created a training program to give insight to new committee members regarding the ASAC. The training program categories will be added to the agenda and completed within a three months.

##### A3. **Discussion and action on EPWU update regarding cat colony property**

Regina Wagner gave an overview of the cat colony property. Paula Powell added that the property is currently in probate court and EPWU has backed out from purchasing the land. This will extend the time for a resolution. Motion was made by Regina Wagner to draft a letter to City Council in which Eydie Prado will assist.



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**Motion was made by Regina Wagner and seconded by Celeste Varela to draft a letter to city council concerning the cat colony welfare at the proposed EPWU water retention site; all members voted in favor, none opposed, and motion passed unanimously.**

### **A4. Discussion on Canine Parvo Virus**

Dr. Johnsen gave information on canine parvovirus also known as infectious diarrhea. The virus is highly resistant to environmental influences. Its original source is unknown. It started in the U.S. in 1978 and hit El Paso in 1980. There are 3 strains: 2A started in 1980, 2B in 1984 and 2C in 2000. The virus adapts to survive where it can reproduce in the body quickly. The spread of the virus is through contaminated feces. Rodents, insects can also spread it, however flies are probably the number one source. The virus is seasonal in fall and spring. The incubation period at onset takes 4 to 10 days and at a maximum of 14 days. The breeds that are more susceptible are Rottweilers, Pit Bulls, Doberman Pinchers, Labrador Retrievers, German Shepherds and Alaskan dogs. The virus enters through nasal contact and reproduces in the lymph nodes. It then spreads to the bloodstream and finally into the intestinal tract, hitting the villi where the cells reproduce quickly. Once the intestinal tract is affected, there's blood leakage which results in sepsis. Some of the symptoms include bloody diarrhea, vomiting, anorexia, dehydration and low grade fever. Pets should be taken to a veterinarian immediately because of the severity of the virus and to determine whether it's parvo. Once parvo is determined, hospital treatment for severe dehydration is quickly started to re-balance levels of electrolytes. Anti-nausea medication will also be administered as well as antibiotics. In some cases blood plasma transfusion might be given. Since parvo can survive in the soil for an extended period, decontamination is a crucial part of ensuring that it doesn't spread. Decontamination can be done, by mixing a bleach/water solution of 1:30 ratio. Dr. Johnsen added that the best prevention is vaccination and the vaccinations are administered in a series, starting at six, then nine, twelve and sixteen weeks.

## **B. Promote Education and Engagement in Animal Health and Welfare**

### **B1. Presentation on the Best Friends Conference**

Barbara Candelaria gave a presentation on the Best Friends National Conference that was held in July. She mentioned that compared to other cities, El Paso is at a national level in animal welfare. Some of the focus was on Data, Transparency and Dash Board during the workshops. She explained that one of the highlights for her was the Dash Board presentation in which involved the collection of data from all the United States, creating a map showing where each state stands in the no kill efforts. According to the map, Delaware is no kill. El Paso is between 80%-90% on the map. Edinburg, TX was the biggest improvement that went from 90% euthanasia rate to 60% LRR in one year. Several DAS staff members attended the conference and were excited to be nationally recognized.

Barbara explained that through the accessing data workshop, there was plenty that can be identified from collecting data. Data can be collected from knowing where



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these animals are coming from, who the major players are that can use this data, what programs are in place, new programs that are needed, the cost of the programs and how these programs are going to be implemented, ect. Since the main goal is to save lives, the data collected can be used to improve the LRR. Some improvements include finding ways on starting a community cats program, more adoption events, keeping animals longer at the shelter and maintaining a 70%-80% LRR, to name a few.

Maintaining the 90% LRR is as important as reaching it. She gave a few examples of what can be implemented: keeping animals out of the shelter, having more high volume spays and neuters, more volunteers and fosters.

Finally, there's transparency, and Barbara explained that it consists of facts, fiction fear, trust and keeping statistics for reference. She added that when there is transparency, the fiction and fear diminish and trust is ensured. She also mentioned that Paula Powell presents the Animal Services statistics at every meeting confirming transparency. Paula added that staff that attended the conference are currently working on an individual project in which she will include in next month Director's report.

7. **Future Agenda Items**

Fiscal report for next month

Title 7 subcommittee- Phase one regarding Boarding Facilities

Discussion on the importance of cleaning up after dogs in public places and parks.

8. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM

**Regina Wagner motioned to adjourn; 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to the A.S.A.C. Chairman, is written over a horizontal line.