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**Animal Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting**

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FINAL MINUTES

CITY SECRETARY
DALLAS, TEXAS

Meeting Date: December 15, 2016 **Convened:** 1:30 pm **Adjourned:** 5:15 pm

Members Present:

Peter Brodsky, Chair
Maeleska Fletes, Vice Chair
Christopher Watts
Molly DeVoss
Karen Kennedy
Sandra Luhring
Pat Rodriguez
Deanna Saucedo
Judith Burnett
Teresa Gubbins
Stephanie Kunkle-Timko

Members Absent:

Ryan McComber
Patti Cody

Briefing Presenters:

Kris Sweckard, Code Compliance Director
Laurietta Stewart-Childress, Code Compliance Manager
Deputy Chief Rob Sherwin, DPD

Staff Present:

Bianca Johnson, Laurietta Stewart-Childress, Major Barbara Hobbs, Deputy Chief Rob Sherwin, Carlos Juarez, Gabby Vannini, Bonnie Hill, Rita Hammelman, Kris Sweckard

Guests:

Diana Rowden, Justina Walford, James Bias, Mindy Owen, Charlie Howell, Deborah Rodriguez

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order

Presenter(s): Peter Brodsky

Information Only:

Welcome New Member Pat Rodriguez to the Commission. I want to extend a Thank You and a We're sorry you're leaving to Chief Sherwin, who has done a remarkable job. The last 2 months are record intake and record live release rates for the shelter. You have done an excellent job and we are very grateful. You will be missed and congratulations. The good news is that the person that really did the work is Major Hobbs and she is staying. I want to call upon the Commission members again to refrain from posting comments on Facebook and through email unless you are absolutely 100% sure that the information that you receive is true and accurate. There is only one way to do that and that is to talk to Major Hobbs in the future. Please try to keep rumors to a minimum because all it does is take time from the DAS leadership staff from doing their jobs.

2. Approval of September 22, 2016 Minutes

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes for the September 22, 2016 meeting.

3. DAS Updates

Presenter(s): Deputy Chief Robert Sherwin

Information Only:

- Deputy Chief Sherwin – Report for September to November 2016. Here are the results of where we are and what we have done so far based on following the BCG recommendations. We have already adopted a mission statement. We have added 4 pillars of our mission statement which is Performance Transparency, Increase Positive Outcomes, Partner with Community, and Education. We also adopted a Mission Centric Scorecard. We partnered with BCG to design a series of reports for DAS functions to tell the real story of what is happening at DAS on a daily basis. The Daily Report Card will be removed from the Facebook Page and placed on our DAS Website.
- We have hired 4 additional ASOs. They are in training.
- One BCG recommendation is to increase field intake. The field has done an exceptional job on this. We expect to pick up over 1,000 dogs each month.
- We have a huge push in citations. With added enforcement writing citations if they are out of compliance.
- We are working with 311 on getting loose calls out to street rescue groups. Open Data Portal is also open for all calls and available to the public.
- To increase volume in transfers, we are adding a second Transfer Coordinator. MOU's with SPCA and Operation Kindness are in progress.
- Financial Transparency website link has all the data that we have on our financials.

The following were questions from the Commissioners to Deputy Chief Sherwin and Major Hobbs:

- Ms. Kunkle-Timko – Is anybody tracking your recidivism?
 - Major Hobbs: We are looking to track that for when they do come back. We are able to help them with issues or concerns and be more of assistance.
 - Chief Sherwin: We will be looking at the number of people that came in that day, and what are the reasons that we had to get the citizen to keep their animal.
- Mr. Brodsky: Why is it that enforcement is not one of the pillars?
 - Chief Sherwin: We have to give the community an opportunity to get in compliance. If we just bring out the stick it will not get a lot of people in compliance. We do have enforcement, but the educational part is much stronger for them to be and get in compliance for the long term goal.
- Mr. Brodsky: Do you know how many of the 70 dogs that were picked up yesterday if they were loose owned or stray?
 - Chief Sherwin: I will have to look into Chameleon and give you answer later on that.
- Mr. Brodsky: Are there some major policies that you have altered?
 - Chief Sherwin: Not major policies. What we have done is empowered the staff to make decisions, especially our Medical staff to make determinations for the animals that comes into the shelter. We observed that many people will bring their animals in that are very unhealthy to the

