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Animal Shelter Advisory Committee

Minutes

September 14, 2016

1. A meeting of the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee was held at the City Council Chambers and was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Bob Melson-Chairperson.

Board Member A.S.A.C.	Present	Absent
Peggy Edman	X	
Dr. Guy Johnsen	X	
Cecilia Carpio	X	
Betty Hoover		X
Catherine Fagan	X	
Marcia Margherio	X	
Robert Melson	X	
Rep. Dr. Michiel Noe		X
Regina Wagner	X	
Barbara Candelaria	X	
Janet Nutt	X	

Animal Services staff present: Kurt Fenstermacher, Marilyn Christensen, Maribel Karisch

Public present: List of attendees available upon request.

2. **CONSENT AGENDA-APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Discussion and action on the approval of ASAC August 10, 2016 minutes.

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

Motion made by Dr. Guy Johnsen and seconded by Cecilia Carpio to accept the August 10, 2016 minutes.

Kurt Fenstermacher – Interim Director
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“Delivering Outstanding Services”



Ayes: Dr. Guy Johnsen, Robert Melson, Barbara Candelaria, Cecilia Carpio, Peggy Edman, Catherine Fagan, Regina Wagner, Marcia Margherio, Janet Nutt

Nays: None

**3. CONSENT AGENDA-REPORTS
Reports of Special (Select and Ad Hoc) committees**

a. Free Roaming Cats

Regina Wagner mentioned that Sun City Cats would like to help educate the public on the purpose and aspiration of the National Feral Cat Day. This day was launched to make the public aware of the Free Roaming Cats, also known as Community Cats, to promote TNR, empower and mobilize compassionate people who care for these cats. Sun City Cats feels it's extremely important for El Paso to participate in this event which will be held on October 16, 2016. As in previous years, El Paso has been nationally recognized for their participation and in making a community change. This year's event will be a milestone with the new ordinance changes and the Animal Services Community Cats Program. There are different events scheduled however the big event is on October 15th and 16th. Sun City Cats and Animal Services will be trying to TNR 120 cats on two days as part of their participation on National Feral Cat Day. The City of El Paso's participation is especially important this year since the city is moving in a positive direction which allows for its citizens and the nation to know that the city cares about animal welfare.

Motion: Regina Wagner motioned and Catherine Fagan for ASAC to endorse our recommendation and participating in the National Feral Cat day, not only on that day but throughout the month as we have in previous years.

Ayes: Dr. Guy Johnsen, Catherine Fagan, Janice Nutt, Marcia Margherio, Robert Melson, Regina Wagner, Peggy Edman, Cecilia Carpio, Barbara Candelaria

Nays: None

b. Public Education, Outreach and Responsible Ownership

Barbara Candelaria sent out two flyers to all ASAC members. One of the flyers is for Halloween pet safety from last year which she will be updating.



The other flyer is a draft for vaccination awareness like Rabies and Parvo/Distemper.

Barbara Candelaria also mentioned that there has been confusion on the 1-year and 3-year rabies vaccinations. Some pet owners get confused as to when they need to return for registration. Dr. Johnsen explained that both vaccines are legal.

Barbara has sent the flyer with the correct logo and suggested to use in conjunction with the Animal Services' spay/neuter and vaccination clinic flyers.

c. Community Cats Task Force update

Dr. Guy Johnsen explained that the Ad Hoc Committee met and went over different topics: the history, definitions, what the community wants as far as a program or standardized plan. The committee will be meeting at Animal Services Conference Room on September 21, 2016 at 6:30 The public and other ASAC members are invited to attend the meetings. He asked the public to stand and address any positive feedback and solutions to the El Paso TNR process. There were none.

Marcia Margherio inquired about the objective of the Ad Hoc Community Cats Committee and the difference between the current TNR program that the city is implementing. Dr. Johnsen mentioned that the program isn't implemented by the city but Sun City Cats is involved in a TNR process. Regina added that the TNR program has been around for the last 30 years as a national organization, Sun City Cats didn't recreate it. The Community Cats Program from Animal Services and Sun City Cats efforts started in June. Dr. Johnsen explained that the committee is looking at the TNR process from a business plan point of view to develop a standardized process. Kurt Fenstermacher added that the TNR Ad Hoc committee piece is from the three goals that were set at the strategic planning meeting that took place in July. The three goals were brought back to ASAC to move forward in the general community. The TNR piece is to improve the welfare of cats. Robert Melson added that the goals were based on including other stakeholders other than ASAC.

Catherine Fagan explained that the ad hoc committee is in support of the current TNR program and is asking if the stakeholders need any kind of help to move the program forward.

Catherine Fagan also mentioned that the three goals which are community cats, spay and neuter and rabies vaccination etc., were created in the efforts to reduce the euthanasia rate. ASAC will not micromanage any one group or program, however it will assist the community, she added.



