

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE April 6, 2018

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Dangerous Dog Task Force**

In light of recent high-profile dog bite cases, the Department of Dallas Animal Services is conducting a review of current laws and administrative processes on how Dallas handles dogs who bite both humans and other animals. To assist in this review, Dallas' Animal Advisory Commission has established a task force. The task force has been underway evaluating current laws, understanding the specific issues, and gaining citizen input on this topic. Attached is an outline of the task force's work-plan, including its objective, time-line, members, and other pertinent information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me, or Dallas Animal Services Director, Ed Jamison

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nadia Hardy'.

Nadia Chandler Hardy  
Chief of Community Services

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Larry Casto, City Attorney  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary (Interim)  
Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge  
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager  
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

Jo M. (Jody) Puckett, Assistant City Manager (Interim)  
Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager  
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer  
Raquel Favela, Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services  
Theresa O'Donnell, Chief of Resilience  
Directors and Assistant Directors

# Dangerous Dog Task Force Workplan

**Objective:** Evaluate laws and administrative processes regarding how Dallas handles animals, specifically dogs, who bite both humans and other animals. Provide recommendations for potential changes to amend City Code.

**Issue:** Current laws have become unclear and as a result, endanger public safety.

**Workplan:** Work cross collaboratively with AAC taskforce, comprised of committee members, staff, citizens in an effort to present recommendations to Committee and Council in June.

## **Timelines:**

- January
  - Identify issues; Department notifies City Attorneys of current issues
  - Form review group (Animal Advisory Commission to form Task Force)
- February
  - Discuss, strategize with DAS, City Attorneys, Task Force, Stake holders
- February – May
  - Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> – Planning meeting at 5:30pm at Bank of America Plaza
  - March 19<sup>th</sup> – Public meeting at 12pm at Dallas Animal Services
  - April 24<sup>th</sup> – Public meeting at 3:30pm, City Hall L1FN Auditorium
  - May 1<sup>st</sup> – Public meeting at 3:30pm, City Hall L1FN Auditorium
- May
  - Task force presents recommendations to AAC (5/10/18)
- June
  - Department presents changes to Quality of Life, Arts and Culture on June 11<sup>th</sup>
  - Department take approved item to City Council on June 27<sup>th</sup>

## **Task Force Members:**

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**Deborah Rodriguez – Task Force Member**  
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# Dangerous Dog Task Force Workplan

## Detailed objectives/goals:

The Department of Animal Services' recommendation at this time for dangerous dog cases is to be determined by the Department, exactly as Texas State Law, Section 822.041 calls for:

(2) "Dangerous dog" means a dog that:

(A) makes an unprovoked attack on a person that causes bodily injury and occurs in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own; or

(B) commits unprovoked acts in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own and those acts cause a person to reasonably believe that the dog will attack and cause bodily injury to that person.

- 822.041 is very clear; the City is not allowed to be in conflict of the law
- Legal owner of the animal has the opportunity to comply with the restrictions placed by the law and keep the animal
- The restriction will be enforceable throughout any jurisdiction in the State of Texas, thus stopping the movement of dangerous animals from one city to another without the dangerous designation
- Appeal provisions through the court system are clearly defined

Cases involving the State defined "Serious Bodily Injury," (822.001) will directly be brought to the court.

(2) "Serious bodily injury" means an injury characterized by severe bite wounds or severe ripping and tearing of muscle that would cause a reasonably prudent person to seek treatment from a medical professional and would require hospitalization without regard to whether the person actually sought medical treatment.

Additional recommendations from the Department for the task force's consideration include:

- Additional "Aggressive Dog Ordinance," that will address at large, unprovoked, animal to animal attacks
- Limit the number of Dangerous or Aggressive animals to not more than 1
- Clear language for seizure and disposition of any animal in violation of Dangerous/Aggressive laws
- Time limit to comply
- Public listing with pictures of registered Dangerous
- Placing a City Ordinance prohibiting an animal to bite