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shelter to euthanize them. The vets in the past would try to save that animal, so what we have asked the vets to do is before you begin the process of caring for an animal that is very ill, is to think about the resources that we have, your professional opinion on what should be done and we will support you and your judgment based on your medical experience and humanely put that animal down if it's necessary.

- Ms. Fletes: Are they reaching out to the rescue groups before they make those choices?
 - Major Hobbs: Yes, we are reaching out to the rescue groups. We give them as much information that we have on the health of that animal and ask if there is anyone that will be willing to take it.
- Ms. Rodriguez: How does tethered and animals with no shelter fit into your mission statement?
 - Chief Sherwin: The focus has been on loose dogs and loose aggressive dogs that plague southern Dallas but we do understand that there are a lot of educational processes that we have to deal with the public. Some pet owners do things that we do not agree with but it is adequate. What we are trying to do is educate citizens to what is legal and provide them with the education that they need to be sure that the animal is well cared for.
- Mr. Watts: What are the vaccinations that you give on intake?
 - Major Hobbs: Dewormer, Bordetella, basic things that are needed to prevent spreading diseases through the shelter.
- Mr. Watts: Dogs that come into the shelter with collars, do you still vaccinate?
 - Major Hobbs: Yes, to prevent spreading diseases.
- Mr. Watts: How do people now report cruelty and to whom?
 - We created an offense to DPD, then it gets physically transported to SPCA and their detective begins to work that case. SPCA reports back to us, and we place it in our management system with results.
- Ms. DeVoss: Animals that are RTO on the spot but are included even though they never come into the shelter, is that only if they are spayed/neutered?
 - Chief Sherwin: Yes, they do get a lot of citations because generally they do not want their dogs to come into the shelter. We have encouraged our officers to leave the pets at home but issue citations to the pet owner.
- Ms. Rodriguez: Are you leaving animals that are not current on Rabies out with the owners putting the public at risk of being bitten?
 - Chief Sherwin: I want to be able to give that pet owner enough time to be in compliance.
- Ms. Fletes: Can you give us the difference of the intake numbers with and without the RTO in the field?
 - Chief Sherwin: They were always counted.

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- Ms. Fletes: Do you have the number for the same animals that are coming into the shelter over and over again?
 - Chief Sherwin: We are starting to have that number and it will be on the Open Data Report.
 - Are we keeping track of the repeat offenders?
 - Major Hobbs: Yes, ASOs are able to see if we have dealt with the same offenders before.
- Ms. Luhring: Can you explain the streamline transfer process?
 - Chief Sherwin: The larger you are the better working with you. We made a block based on services and that is what you will pay.
- Ms. Kunkle-Timko: What can we offer our community to take care of their deceased dogs? Possibly for citizen to bring in their aging dog, and for them to be in the room during euthanasia allowing them to having a grieving process and some way to memorialize that pet.
 - Chief Sherwin: With our current capacity and staff at this time we cannot offer that. We are pretty overwhelmed with the flow of more than 50 owner surrenders.
- Ms. Burnett: Have rescues always had to pay for animals?
 - Chief Sherwin: We have talked with all rescue partners and they have all agreed that lowering the cost would help them be able to do more.
- Ms. Burnett: Will MOUs be available?
 - Chief Sherwin: Yes
- Ms. Burnett: For 70 dogs to be picked up in one day, was there something going on that day?
 - Chief Sherwin: I spoke with Field Manager Ann Barnes and she informed me that our CARE Team goes out and does sweeps in the neighborhoods of our most calls for loose dog calls.
- Ms. Fletes: Are you in the process of hiring a Foster Coordinator?
 - Chief Sherwin: We are working on another Transfer Coordinator but that position will not be filled until January.
- Ms. Rodriguez: What do you think we need to do to get attention to Dowdy Ferry?
 - Chief Sherwin: Dowdy Ferry has been a dumping ground for multiple things. We have to make a decision with little resources; this will be a continued issue because of where it is. But we will do what we can with SPCA cruelty experts.
- Ms. Saucedo: Has there been animals' there and actually making criminal case for the animals?
 - Chief Sherwin: Pets are placed in the category as property. If there is a clear case of animal cruelty, that is when SPCA will come in and investigate.
- Ms. DeVoss: Where is the website?
 - Gabby Vannini: It is under construction but it will be up in about 30 minutes.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

