

RECEIVED

160010

**Animal Advisory Commission
Special Meeting**

2016 SEP 22 PM 3:59

FINAL MINUTES

CITY SECRETARY
DALLAS, TEXAS

Meeting Date: August 4, 2016

Convened: 1:30pm

Adjourned: 5:25pm

Members Present:

Peter Brodsky, Chair
Maeleska Fletes, Vice Chair
Christopher Watts
Karen Kennedy
Sandra Luhring
Deanna Saucedo
Stephanie Kunkle-Timko
Jean-Paul Bonnelly
Judith Burnett
Patricia Cody
Teresa Gubbins

Members Absent:

Molly DeVoss
Ryan McComber

Briefing Presenters:

Boston Consulting Group
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Jody Jones, DAS Senior Program Manager
Ann Barnes, DAS Operation Manager
Catherine McManus, DAS Operations
Manager

Staff Present:

Joey Zapata, Kris Sweckard, Jody Jones, Ann Barnes, Catherine McManus, Rita Hammelman,
Taneshia Wilbon, Daniel Genz, Chhunny Chhean

Guests:

Rebecca Poling, Fran Gaconnier, Laura Stankosky, Charlie Howell, Diana Rowden, Mary Spencer,
Kelly Balthazor, Andie Comini, Stephen Foster, Andrea Allen, Sarah Menosh, Vicki Chen, Janeue
Justice, Lisa Faulkner-Dunne, Linda Yarbrough, Karen Froehlich, James Bias, Carlin Seale, Leslie
Smith

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order

Presenter(s): Peter Brodsky

Information Only:

Cameras were not available to broadcast the presentations for the meeting, so the presentations will be available on the Dallas Animal Services website after the meeting. Mr. Brodsky welcomed Stephanie Timko to the commission. Also welcomed Kelly Balthazor with PetSmart Charities to the meeting.

2. Approval of May 26, 2016 Minutes

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s):

Correction to meeting start and end times to be made to the final minutes. With that change a motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes.

3. Strategic Plan Update

Presenter(s): Stephen Edison, Boston Consulting Group
Information Only:

Mr. Brodsky thanked BCG for all of their work on the project, and that this presentation is an interim update. Its purpose is to discuss the process they went through and what facts they have learned. The final report is to be completed by the end of August and will provide recommendations.

Mr. Edison thanked everyone for their cooperation. The BCG presentation will cover: 1) Scope and approach, 2) Review progress to date, 3) Preliminary findings, and 4) Next steps.

Scope and approach – BCG was asked to identify opportunities to improve public safety by reducing number of loose dogs and animal welfare through continued improvement in the live release rate. BCG's approach was to focus on dog population. Animal Cruelty investigation was not included in the process.

Preliminary findings –

- Dallas is home to ~350K dogs, with low spay/neuter in Southern Dallas resulting in high population growth.
- Growth is slowed by DAS and community efforts, but has not reduced intact population.
- A census of loose dogs was done, with a total of 235 miles driven.
- Based on census results, BCG calculates there are ~8,700 loose dogs in Southern Dallas.
- Dog bites in Dallas are up 15% annually from 2013 to 2015
- Since 2011, dog intake is flat with increase in owner surrenders compensating for slight decline in field intake.
- Citations increasing 7% monthly, but only 36% are paid.
- Approximately 60% of dogs achieve positive outcomes.

Next steps –

- BCG to finalize and publish report in August to include:
 - List of strategic recommendations.
 - Expected impact/importance of each recommendation.
 - Rationale behind each recommendation.
 - Supporting analysis and research.

Mr. Brodsky stated that the City now has a statistically significant count giving a baseline to measure future progress.

The following were questions from Commissioners to Mr. Edison with his response:

Ms. Saucedo - How was the number for owned dogs determined? The owned dogs were determined through their observations and through bite data.

Mr. Watts – What was the survey response numbers? Mr. Edison said that he would get back with exact numbers. Physical surveys were done in areas that may have been under represented with survey responses.