4. Call to the Public

- a. Public member Linda Krasowski continued to have concerns about the sick animals that are being adopted. In last month's ASAC meeting, she mentioned there were 55 returned sick adopted animals with no medical reasons. The medical treatment report, that she requested, was incomplete and unclear. She asked Dr. Waldrop to inspect the shelter and received a report that only included the cleaning policy in place. The report didn't include the viewing of the training or cleaning being done. Linda expressed that there is no transparency regarding the cleaning of the shelter or trucks. She also mentioned that she firmly believes that disease is being brought into the shelter and it's being allowed to infect other animals. Another concern is the cat's and dog's euthanasia rate: 389 cats were euthanized in July and 356 were euthanized in August and the reasons for euthanizing these cats have either been sick or injured. The cats' intake numbers from January to July increased by 28% and euthanasia increased 30%. The dogs' intake increased by 26% and euthanasia increased by 49% during the same time. She added that there is nothing in the report that shows there is a problem at the shelter and ASAC needs to pay attention to what's going on. Robert Melson explained that ASAC doesn't have management or oversight of the shelter. Linda Krasowski suggested having free Parvo/ Distemper vaccination clinics every weekend.
- b. Public member Patricia Johnsen mentioned that there is a huge problem with distemper/parvo that is spreading in the community and she hasn't seen this problem being addressed. She suggested that the Parvo/Distemper vaccinations and spay/neuter should be free. There are citizens that aren't able to afford the \$25.00 spay/neuter fee, she added. She explained why not provide vaccinations for these cats rather than euthanizing 2/3 of cats being impounded. There has been improvement but nothing significant. ASAC should be informing their representative about the problem.
- c. Public member Loretta Hyde from Animal Rescue informed ASAC that they are having the first free Parvo/distemper vaccination clinic on October 1st from 8 am to 12 pm on the east side at the Jail Annex on 12501 Montana. The clinic will be for 100 vaccinations. She will also be part of the TNR/Community Cats Ad Hoc committee and she mentioned that there's a lot of room for improvement with education being a priority in moving the program forward.



5. REGULAR AGENDA

New Business-Main Discussion of Meeting

a. **Discussion and action on the Title 7 Ordinance Revision**

Kurt Fenstermacher presented a list of suggestions from Joe Grindstaff to ASAC members. The recommendations were brought forth due to a dog vs. dog incident where one of his dogs was killed by a roaming dog that jumped into his yard. Mr. Grindstaff addressed his issue to City Council Representatives. Kurt mentioned that he would like to add this portion to Title 7 which currently doesn't address dog vs. dog attacks. Kurt is asking ASAC to endorse the concept to protect owned animals from owned animal attacks to strengthen Title 7. He asked ASAC members to review the suggestions and then he will have the city's specific section for discussion.

b. **Animal Services Monthly Operations and Statistics Report**

Kurt Fenstermacher mentioned that the Texas Humane Legislative Network is planning on collecting El Paso community input for their next legislative session. The topics for discussion will be anti-tethering and anti-cruelty laws. The date and time is pending and the public is invited

Kurt Fenstermacher gave an update for the month of August: Since the approval of the five-year plan by City Council in February, several staffing positions were added for year one. The funding became available September 1st with 8 positions: Surrender prevention clerk, an additional adoption counselor, one Animal Care Attendant, two veterinary technicians, a training specialist, an Off-site Rescue Transfer Coordinator, who will be using an old 2002 dental clinic van with 19,000 miles to transport animals out of El Paso. The \$45,000 of the \$90,000 grant from Petco will be used as supporting revenue for the Off-site adoption supervisor and related expenses and the other \$45,000 is to off-set the free adoptions.

Since the start of the adoption program in January 2016, there have been 4180 adoptions with no less than 400 animals adopted per month. The month of July had 724 adoptions.

Some of the summer promotions included: *Clear the Shelter* with 171 adoptions *Fixed and Free* 174, *Dog and Cats day of Summer*, *Back to School Buddy*, *Welcome Home your New MVP*.

Animal Services has a new partnership with Clint ISD. There are 27 students who assist the shelter and Socorro spay/neuter surgical team. Another partnership, on the works, is with Southwest University's business administration program which will help with the clerical section.

The Socorro spay/neuter Clinic is operating 2 days a week and is moving to 3 days a week in October. The total spay/neuter surgeries for the shelter are 8,818 and for Socorro 255. Animal Services is working on hiring the fourth veterinarian.

Animal Services is going to participate in the Barn Cat Program through a small



grant. The program will include businesses, warehouses that have cat over-population problems. The program will help with trapping and spay/neuter in order to manage the colony.

The new hours of operation for the shelter will have a consistent schedule which is 11am to 6 pm from Monday to Sunday.

There have been 1782 community cats processed since January 2016. In July there were 256 and in August the total was 299.

The Field Operations has more time to educate the public since they are no longer picking up cats unless they are sick or injured. They are also helping find the owners of lost livestock, and the result was no livestock impoundments in 3 months.

Sheriff's office is coming aboard with the Community Cats Program.

The State law has changed concerning all raccoons and foxes. They are to be returned back to nature if they haven't been involved in an exposure.

