

**Animal Advisory Commission
Special Meeting**

FINAL MINUTES

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CITY CLERK
DALLAS, TEXAS

Meeting Date: August 4, 2017

Convened: 1:37 pm

Adjourned: 4:25

Members Present:

Peter Brodsky, Chair
Maeleska Fletes, Vice Chair
Christopher Watts
Karen Kennedy
Sandra Luhring
Pat Rodriguez
Ryan McComber
Judith Burnett
Teresa Gubbins

Members Absent:

Molly DeVoss
Patti Cody

Briefing Presenters:

Ann Barnes, DAS Manager

Staff Present:

Bianca Johnson, Rita Hammelman, Ann Barnes, Sgt. Deborah Hughbanks, Kanesia Williams, Nadia Chandler-Hardy

Guests:

Skip Trimble

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order

Presenter(s): Peter Brodsky
Information Only:

2. Approval of June 2, 2017 Minutes

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): A motion was made by Judith Burnett and second to accept the minutes for June 2, 2017 meeting was Maeleska Fletes.

3. Discussion of Dog/Homeless Program

Presenter(s): Councilmember Felder
Information Only:

- Mr. Brodsky: Is the idea for the homeless to try to collect the dogs or once the dogs are collect we match them with a homeless person for companionship?
 - We are to select the most stable homeless person we can find. We will stabilize them a place to stay. The City of Dallas has a lot of tax foreclosure properties that are being sold and these homes just need rehab where we can place those that are homeless in a home.
 - Once we get them stabilize and around care, we can get the homeless trained on how to catch and train dogs. They can either keep the dog, turn them over to the shelter and/or sale the dogs.

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- Ms. Chandler-Hardy: We have been working since Councilman Felder introduced this idea. As we were looking at our budget to access how we can go about introducing concept to our community, service providers and for those that are experiencing homelessness.
- I have asked Major Hobbs and the staff from the Homeless Solutions to put our heads together as we prepare to see how we can introduce what we call pro-social activities for those that are interested and has a desire and love for animals and their well fair to see how we can introduce this as a service opponent.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

4. Management Updates

Presenter(s): Ann Barnes

Information Only:

- Background
 - Received BCG Reports and recommendations
 - Reassigned leadership of DAS to DPD
 - Formed a task force to support the plan of improvements to services and operations.
 - Two (2) Committees were created for Tethering
 - City Council passed ordinance change on June 14, 2017
- Quarterly Statistics
 - All Citations has increased by 18.53%
 - Bite Investigations for All Types decreased by 37% and Bite Investigations for Owned Loose and Loose decreased by 17%.
 - Impoundments from Field Only for dogs has increased by 66.32% and for All animals increased by 44.22%
 - Impoundments for Shelter Only for dogs decreased by 9.70% and for All animals decreased by 4.98%
 - Outcomes
 - Adoptions increased by 33.30%
 - Rescue and Relocations increased by 38.38%
 - Redemptions increased by 139.89%
 - Euthanasia decreased by 19.87%
 - Live Release Rate has increased by 10.9%
 - DAS Spay Neuter has increased by 45.47%
- Care Team Statistics
 - Visited over 1800 houses
 - Left over 300 Violations
 - Written 66 Citations
 - Returned to Owners and Intakes are lower due to our OPS Team and Care Team are working in the same hot spot area recommended by BCG.
 - Pet Resources were given to 615 households
 - Volunteers hours are 108 hours

