



**Animal Shelter Advisory Committee
Minutes
April 15, 2015**

Mayor
Oscar Leeser

City Council

District 1
Ann Morgan Lilly

District 2
Larry Romero

District 3
Emma Acosta

District 4
Carl L. Robinson

District 5
Dr. Michiel R. Noe

District 6
Claudia Ordaz

District 7
Lily Limón

District 8
Cortney C. Niland

City Manager
Tommy Gonzalez

1. A meeting of the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee was held at the Conference Room at the Animal Services Shelter and was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Bob Melson Chairperson.

Board Member A.S.A.C.	Present	Absent
Peggy Edman	X	
Dr. Guy Johnsen	X	
Patricia Gonzalez		X
Betty Hoover		X
Linda Krasowski	X	
Marcia Margherio	X	
Robert Melson	X	
Rep. Ann Morgan-Lilly	X	
Regina Wagner	X	
Barbara Candelaria	X	

Environmental Services staff present: Ellen Smyth, Maribel Karisch

Public present: List of attendees available upon request.

2. Discussion and action on the approval of the ASAC March 11, 2014 minutes.

Committee members were asked if there were any questions or revisions.

Motion made by Linda Krasowski and seconded by Marcia Margherio to accept the March 11, 2014 minutes with corrections.

Ayes: Robert Melson, Linda Krasowski, Barbara Candelaria, Marcia Margherio, Peggy Edman, Regina Wagner, Dr. Guy Johnsen, Ann Mogan-Lily

Nays: None

3. Discussion, Action and Revisions on the Plan to Reduce Euthanasia

Robert Melson explained that each member would have 5 minutes to voice their problems, concerns and questions on the Plan to Reduce Euthanasia. The committee would then vote after all members presented.

- a. Marcia Margherio mentioned that the plan to reduce euthanasia is good, however in addition to all that's included in the plan, she would like to not only work to improve the shelter, raise adoption rates or increase spaying /neutering, but to see a renewed commitment to reject the killing of healthy adoptable animals. She would also like to see a clear directive from City Council to Animal Services staff to reduce the killing of healthy adoptable animals by implementing programs and policies related to reducing the intake and increasing the live outcome of shelter animals. Regina Wagner added that Animal Services is not a housing unit and the plan does include foster care, TNR, and spay/neuter in the efforts to reduce euthanasia. Linda Krasowski expressed that Ms. Margherio's suggestion could be used as a mission statement. Marcia Margherio added that she would like to have her wording added to the plan.
- b. Ann Morgan Lily declined to add any input to the discussion however Ellen Smyth explained that they met, discussed the report and submitted their comments. Ellen advised that the report could use an executive summary/ appendix and the rest could be used as a resource. She suggested that the report could be organized in different groups such as: what is already being done, what should be done more, what needs to follow the budget, what we don't do anymore, and where we need more budget, etc. She also mentioned that the ideas are solid and Marcia's request could be incorporated as an introductory long term vision to the report.
- c. Peggy Edman expressed that the report was very well put together, although she had concerns. One of the concerns was whether Animal Services staff was ever given the opportunity and tools, such as personnel and budget, for such programs. She asked the committee to be more specific in the programs to be implemented. Her other concern was whether the licensing would be effective or will it have more citizens avoiding registering and vaccinating their pets.

- d. Regina Wagner expressed that the subcommittee did an amazing job on all the research. She explained that the plan is not a report and was not intended to be presented to city council as is. The plan consists of ideas of what other cities are doing, what can be done and different solutions to help reduce the euthanasia rate. The plan is not only intended for Animal Services but for the whole community in order for it to work. She added that her concern was whether all committee members are on the same page regarding the presentation of the plan. Linda Krasowski expressed that she would like to have City Council endorse the plan and move forward. Robert Melson suggested making a recommendation of the plan to City Council and Regina Wagner expressed to make it clear as far as what the committee will be presenting to City Council. Barbara Candelaria suggested having the working plan condensed to a three minute presentation, to include what other cities are doing and have City Council help in implementing the plan. Ellen explained that City Manager Tommy Gonzalez has strategic business reviews for agenda items on Wednesday afternoons before presenting to City Council. Ellen also advised that the presentation has to be made in 10 slides. Barbara thanked Catherine Fagan and the rest of the subcommittee members for a great job done.
- e. Dr. Guy Johnsen expressed that the plan is great resource material, but, it's not a good presentation for a government entity. He explained that the plan would be implemented by the Department Director not City Council. In spite of the continuation of the never ending problem of euthanasia, the City of El Paso has seen many positive changes he added. He also gave an overview of the changes within Animal Services and the different types of euthanasia methods used to date: From carbon monoxide by a car engine, to gas carbon monoxide and now lethal injection. There was only one rescue group which was the Humane Society and now there are six. Dr. Guy Johnsen also expressed that the best thing that happened in the state of Texas in 2001 was when the Texas Legislation passed a law mandating all rescue adoption agencies to spay/neuter all dogs and cats. Adoptions started at Animal Services about 20 years ago. He also mentioned how successful TNR has been. The City of El Paso has seen progression and positive changes within Animal Services and yet the negative still exist. He suggested that the committee has to make it clear that this problem is at the level of