Ms. Burnett – How many days did BCG go out in the southern Dallas area to come to the conclusion that there are 8,700 loose dogs? The calculation is based on observed dogs over mileage driven to get to dogs per mile, then multiplied by miles of local roads in south Dallas adjusted up by a multiplier from a study.

Ms. Fletes – Is the increase in bites because of an increase in the problem, or is it because of an increase in people and animal population? More people are being bitten now than in the past based on bite cards. No strong data point on population, or an estimate of dog population to make that determination.

Mr. Bonnelly – Did the bite cards indicate owned/un-owned dogs? The cards indicated loose owned, restrained owned or stray.

Ms. Gubbins – Are the next steps for just DAS or for all City departments? It will be a holistic solution that will involve more than just DAS.

Mr. Watts – Will there be a call to action from the community? Yes.

Ms. Timko – On field intake, the numbers presented is over a three year period? Yes. Was there a seasonal rise or dip on intake? There is seasonality effects, but the numbers presented are in 12 month periods. The trend is down on field intake but increase in owner surrenders. Citations are up since June 2014, but enforcement of those citations is down.

Ms. Saucedo – Were there any surprises? Nothing specific.

Mr. Bonnelly – Did you find a reason for the rise in over the counter surrenders and how are owner surrenders in the field entered into the system? Ms. Jones responded that owner surrenders in the field are entered as field pickup.

Ms. Cody – Are the intake numbers showing people that have found a dog and turned it in to the shelter versus an owner bringing their dog to the shelter? The data in the presentation does break up over the counter intake by owner surrender and stray turn in.

Ms. Gubbins – On bites, was it broken down by bites to family members versus strangers? This data was not collected from the bite cards.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

4. Quality of Life & Environment Committee Briefing On June 10,2016 – ‘Animal Services Enforcement’

Presenter(s): Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Information Only:

Mr. Brodsky opened this item by stating that commission has been asked by QOL to consider and weigh in on the recommendations presented in the briefing. Council Member Young asked that the Commission either discuss or indicate support or nonsupport for the recommendations. Commissioners indicated to Mr. Brodsky that they do not feel comfortable voting on the recommendations because not enough work has been done to assess the recommendations, or the need to wait on BCG study. Commission was asked individually if they wished to do a straw vote during the meeting or have a discussion on the recommendations. The majority wanted to discuss and not do a straw vote on each recommendation.

Mr. Zapata presented the briefing given to the Quality of Life on June 13, 2016. The recommendations to discuss are:

- Mandatory microchipping.
- Breed specific insurance – Texas Health and Safety Code prohibits this. City ordinance does require that if a dog is deemed dangerous insurance is required. Enhancement – increase insurance requirements, and strengthen impoundment requirements pending hearing.
- Enhance penalties – Use City’s Legislative Agenda to support a Class A or B misdemeanor for bodily injury. Dallas Marshal’s Office has been asked to prioritize serving warrants.
- Require partnership for 311, DPD and DAS. On-going actions include DPD Officers assigned to DAS to improve communications, policies and operations between departments, and public service announcements to call 911 for animal attacks in progress.
- Improved training & quality control for 311 customer service agents is on-going with web-based refresher training for agents to be implemented by September 2016 and quality monitoring software.
- Dog czar for strays & cruelty – Currently the Animal Advisory Commission is an advisory body to the City Manager and City Council, and a working group was formed in April to improve the reporting, investigation, and prosecution of cruelty to report to the Commission by October 2016. On-going are the embedded DPD staff at DAS to improve focus on loose dogs and dog attacks.
- Loose Animal Force – Possible enhancements are to increase impounds by ASOs, and add ASO deep night coverage.
- Separate Animal Services department – The recommendation was to await completion of BCG’s strategic plan.
- Spay/Neuter Requirements – Enhancements to impound animals for failure to sterilize, instead of issuing citations and budget to provide free surgeries to improve compliance.

