



Tulsa Animal Welfare Commission

**Regular Meeting | January 13th | 6:00 pm
One Technology Center 175 East 2nd Street Tulsa OK 74103
10th Floor North Conference Room**

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present:

Chair Susan Savage
Christine Kunzweiler
Teresa Burkett
Robin Ballenger

Commissioners Absent:

Cordell Dement

City Staff Present: Dwain Midget, Jean Letcher, Sarah Davis, Christina da Silva

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Chair Susan Savage called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Chair Savage asked the commissioners to review the meeting minutes. Commissioner Burkett made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Kunzweiler seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Discussion of Subcommittees Scope of Work

Christina da Silva from the Mayor's Office reviewed the language from the City Charter that explains the mission of the Animal Welfare Commission. She further explained that Commissioners have expressed a desire to further explore specific topics as they relate to animal welfare.

Based on its mission and previous meeting discussions, the Commission have identified a need to create two subcommittees 1) Spay & Neuter Subcommittee, with the goal to recommend policy that reduces pet overpopulation in Tulsa 2) Humane Treatment & Animal Cruelty Enforcement Subcommittee, with the goal of promoting public safety by protecting animals and citizens. Commissioner Ballenger volunteered to chair the Spay & Neuter Subcommittee, Commissioner Burkett volunteered to chair the Humane Treatment & Animal Cruelty Enforcement Subcommittee.

Chair Savage asked about what support that City staff would be able to provide. da Silva stated that because animal welfare issues are a priority for the Mayor, that the Commission would have the Mayor's office staff and other City staff at their disposal to help with tasks or requests. Commissioner Ballenger confirmed that these would be public meetings. da Silva explained that she would work with each of the chairs to schedule the first meetings.

Tulsa Animal Welfare Department Update

Commissioner Ballenger asked about a status update on the amendments that were approved in the Title II Animal Ordinance. da Silva explained that the amendments that there were passed to city prosecutor for a final review. da Silva explained that when city prosecutor finishes his final review of the amendments, it will be filed first with Mayor to review. Once the version of this document goes to the Mayor, da Silva stated she would make that document available to the public.

Sarah Davis explained that there will be a redlined version that the Mayor will approve to move forward to City Council agenda so that the public can be able to see proposed changes. da Silva stated if the city prosecutor is finished with his review, that she hopes to be able to file the amendments with Mayor by the following week.

Sarah Davis explained that the Mayor has to agree to put the proposed changes forward for the City Council to review the Thursday before the next City Council meeting, which are held on Wednesdays. The City Council reviews the proposed amendments in committee and then has it read publicly in the evening City Council meeting as first read. If there is no further discussion, City Council will put the amendments up for a vote in their next City Council meeting.

Jean Letcher, Animal Shelter Manager stated that they are working on a report of their 2019 performance. Preliminary numbers show between 9-10% increase of intake of more animals to the shelter. Letcher credits that expansion of shelter hours and increase of field staff that have helped increase the numbers of animals received. Additionally, Letcher has noted that the shelter has been able to report the highest rates of live release for the past 20 years. Euthanasia rates have remained flat.

Chair Savage asked what other metrics does the shelter use to track progress. Letcher explained that the shelter also measures length of stay. There are several strategies that they have used to reduce length of stay, including microchipping animals and also open selection, which allows individuals to adopt an animal the moment that it enters the shelter, with the provision that the animal will be returned to the owner if they claim the animal within three days.

Commissioner Ballenger asked if the shelter microchipped animals that go to rescue groups. Letcher explained that no they did not because the animal shelter is transferring ownership to the rescue group and letting their organizations use their process to microchip the animal.

Letcher also explained that there are 20 cases of animal cruelty that are in various stages of case processing.

Letcher also explained that they are still working with working with IT to create an online process for pet licensing. Letcher also shared that they have been working with Animal Balance, which is an organization that provides free spay and neutering services. They are planning to host their next events in March and April.

Commissioners discussed if there was a way to identify what resources would be needed to address the need for spay and neuter.

Commissioner Burkett shared some community resources that she recently learned about. Pause4Paws helps people in need of emergency medical, mental health, or addiction treatment find loving and safe foster homes for their beloved pets. Hospice of Green Country Peace of Mind assists hospice patients who are unable to maintain appropriate routine health care and nutrition for their animal companions due to mounting medical expenses or caregiver disability.

Letcher explained that they have an employee who is a diversion coordinator and works with families to find resources that help them keep their animal and avoid having to turn it to the shelter.

New Business /Public Comment

Chair Savage opened the meeting up for public comment.

Public comment can be viewed here:

<https://cityoftulsa.viebit.com/player.php?hash=pbSVgavZXG5N>

Adjournment

Chair Savage adjourned the meeting at 7:44pm.