ownership and they need to deal with the problem. He advised that the internal process of the working plan will work with the continuation of public education.

- f. Barbara Candelaria explained her role in the creation of the working plan. She mentioned that she was assigned to compare cities, the surveys from animal services and a portion of Title 7 pertaining to ASAC. In comparing cities, she mentioned that it took San Antonio a year to go from 90% constant kill to 60% live release. Other cities offered a variety of programs such as TNR, spay/neuter, fostering, vouchers, door to door education, free shot clinics and rescue groups having a great relationship with Animal Services. Barbara Candelaria suggested to have the working plan condensed and to have everyone work out their differences in order to move forward. Ann Morgan-Lily suggested having ASAC work on promoting a program similar to a program at Western Hill Elementary School where a teacher is teaching the kinder, first and second graders on how to take care of their pets.

- g. Linda Krasowski mentioned that the working plan is a good start and they need to move forward with it. ASAC needs to be part of the budget process and now is the time to make requests. She made several suggestions to the working plan: To add a 501 (c)(3) component to the organization, creating a pay pall button on the Animal Services website to make donations, adding the Socorro low cost spay/neuter clinic to year 1 of the plan, to have an adequate animal shelter software system for tracking the disposition of all animals entering the shelter and printing reports as requested by ASAC, City Council and other government entities, to look into other progressive cities on best practices in lowering the euthanasia rate and on improving operational practices and to establish off-site adoption locations with necessary staff at different locations of the city. Barbara Candelaria advised that Cindy Foyt from Simon Malls is offering all rescue groups an opportunity to set up for adoptions at Sunland Park and Cielo Vista Malls.

- h. Robert Melson expressed that the plan is good even though it's only the framework for the plan. The plan might not be the ideal "NO KILL" philosophy, nonetheless, if the plan can help reduce the euthanasia rate by 10%, 20%, 30% or 40% as long as

euthanasia is reduced that's what is important, he added. Robert Melson also advised that since ASAC is not an action organization, they will have to present the plan to City Council for action or not. Linda Krasowski suggested first approving the working plan and then working on the presentation to City Council.

Motion: Motion was made by Ann Morgan-Lily and seconded by Linda Krasowski to approve this plan.

Ayes: Robert Melson, Linda Krasowski, Ann Morgan-Lily, Regina Wagner, Barbara Candelaria, Marcia Margherio, Peggy Edman, Dr. Guy Johnsen

Nays: None

4. Call to Public

- a. Member of the public Barbara Valencia mentioned that the first step to reduce euthanasia is to bring in a compassionate Director to Animal Services that will be on board with "No KILL", on board with reducing euthanasia, on board with the plan and who will stand to fight until the plan gets implemented.
- b. Member of the public Patricia Johnsen inquired about the statistics. Robert Melson advised Patricia Johnsen that it was not the appropriate time for this topic. Ellen Smyth advised her to make an appointment with her.
- c. Member of the public Ron inquired about the new 25 diesel trucks that cost \$74,500. Ellen Smyth advised that the trucks are required by state law to be air conditioned. Robert Melson advised to take this discussion for a later time.
- d. Member of the public Dawn commented that it's the first time in 15 years that an ASAC committee is moving in a positive direction. She inquired about why citizens have to qualify for the vouchers. Dr. Guy Johnsen explained that the vouchers are from a grant and grants have specifications on how they have to be managed.
- e. Member of the public Catherine Fagan recommended approaching City Council with achievable specific items as mentioned at a previous meeting instead of presenting a compressed version of the plan

5. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:48 was made by Dr. Guy Johnsen and seconded by Peggy Edman.

Prepared by: Maribel Karisch

Approved by A.S.A.C. Chairman