Animal Advisory Commission
Special Meeting – August 4, 2016

- Impound Hold Periods – Possible enhancement to shorten hold periods and increase outreach to rescues. Also to eliminate hold times on community cats, underage animals, and/or strays impounded from designated areas with high incidence of injuries by animals.

Commission discussion on recommendations:

Microchipping –

Ms. Burnett asked how mandatory microchipping in place of registration works. Ms. Jones explained that in some cities the microchipping would be rolled in with registration, and the checking of current chip information each registration year. Some cities choose to require microchipping and eliminate registration. Ms. Burnett feels that microchipping will need to be offered for free to make it effective. Mr. Zapata stated that making microchipping a mandatory requirement, but then also provide support to do it. An unintended benefit may be that microchipping will have the citizen's name and address tied to it, may raise the level of responsibility for the pet.

Ms. Saucedo stated that owner compliance is one of the biggest obstacles, but community resources can help fill the gap when owner's information is not current.

Ms. Fletes – She is in favor of doing this, but questions whether or not there is financial resources to make it affordable for everyone. Would like information on cost for this type of program available to each commissioner to take to their Council Member.

Mr. Watts – Would like for DNA or another alternative be looked into as an option for citizens that have an issue with microchipping.

Mr. Brodsky verbally asked the board and the consensus is this is worth exploring and that there will be a cost to it.

Enhancement to insurance requirements on designated dangerous dogs -

Mr. Brodsky – Does not understand how this addresses the bite problem. Ms. Jones stated that generally once a dog is deemed dangerous through the affidavit process, they often surrender the dog.

Ms. Timko – Is concerned that the affidavit process is prohibitive to people, and that process needs to be looked at rather than the insurance aspect.

Mr. Brodsky – The consensus of the board is that this is not worth pursuing.

Enhance Penalties –

Mr. Brodsky – If the BCG data is correct, we are not enforcing the penalties now, so what is the point in increasing them. Why add more that cannot be enforced.

Animal Advisory Commission
Special Meeting – August 4, 2016

Mr. Zapata – Suggests that these fines be reviewed and some may need to be increased, and others maybe need to be eliminated.

Ms. Burnett – Agrees that enforcement is not happening.

Ms. Fletes – If fees are increased, what do we do with folks that cannot afford it?

Mr. Brodsky – The consensus of the board is that more information is needed on what is happening today with enforcement, and then look at what, if anything, needs to be changed.

311, DPD, DAS Partnership –

Ms. Kennedy - Expressed concern about the training for 311 operators.

Ms. Fletes – Expressed concern about responses from 911 referring a dangerous situation back to 311.

Mr. Watts – Stated that in Portland numerous city departments addressed animal related issues, and that it was not just animal services responsibility, but the entire City unified behind the problems. Would like to see representatives from other City of Dallas departments, such as sanitation, present at commission meetings to answer animal related questions.

Ms. Timko – Expressed how citizens are so confused over who to call for assistance and solutions must be formed through a citizen's perspective.

Mr. Bonnelly – Suggested that there be cross training of peace officers trained as animal control officers, and animal control officers be trained as peace officers.

Mr. Brodsky indicated that commission feels that improved partnership between City departments must be continued.

311 improved training and quality control –

Ms. Kennedy – Suggested reaching out to postal workers for animal issues.

Mr. Brodsky indicated that improved training needs to be continued.

Dog czar for strays and cruelty –

Mr. Zapata – This one is more direction for staff rather than needing commission recommendations.

Ms. Timko – Stated that a single person that is accountable for dog issues and specifically animal cruelty is critical. That no one at the City is working on animal cruelty and that is unacceptable.

Mr. Brodsky - Calling for a dog czar is pointing to the fact that there needs to be a position of accountability for animal services. A need for an inter-departmental person needs to be over the entire problem and is accountable.

Mr. Bonnelly – Stated that Dallas needs a cruelty task force.

Mr. Brodsky indicated that accountability and governance needs to be addressed, and that a person needs to be added that is responsible for cruelty.