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- 225 Spay/Neuter Transports, these are done twice a week
- BCG Updates
 - We have adopted a Mission Statement
 - Opened 8 ASO positions
 - Added an Overnight Shift
 - Implemented a Care Team for Community Education
 - Increased enforcement and citations
 - Created an Open Data Portal for 311 calls
 - Hired Social Media Coordinator
 - Added an additional Rescue Coordinator
 - Opened 8 Animal Keeper II positions
 - Transfer Partner Program is in high volume
 - A Surrender Deflection was initiated in December
 - Provided Behavior Training to our employees
 - Increased Spay and Neuters by DAS Veterinarians and Spay Neuter Network
 - Implemented an Internship Program with Texas A&M University
 - Our Volunteer Coordinator works on early childhood education as schools and in the shelter
 - Increase in unaltered citations.
 - There is open access to DAS data
 - We have quarterly meetings with our Transfer/Rescue Partners
 - We provide a Daily Scorecard on our website
 - DAS has been authorized to be a stand-alone department
 - A search for a Director is underway
 - An increase in funding of \$2.7 million by City Council
 - Hired Project Data Analyst
 - One time microchip fee for owner – No Registration Fee
 - Rabies Vaccine is a state law requirement and maintained by a veterinary clinic. If not in compliance, citations will be issued.

The following were questions from the Commissioners to Ann Barnes with her response:

- Ms. Rodriguez: How do you have fewer veterinarian but are doing more spay and neuters?
 - We are doing more work with less vets but we have relied on Spay Neuter Network and a relief vet that comes in as much as they can to help. We have put out offer letters to 2 other veterinarians. We are doing everything that we can.
- Ms. Rodriguez: From the rescue partners, there are new individuals on the rescue desk. One was let go and the other was placed to another desk due for maternity leave. Are you planning to just keep two (2)?
 - There were 3 people on the rescue desk, one is gone and there are still 2 left. There are no plans of moving either one of them and none that I know of is pregnant. We will be filling that other positions.
- Ms. Fletes: The CARE Team is working on the Hot Spots, what part of town is that in?
 - Pleasant Grove

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- Ms. Kennedy: Are you looking to hire new vets?
 - Yes, we just hired 2. We will be fully staffed for veterinarians.
- Mr. Watts: How many animals are in quarantine at any given time at the shelter?
 - We are always full.
- Mr. Watts: If someone can show proof that they have a current rabies shot, why are we keeping them for ten days at the shelter?
 - The law states that they can do home quarantine of the dog was not at large at the time of the bite. We do have the check the house to see if it is suitable for a home quarantine were the pet is kept away from other animals and people. For example, in an apartment building, where the animal would have to walk down a hallway or a flight of stairs and pass other people and other animals to go outside that wouldn't be a suitable place for a home quarantine.
- Mr. Watts: Is the quarantine period also to monitor if the dog is considered dangerous?
 - No
- Mr. Brodsky: Is the quarantine process city ordinance or state law?
 - Its State Law, no rabies vaccine is 100%. State law requires that even if the dog is current on a vaccine and it is at large at the time of the bite it must be quarantine at a shelter or vet clinic, but the vet clinic may be more expensive for people to be willing to pay.
- Ms. Rodriguez: Do DAS keep the dog if a dangerous dog affidavit has not been filed?
 - If we received a dog affidavit we are allow to hold that dog until the hearing. After the 10 days are up they are placed in protective custody.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s):

5. DAS Tethering Presentation

Presenter(s): Ann Barnes

Information Only:

- Our ordinance recommendations were to allow tether for 24 hours. We wanted to take the time limit out for the ordinance to be more enforceable. We also wanted to make other this stricter such as:
 - Adequate shelter and potable water
 - Tether must be connected to a collar and/or harness
 - Unobstructed range of motion and unlikely to become tangled and cause injury
- The current tether ordinance allows tethering with restrictions but it is unenforceable due to time restrictions and the defense of prosecution makes prosecution difficult.
- This was presented to Quality of Life on May 22, 2017. They requested further input from citizens so two (2) committees were created.
 - Animal Advisory Commission Tethering Subcommittee
 - Citizen Tethering Workgroup
- A tether census was requested. The City sent Paul-Quinn College and SMU a Census BID request but neither were interested in the BID.
- The current DAS recommendation is for the City to be no tethering but to only allow tethering in the presence of the owner and to remove the defense of prosecution.