4. Strategies of Mission Statement

Presenter(s): Peter Brodsky

Information Only:

We will be sticking with the mission statement.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): The mission statement is accepted.

5. Revision of Intact Animal Permit

Presenter(s): Deputy Chief Sherwin

Information Only:

- Mr. Brodsky: Should we raise the price and minimize the qualification?
- Ms. Fletes: What are the steps of getting a permit?
 - Major Hobbs: Take the RPO Class pay the fees and you're on your way
- Major Hobbs: The price cannot be punitive to the public and that's why it is \$100.
- Does anyone know of any other cities that may have done this?
 - Mr. Watts: They define what breeders are, such as backyard breeders versus business breeders.
 - Major Hobbs: LA has the strictest. They identify the breeders as well as a permit and having an AKC.

Action Taken Committee Recommendation(s): Asked for direction from the Commission.

6. Dangerous Dog State Law/Ordinance/Procedures

Presenter(s): Laurietta Stewart-Childress

Information Only:

A lot of people have asked and made comment about the Dangerous Dog Ordinance and process. Commission to decide if they want to make recommendations for change.

- Mrs. Stewart-Childress: For a dog to be declared dangerous owners must comply with specific requirements for citizens to feel safe.
- A Dangerous Dog is a dog that makes an unprovoked attack on a person that causes bodily injury and occurs while the animal is at large and/or an enclosure of where the dog is being kept.
- Reporting a Dog Bite: The Dangerous Dog Coordinator will get in contact with the victim and we offer the victim an affidavit. If the victim is interested in filing an affidavit, we give them the documentation to start the process.
- Once we receive a complaint, we start the investigation within 30 days and a discussion on the incident once a hearing date is set. Both parties are asked questions and they are allowed to ask questions as well.

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- At the end of the investigation, the panel will make a decision on if the dog is or is not dangerous. The owner has 30 days to comply with City Ordinance or permanently remove the dog from the City.

The following were questions from the Commissioners to Laurietta Stewart-Childress with her response:

- Mr. Brodsky: This process seems cumbersome and can be a full time job for the victim, and that dogs that are truly dangerous don't get declared.
 - Some victims don't want to do an affidavit because they do not want an issue with their neighbors, and we cannot go through with declaring a dog dangerous until they do so.
- Ms. Fletes: What is considered an unprovoked attack?
 - You are walking down a sidewalk and a dog comes out of nowhere and attacks you and you did nothing to provoke the dog in any way.
- Does that take into consideration when you are walking your dog? How?
 - Yes, the person has reason to believe that the dog was trying to attack them as well.
- Mr. Watts: So if someone got in the middle of an attack between the dogs and got bit, provoked or unprovoked?
 - When we start asking questions and get more into what happened. That wouldn't fit into starting a dangerous dog investigation unless you knew what dog bite you.
- Ms. Saucedo: Have you had any dangerous dog cases where people say it was a dog but clearly it was a dog fight? And how did that turn out?
 - Yes, this happens quite often and in most cases they will withdraw their affidavit.
- Ms. Kennedy: What if it is a stray dog?
 - According to the ordinance it has to be an owned animal in order to deem the dog dangerous and then the owner must meet the requirements of owning a dangerous dog.
- Ms. Kennedy: How can it be dealt with then?
 - DAS will pick them up.
- Mr. Watts: Is there not a way for the City to declare a dog dangerous from multiple attacks?
 - Not without a sworn complaint according to the state law.
- Mr. Brodsky: What does it take to make a sworn complaint?
 - You fill out an affidavit and have it notarized
 - Is it one page, ten pages?
 - About 2 pages
- Ms. Kunkle-Timko: Are you the person in charge? Can you tell me what the purpose of the dangerous dog designation is?
 - The purpose is to identify dogs that have been involved in a bite and ensuring those owners who choose to keep those dogs to remain in compliance and don't allow those dogs to be involved in other incidents. Also, to identify owners that let their dogs get out and bite somebody and hold them accountable for any future incidents.
 - So the entire process is to determine and identify the owner of those dogs that could be a threat to public safety?
 - Yes