Loose Animal Force –

Mr. Brodsky – Would like productivity rate of our officers reviewed, and comparison to peer cities be studied, before more staff is added.

Ms. Fletes – Would like this tabled until DAS is fully staffed with current staffing levels.

Separate animal services department –

Mr. Brodsky – Stated this has already been covered.

Spay/neuter requirements -

Ms. Saucedo – Feels that the exclusions for intact animal permit need to be reviewed.

Ms. Burnett – The exclusions were included to the ordinance as compromises because of opposition from breeders and retail establishments to the spay/neuter ordinance changes.

Mr. Brodsky – Feels that increases to spay/neuter surgeries is necessary to solve this problem.

Mr. Watts – Ordinances need to address independent breeders and industry breeders separately. Would also like to explore Zeuterin as a sterilization option.

Impound hold periods –

Mr. Brodsky – More data is needed on hold periods in place today before making any changes.

Ms. Jones – The hold period changes would only effect animals that owners generally are not looking for, for example community cats or a litter of puppies. When we have a live release outcome for these animals, we need a hold period options to increase capacity and save lives.

Mr. Timko – Would like this to be at the discretion of the director when there is a live release option.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s):

- Microchipping – Worth exploring.
- Enhancement to insurance requirements on designated dangerous dogs – Not worth pursuing.
- Enhance Penalties – More information needed.
- 311, DPD, DAS Partnership – Improved partnership between City departments must be continued.
- 311 improved training and quality control - Improved training needs to be continued.
- Dog czar for strays and cruelty - Accountability and governance needs to be addressed, and that a person needs to be added that is responsible for cruelty.
- Loose Animal Force – Review productivity of current officers and review after DAS is fully staffed with current staffing levels.
- Separate animal services department – Wait for BCG recommendations.
- Spay/neuter requirements – Ordinance review needed.
- Impound hold periods – More information and review needed.

5. Intake Statistics Discussion

Presenter(s): Peter Brodsky, Chair and Ann Barnes, DAS Operation Manager
Information Only:

Mr. Brodsky prepared slides displaying a rolling twelve months of field intake data. No seasonality in the data. Since June 2015 DAS has consistently taken in fewer dogs every month. Also, presented monthly intake by month comparison for last two years. Asked management why intake is dropping so much.

Ms. Jones – Direction and policy at DAS is enhanced enforcement, not necessarily just picking up dogs. It is a multi-faceted approach including issuing citations, writing violations, gaining compliance, picking up dogs and returning pets to owners. Direction from our community indicated they wanted greater enforcement. DAS is issuing more citations. DAS is using multiple strategies.

Ms. Timko – stated that metrics are needed.

Mr. Bonnelly – Stressed that just picking up dogs is only a piece of the problem. Would like to explore if this is a result of a policy change, a result of direction to ASO, or an exogenous factor that is causing this.

Mr. Watts – Would like DAS to go back and look at 2015 thru 2016 head count on how many officers each month, and number of officers in education vs picking up animals.

Ms. Jones – With the most recent changes made at DAS, the new team at DAS, structure and accountability and schedule changes, there are more officers on the street than ever before. We are keeping track of better information now.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

6. 2016-2017 Budget Update

Presenter(s): Peter Brodsky, Chair and Jody Jones, DAS Sr. Program Manager
Information Only:

Next Council workshop is August 9 and city town hall meeting begin on August 9 also. Through August there will be Council deliberations. City Manager presents his proposed budget on August 9.

History of DAS budget in FY2011/12 was 6.2M and 81.5 FTE. Budget grew gradually to FY2015/16 to 10.8M and 116 FTE.

Enhancements submitted in February have been merged into officer coverage deep night staffing, microchipping for owned pets, partner stipends, free/low cost spay/neuter surgeries.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

7. Dog Parks and DAS Role

Presenter(s): Jody Jones, DAS Sr. Program Manager
Information Only:

DAS is working with Park and Recreation to determine DAS's role in dog parks and parks in general. Looking for feedback from Commission on this. There are 365 parks in Dallas, 32 acres of off leash dog parks. City dog parks are open 5am-11pm, closed on Mondays for maintenance. Dog parks currently fall under the authority of Park and Recreation. Issues are violations of dog park rules and are mainly people problems. Park rules are posted, but compliance with rules are park infractions. As we create dog parks in our community, discussion needs to be given to ways to keep the parks safe. DAS will collaborate with Park and Recreation to train park personnel/security for their parks.