Animal Services has received several grants: Petco Foundation-\$90,000, Maddie's Foundation -\$500.00, Barn Cat Program Apprenticeship-\$1,500 for the training of The Community Cats Coordinator, Dog's Playing for Life-Training apprenticeship, Texas Department of State Health Services for spay/ neuter voucher program-\$18,000

Kurt Fenstermacher explained the Shelter Animals Count Report. The report template and website was created by a national organization for shelters. This one-way tracking system will compare numbers with other shelters. Animal Services is part of the 2500 shelters enrolled. The report will include all animals in the department, not only the shelter. The live release rate for August was 59% and the euthanasia rate was 56%.

c. Discussion and action on the El Paso Community Vaccination-Rabies control Program (follow up from ASAC strategic planning meeting)

Marcia Margherio expressed concern about the parvo/distemper outbreaks in the community. She mentioned that ASAC needs to respond to the crisis and find solutions. She also expressed that she is tired of hearing about and seeing animals suffering and dying from a highly preventable disease. She asked why this issue hasn't been addressed when the key is to vaccinate. She suggested having ASAC sent a letter to City Council asking for help in combating distemper/parvo outbreaks.

Catherine agrees in asking for help from City Council however she asked Marcia to present some best practices solutions from other communities.

Dr. Johnsen mentioned that the EPVMA is not seeing cases of distemper/parvo from animals other than the ones that are coming from the Humane Society and Animal Services. If the animals are coming from Animal Services and Humane Society then there should be control at these facilities and trying to find out



where these animals are coming from, he added. The city is mandated to protect the public from rabies not the animal; that would be pet ownership responsibility. He expressed his appreciation to the groups that want to have vaccination clinics however it comes down to an owner issue and cats deserve to be protected as well. Dr. Johnsen suggested keeping from adopting animals that might be showing signs of distemper/parvo and hold the animal during the incubation period, however that would mean the city will have to house these animals longer.

Dr. Chris Boehm a veterinarian from Texas Tech mentioned that the city is mandated to protect human health. Dr. Boehm's pointed out that city funds are better allocated to public education and getting children vaccinated than vaccinating a specific canine population against distemper and parvo.

Linda Krasowski expressed that ASAC should focus on where the distemper/parvo is coming from and have Animals Services show them how they are cleaning the shelter. Animal Services should be collecting data in order to identify from what zip code these sick animals are coming from, she added. Cecilia Carpio mentioned that she had 16 emails from owners that adopted animals from Animal Services that were either returned or died. She had several questions concerning the return of sick and inquired about the cleaning procedures.

Kurt Fenstermacher passed out the cleaning procedures. He mentioned that the percentage of returned sick adoptions is 3%. There is no treatment for these cases. Since all animals are adopted healthy, it makes it difficult to identify where the animal came from, once the animal starts showing symptoms of distemper and parvo.

Loretta Hyde added that the adopter should be responsible to take care of the animal that they choose and not return them. She would also like to arrange vaccination clinics in those areas that are affected by distemper and parvo. Regina Wagner agreed with Loretta that the disease can also be acquired at groomers and dog parks. Public education is so important in helping the community with the problem.

Marcia Margherio expressed that the public needs to have affordable vaccinations to help reduce the spread of the disease.

In the efforts in finding solutions to the concerns at hand, Robert Melson suggested having an AdHoc committee which consists of Marcia Margherio, Robert Melson, Cecilia Carpio, Loretta Hyde and Amanda Herrera.

d. Further discussion of the EPAS/ASD lot and found procedures

Dr. Johnsen explained that he was still researching for material on lost and found pets and Kurt Fenstermacher passed out a flyer to ASAC members on what to do when a pet gets lost. The information will also be posted on the website. Dr. Johnsen also mentioned that the material on lost and found pets will be used to



create a pamphlet or brochures for public distribution. Janice Nutt will be helping with this project.

Dr. Johnsen explained that his facility helps the client register the microchip; however he doesn't know whether the other clinics do. Marcia Margherio stressed the importance of registering microchips and it should be done before the client leaves the facility.

e. Election of new chairman

Robert Melson announced that he resigned as Chairman and asked ASAC members for nominations. Marcia Margherio asked Dr. Johnsen whether he is willing to actively support the city's new goal of saving 90% of the municipal shelter animals. Dr. Johnsen replied yes and accepted the nomination for chairman.

Motion: Motion was made by Catherine Fagan and seconded by Cecilia Carpio to nominate Dr. Guy Johnsen for Chairman.

Ayes: Catherine Fagan, Janice Nutt, Robert Melson, Regina Wagner, Barbara Candelaria, Cecilia Carpio, Peggy Edman, Dr. Johnsen Marcia Margherio.

Nays: None

6. Adjournment

Motion was made by Dr. Guy Johnsen and seconded by Peggy Edman to adjourn the meeting of September 14, 2016 at 8:37 p.m.

Prepared by: Maribel Karisch

Approved by A.S.A.C. Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Johnsen", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.