- We would like to have an education campaign for a minimum of 90 days but not to exceed 6 months to inform the public of tethering ordinance and allow enforcement on a case by case basis.

The following were questions from the Commissioners to Ann Barnes with her response:

- Mr. Brodsky: What caused DAS to change its recommendation? Was it the public's reaction?
 - We didn't think the community was ready to ban tethering. We just wanted to make the tethering ordinance easier to enforce.
- Mr. Brodsky: Do you now feel that the community is ready to ban tethering? What cause you to think that?
 - Yes, the messages that we are receiving, meeting that I have been sitting in and information from the public

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

6. AAC Tethering Presentation

Presenter(s): Karen Kennedy

Information Only:

- We recommend a total immediate ban on unaccompanied tethering, as well as a task force to help people come into compliance.
- Other cities who implemented total tethering bans such as Arlington Animal Control in Texas, Pima Animal Control in Arizona, and New Hanover Animal Control in North Carolina were contacted and stated that education and enforcement are key, let people know what is expected and what they have to do to correct a problem.

The following were questions from the Commissioners with response:

- Ms. Gubbins: For the task force, do you know what those activities would be?
 - Maeleska Fletes: The task force would be both groups the citizens and the City by pulling together resources and any other things that will help the citizen become current.
- Ms. Gubbins: Will there be fencing programs?
 - Maeleska Fletes: We will get a lot of the information together by reaching out to national fencing programs and possibly getting grants as well.
- Mr. Brodsky: What happens if those resources are unavailable?
 - Pat Rodriguez: We will go out and give resources, but if we don't have enough available resources to hand out the goal remain important and animals do not belong on tethers.
- Ms. Burnett: What do we do once we get through the education period and develop this plan for citations and people still don't or unable to comply?
 - Kanesia Williams: In the prior ordinance change it was worked into the multiple convictions section that was changed which can result to confiscation of the animal at some point.
- Mr. Brodsky: Do you feel that an ordinance can be implemented immediately?

- Nadia Chandler-Hardy: We would prefer a time period where we can wrap up and enhance our education efforts and at the same time be able to come together with some type of plan around the citations piece could work hand in hand. We are thinking no less than 90 days but max up to 6 months.
- Karen Kennedy: There is a lot of situations for some residents and the decision would be at the animal officer's discretion.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

7. Tethering by Citizen Tethering Workgroup

Presenter(s): Fran Gaconnier

Information Only:

- Goals
 - Update the current Chapter 7 tethering ordinance to make it enforceable
 - Create buy in and support from residents, DAS, the SPCA of Texas, Community Prosecutors, Municipal Courts and City Attorneys.
 - Identify additional education opportunities, outreach initiatives, and target areas.
 - Improve safety and quality of life, the lives of dogs, and working with owners.
 - During a 3 month, public education period, DAS should utilize warnings instead of citations. After the warning period is over, officers have the discretion to write a warning, a civil citation, or a criminal citation.
- Experts Opinion
 - "Never tether or chain your dog because this can contribute to aggressive behavior."
 - "Tethering is an unacceptable method of confinement for any animal and has no place in humane sheltering."
 - A resident dog is one that is left in a yard or tethered in a yard without regular positive human interaction versus a companion animal that is integrated into family life is more likely to protect than a resident dog.
- PROs of Anti-Tethering
 - Good for law enforcement, it creates a clear boundary and set humane expectations of pet owners.
 - Staff has stated that the simpler the ordinance, the easier enforcement will be on the ASOs and courts.
 - Good for animals, dogs on tether are at risk from dog attacks from other loose dogs and animals.
 - Dogs are social animals. When tethered, they become lonely, boredom and anxious, which can lead to increased aggression and destructive behavior.
- Challenges
 - Will people just let their dogs loose?
 - There is no fact base evidence that people will let their dogs loose if an enforceable ban is enacted.
 - Will call volume take officers away from priorities?