Mr. Bonnelly – Suggested that dog parks require an animal registration/license for dogs using dog parks.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

8. Lost and Found Reporting

Presenter(s): Maeleska Fletes, Vice Chair and Catherine McManus, DAS Operations Manager
Information Only:

Ms. Fletes discussed the need for animal rescue groups to bring found animal information to DAS to give owners a chance to reunite with their animals. Asked DAS to review the lost/found process.

Ms. McManus – Found animals can be reported to DAS through DASlost@dallascityhall.com and will then be entered into Chameleon. Pictures and specific information is important. Found reports are on Pet Harbor website. DAS will pass finder information on to inquiries concerning found pets. DAS stresses the importance of giving an owner the opportunity to find their pet and to not jump to conclusions based on the condition of the pet, since it may have been lost for a period of time, and its condition is not an indication of owner care.

Ms. Jones reminded everyone of Finding Rover and Next Door as places to post found pets. All animals reunited with their owners through DAS leave the shelter in compliance with ordinances, so utilizing DAS also insures that pets are vaccinated, and registered properly.

Ms. Timko asked what is required by law on found animals. Ms. Jones stated that animals with identification must be reported to DAS.

Ms. Timko requested that this ordinance be part of the ordinance review process.

Ms. Fletes asked when the ordinance review would happen. Ms. Jones - DAS is currently reviewing 5 city ordinances. The focus primarily on ordinances pertaining to loose and stray dogs.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

9. Public Comments

The following citizens stated their full name, address, and raised their concerns:

Charlie Howell – District 1 – spoke about dog attacks, his personal attack and neighbor attacks that he is aware of. His personal attack was by dogs that had previously been reported to DAS by someone else. DAS responded to the service request reports, and the service requests were closed. He has requested information through open records from DAS, but is still waiting for the information requested. They have requested dangerous dog affidavit information from DAS, but had issues getting the information when calling DAS. They found information that DAS was to send formal notification regarding procedure for the dangerous dog affidavit process. They have completed the affidavit process, but questions why the affidavit is needed and the process falls to the victim. A January 22 open records request has not been responded to from the City.

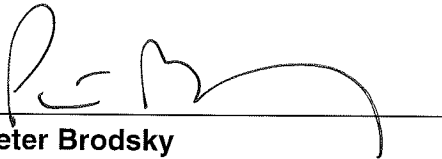
Jeremy Boss – District 1 – Austin has special animal cruelty unit. Animal service is working there. Zeuterin male dogs would work in the mobile units, and feels that it is much cheaper and easier to do. Knows someone who was bitten by a dog and DAS has never contacted them regarding the bite. His dog has escaped four times, received 2 citations and will go to court to fight them. Would like to let one go to see if anything happens to him. Citation fees need to stay with DAS rather than go into general fund.

Leslie Smith – District 12 – She polled on Next Door in her area to see if they are willing to pay extra every month to help support DAS. Ninety five percent she polled were willing. She feels there are a lot of people in the City that are willing to pay extra for DAS. She feels we need another shelter. Wants commitment from City Council for no-kill. Would like to renovate the old shelter like Austin did. Concerned about an injured dog being held in DAS for a month while injured. Wants information regarding this dog.

Andy Comini – District 9 – Thanked Jody, Cate and the rest of the group. Feels that DAS is short on people, money and time.

10. Next Meeting

September 15, 2016 at City Hall, Room 6ES at 1:30pm.
December 15, 2016 at City Hall, Room 6ES at 1:30pm.



Peter Brodsky
Animal Advisory Commission Chair



Rita Hammelman
Coordinator III