



El Paso Animal Services

MAYOR
Oscar Leeser

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee Minutes September 8, 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 Alexsandra Annello at 6:03 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	
Loretta Hyde	X	
Alexandra Annello	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 August 11, 2021

Loretta Hyde motioned to accept the August 11, 2021; 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

Ramon Herrera – Interim Director

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B. El Paso Animal Services August update and statistics

Ramon Herrera explained that August was a busy month with the steady intakes. The Strategic Plan will be updated towards the end of 2021 and will include the services to the public that Animal Services provides. The intake for August was 1,658 which included two cases involving cats that had to be owner surrendered. There were 1,296 outcomes and there are currently 800 animals in shelter. Adoptions have continued to decrease; August 2021 had 376 compared to 1,020 in 2019. Ramon mentioned that other shelters are experiencing low adoption rates as well. Animal Services will host Clear the Shelter event, later in September. There are currently 896 fosters out, however with fifty dogs being at the shelter for longer than six months, more fosters and volunteers have stepped up. The top two reasons for euthanasia remain to be trauma with 39 and infectious with 55. The LRR for August was 88.75% in spite of all the traumas and hoardings. The Fiscal Year LRR was 87.25% and Ramon thanked the partners from The Bissell Foundation and Dog is my Co-Pilot for all their support with the transfers. The Shelter Animal Count for 2021 was 88.75% compared to 89.14% in 2020. He went over the Community and Pet Support program (CAPS) for August: there were 86 pets were returned to their owners without impoundment 1,658 total intakes, 366 no appointment intakes and 758 field intakes. Ramon thanked City Council for approving the shelter expansion project that will have housing for large breeds and a much needed medical designated isolation area.

Ramon Herrera presented the PAW cast.

Alexsandra Annello thanked the public for their support on having the Animal Services project funding approved.

Gina Gagen inquired about an all-around Animal Services Fall Festival.

Ramon explained that he will contact Recreation and Rec about organizing an event. There are currently plans to have a microchip clinic with the City of Socorro and the Tigua Animal Control.

Loretta Hyde inquired about whether the 896 fosters will have surgeries. Ramon explained that some will, but the majority won't; some fosters are kittens and may not be of age and Animal Services is behind on the surgeries. Dr Cannup is performing surgeries 4 days a week with Dr. Flossy and Dr. Cane is assisting with TNR.

Ramon added that Animal Services will partake in the Petsmart adoption event at the Fountains of Farrah on October 12-14.

C. El Paso County Animal Welfare Department August update.

Lauralei Combs congratulated Animal Services for the shelter expansion that City Council approved. She also mention that county is in the final run for the approval of three new officers and trucks. This will allow officers to stay connected to the community a year at a time. The meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2021. Petco donated 300 vaccines to the department and they will

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be used at the clinic for owned pets. The clinic is scheduled for sometime in November in the Far East off Montana Vista. The clinic will be in collaboration with Dr. Medina. She also mentioned the re-classification of officer Crystal Reyes to a managerial position.

4. Call to the public

Letty Benitez

Marcia Margherio

5. Main Agenda

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

A1. Discussion and action on the revisions to ASAC Strategic Plan

Sandra DiFrancesco and Alexsandra Anello went over the recommended changes of the Strategic Plan. The final draft will be presented at next month's meeting for approval.

A2. Discussion on the pros and cons of the HASS Program

Loretta Hyde explained that the reason for this item is due to the various concerns from rescue groups throughout the past year and they wanted their concerns heard by the ASAC and possibly taken to City Council. She explained that the only pro of HAAS, is less intake. She also went over the cons of HASS. Before HASS, the rescue groups had more RTOs, adoptions and intakes with high release rates. Once Animal Services implemented HAAS, there were more loose animals, more litters, disease, animals hit by cars and a large number of abandonment cases. The public is posting all found and lost animals on Facebook with some finders unable to hold on to the pets. She also mentioned that financially the Rescue Groups cannot take the slack and are overwhelmed with so many intakes. She also mentioned that for 40 years, she has always known to take a stray to Animal Services where the owners can go search. In some situations the pets owners' are found, but there are those cases where the pets are given away because the finders weren't able to keep the animals, which is causing a ripple effect for those animals that are not taken in by Animal Services. Loretta added that the HAAS program is not allowing for options and is not fair for animal welfare and the entire community. She suggested working together to find a solution. Barbara Candelaria explained that while researching over different shelter Strategic Plans, she found that many shelters are euthanizing for space and the HAAS program is supposed to help. Alexsandra Anello explained that the expansion project should be completed by FY22 and intakes at Animal Services are without an appointment.

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She added that as a committee, they need to come up with ways on how to bring the shelters together. Regina Wagner went over several positive points about the HAA Program: Decreases the length of stay, improves morale for shelter employees, increases the return to owners, keeps people and animals together, reduces intakes and reduces the number of dogs that are housed together. She expressed to give the program a chance and work together since EPAS is being watched nationally. Gina Gagen mentioned to work together by beginning where the problem started which involves spaying, neutering and vaccinating. Ramon added that if a program doesn't work, then it won't be done, however the programs need to get a chance and there were recent changes that were made at Animal Services due to the public's concerns. Alexandra Annello mentioned how Animal Services found creative ways to perform their daily operations during the covid-19 closure, while other city facilities were closed.

6. Future Agenda Item

Strategic Plan

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM

Dr. Gina Gagen motioned to adjourn; Stephanie Frias 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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