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- Ms. DeVoss: Are you the Dangerous Dog Coordinator?
 - Carlos Juarez is the Dangerous Dog Coordinator.
 - Do you work with Dallas Animal Services?
 - Mr. Juarez: Yes, I work with DAS but I was moved to Code.
- The investigation numbers seem a lot lower than the number of bites that we get, so what do you do?
 - Mr. Juarez: I am constantly in contact with the citizens. The issue that we run into is that they do not want to file an affidavit and have an issue with their neighbor.
- How do you know if they have been bitten?
 - Mr. Juarez: I go through the service requests every day and contact the rabies investigator for any owned animal and make contact with the victim.
- Mr. Brodsky: From beginning to end of the process, if I'm bitten and the next day I file an affidavit, how long does it take to go all the way through the process till the dog is deemed dangerous or not?
 - The next business day Mr. Juarez is looking at the service request and makes contact with you. You can bring the affidavit to us or we will pick it up from you and immediately schedule an investigation. We do give the owner 10 days' notice and immediately after, we declare if the dog is dangerous or not.
- So is the process all done in 2 weeks?
 - In most cases yes.
- Does Code and DAS not share the same database of information, including from 911?
 - Sometimes the information from 311 is not always all the way there, so when an officer goes out to the location and gathers more information.
- Ms. Fletes: Is it possible for a period of time that a dog was declared dangerous an explanation?
 - Mr. Brodsky: Let's let the staff think about it and have them decide at the next meeting.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation(s):

7. Animal Advisory Commission 2017 meeting dates

Presenter(s): Peter Brodsky

Information Only: There has been a lot of discussion on how often we should meet. We have met about 6 times this year.

- Mr. Brodsky: How often do you think we should meet?
 - 12 times a year
 - Ms. Burnett: Every 6 weeks
- The data that we receive, do you think is required for us to meet that many times?
 - Ms. Kunkle-Timko: I think that data helps us to ask more intelligent questions.

Action Taken/Committee Recommendation(s): We will meet every 6 weeks, 8 meetings in 2017. The calendar will be determined and will be emailed to Commissioners.

8. Public Comments

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

- Deborah Rodriguez: Listening about Dangerous Dog process is frustrating. In order for that to be effective is that you have to get people in here that have done it. You have to have an address in order to file it and if the city forces you to do an open records request and then it goes to the Attorneys Office to make a decision. But you really don't know unless you have actual case studies and why did they give up.

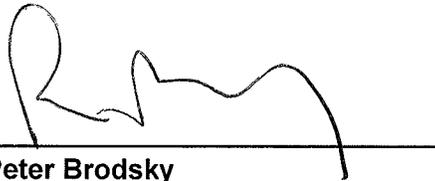
Action Taken/Committee Recommendation(s): N/A

9. Adjourn

5:15p.m.

10. Next Meeting

The calendar for 2017 will be determined and commission will be notified.



Peter Brodsky
Animal Advisory Commission Chair



Rita Hammelman
Coordinator III