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- When 311 tethering call is received, the call is closed and a letter is sent.
 - On the third call, a violation notice is left and not follow up is done.
 - Most come reasons for compliance issues.
 - Lack of education about the tethering
 - Resources to fix existing fencing such as repairs
 - Flea and tick control
 - Restraint Alternatives
 - Indoor confinement with daily walking and crate training
 - Funding
 - Through civil citations, allows access to the Animal Welfare Fund for outreach resources like fence building projects.
- Return on Investment
 - Research supports a deep correlation between caring for companion animals and a human's connection to empathy.
- Next Step
 - Vote to make tethering, as a permanent form of restrain illegal in the City of Dallas.
 - Create a task force led by the Director of Community Services
 - Secure expert partners

The following were questions from the Commissioners with response:

- Mr. Brodsky: Why are you so certain that this will be treated as a low priority such as loose dog calls?
 - Speaking with Major Hobbs she feels that there is not a high volume of calls nor will it be in the future.
- Mr. Brodsky: What happens if those resources don't follow? What happens of the City makes this ordinance but we will not allocate those resources?
 - We must signal to nonprofits and groups to buy in on this idea. The ordinance would be the first step.
 - Hopefully, the majority of people will be able to find a way to confine their dog without putting them on a tether.
 - People will get education, then citations and after 4 violations the animal will be ceased.
- Mr. Brodsky: What is the cost that you estimate that you need to raise in order to implement what you have outlined?
 - Without the tethering census, we cannot answer.
- Mr. Brodsky: If none of the money is allocated and pass the complete ban on tethering, you would be comfortable with that?
 - Yes, there are groups that are looking to do pilot programs to understand the cost, implications and return on investments that are not with the City.
- Ms. Burnett: Does the law recommend both civil and criminal citations?
 - It's at the officer's discretions and that is what we recommend to continue.

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- Ms. Burnett: If the 311 call is at the bottom of the priority list, will a lot of those calls be addressed?
 - The first two calls do not require an officer, but the third call does require an officer and respond on a priority basis.
 - Ann Barnes: Currently, the first and second complaint we will send a letter out to both the complainant and the violator. Once a violator has a third violation, the call will be dispatched to an officer.
- Ms. Kennedy: Do you object to an attending tethering?
 - No, Supervised Tethering is allowed
- Mr. McComber: Are you going to be adding a tethering definition to describe what supervised tethering look like?
 - The City Attorney advised that is was not necessary but we are open to that.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation(s): Hasani Burton motioned to vote to send on ordinance from the subcommittee with stipulations to look at language from the citizen committee. Seconded Karen Kennedy. Opposed Maeleska Fletes.

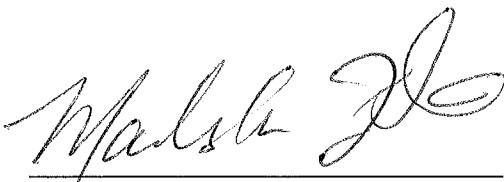
8. Public Comments

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

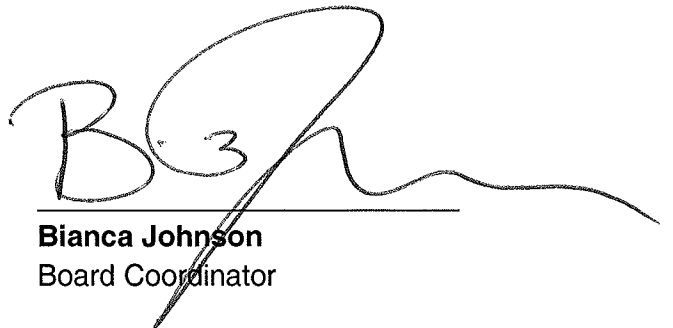
- Skip Trimble
 - Reconsider the vote and motion for DAS Recommendation.

9. Next Meeting

- September 14, 2017



Peter Brodsky
Animal Advisory Commission Chair



Bianca Johnson
Board Coordinator