

**Tulsa Animal Welfare Commission
Regular Meeting | September 14th | 6:00 pm
One Technology Center 175 East 2nd Street Tulsa OK 74103**

Commissioners Present: Susan Savage, Robin Ballenger, Teresa Burkett, Christine Kunzweiler

Commissioners Absent: Cordell Dement

City of Tulsa Staff Present: Jack Blair - Mayor's Chief of Staff, James Wagner - Director of Finance, Patrick Boulden - City Council Administrator, Dwain Midget - Director of Working in Neighborhoods, Marshelle Freeman - Special Administrative Aide/Interim Manager, Donna Gemmill - License Center & Revenue Processing Manager, Kathryn Weston - Animal Placement Coordinator

Meeting Minutes from Monday, September 14, 2020

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Chair Savage opened the meeting at 6:01pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Savage called for review of the minutes from the August meeting of the Animal Welfare Commission. Commissioner Ballenger made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Burkett seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Shelter Operations and Facilities Update – Marshelle Freeman, Interim Manager

Mrs. Freeman advised that the Parks & Puppies obedience training scheduled to be held in September at Central Center was canceled due to lack of registration. Staff will coordinate with Parks to reschedule in the spring.

The shelter is still without a staff veterinarian. Human Resources has agreed to advertise the position with the American Veterinary Medical Association, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association and OSU College of Veterinary Medicine Alumni Association in hopes of getting someone hired soon. Commissioner Chair Savage asked if the veterinarian position could possibly be filled by two people, more like a practice. Mrs. Freeman advised that the position is currently budgeted for one fulltime person but splitting it into two part-time positions may be an option. Mr. Midget agreed that we could explore that as an option. He continued by reminding the Commissioners that finding a veterinarian is difficult, especially for a municipal shelter. He believes that with the additional outreach previously mentioned, we should have more success by reaching out to the professional associations. He mentioned that there are currently three relief veterinarians, Drs. Bailey, Fry and Montgomery, working with clinic staff weekly and they are doing a great job. Mr. Midget added that our partnerships with Oklahoma Animal Alliance, Spay OK and Human Society of Tulsa afford us options should alteration surgeries get backed up. Commissioner Kunzweiler echoed that finding a veterinarian, especially around this time of year is hard and that advertising with the Veterinary Medical Associations was a good idea.

Save rates for August increased, 9% for canine, 2% feline. Staff is doing better to ensure more live releases with the increase in intakes.

On September 2nd, City staff meet with GH2 Architects to go over their draft program design of areas identified that should be included in the expansion and renovation. Staff answered questions and provided additional information to the team so that revisions could be made. The next step will be a meeting to layout the spaces to get an idea of placement and construction phases.

Commissioner Chair Savaged asked for an update on the Shelter Management search, what the process looks like and what's happening. Mrs. Freeman explained that discussions with Best Friends Animal Society (BFAS) about their embedded program are ongoing. The program would implant two BFAS staff members at TAW to oversee shelter management and kennel operations for at least a year. Their scope of service revolves around improving overall operations, community relations and putting TAW on the right track to becoming a world class shelter. BFAS is also committed to helping the city advertise and staff the vacant manager and kennel supervisor positions with highly qualified professionals. A team, consisting of Mr. Blair, Mr. Midget and Mrs. Freeman, reached out to other national organizations to see if similar programs were offered, and most referred back to BFAS. A request will be submitted to the City's Purchasing Department to sole source with BFAS. The draft agreement, revised by the team, has been sent to City Legal for review. Once the agreement has been approved by both legal teams, it will be routed for signatures. Mr. Midget advised that we hope to have the agreement finalized and signed by both entities in late October/early November. The goal is to have BFAS onsite at TAW within 30-days of contract filing. Discussion ensued.

Foster Placement of Animals Held for Cruelty Confiscation - Kathryn Weston, Animal Placement Coordinator

Mrs. Weston reported that two of the six dogs being held have been placed in a foster home. She also mentioned that one of the dogs was able to leave the shelter for five (5) days before being returned because it wasn't a good fit for the foster who was used to smaller dogs. Ms. Weston noted that the dogs are happy and thriving outside of the shelter and she will continue to look for fosters to place the other dogs. Commissioner Kunzweiler asked if the dogs were neglected or physically abused. Unfortunately, due to pending court cases, only minimal medical information could be shared.

City Council Animal Ordinance Review Update – Patrick Boulden, City Council Administrator

Mr. Boulden advised that there had been a City Council Committee meeting to discussed proposed Ordinance changes on issues brought to Council members by constituents. On August 26th, Luisa Krug made a presentation to the Council about research, conducted with the American Planning Association, on potbelly pigs and hogs. The document given to Councilors was shared with Commissioners. Findings showed regulation on the number of potbelly pigs, limited to one, that could be keep in non-agricultural zoned property. Vietnamese potbellied pigs must weigh less than 150 pounds and stand under 20 inches tall. They must be spayed or neutered and registered with WIN if inside the city limits of Tulsa. Council discussed whether the weight and height limit should be lowered and why. It was also noted that the pigs be kept as pets and not for consumption. Ms. Krug also presented on goats. There wasn't a lot of objections to what she suggested as regulation for goats nor much discussion. Councilor Patrick raised

the issue of pygmy goats and goat yoga. Additional research may be needed to determine if amendments need to be made to what the Commissioners proposed. The Council Urban and Economic Development (UED) meeting agenda for September 16th includes discussion on chickens and chickens at large. This topic has been controversial in the past so there may need to be some flushing out of what the issues are on chickens in a metropolitan area.

Commercial Animal Establishments – James Wagner, Director of Finance

Commissioner Burkett and Commissioner Chair Savage attended the Council UED meeting and there was discussion about the new Pet Land store. There are currently twelve (12) similar stores operating in Tulsa. In hearing the concerns raised about Pet Land and animal abuse across the country, Councilors asked that the Animal Establishment Ordinance and the scope of the required background check be reviewed. A request was also made to evaluate the enforcement of any violations and its effect on licensing of such facilities.

Mr. Wagner focused on the background check piece of the ordinance and the following excerpt:

The Director of Finance shall perform a background check encompassing the past ten (10) years, to ascertain if the applicant has been convicted of animal abuse or cruelty charges in that time. Conviction of animal abuse or cruelty shall be grounds for denial or revocation of a commercial animal establishment permit.

He advised that the background checks are conducted annually for the dozen or so licensees that require a permit.

Donna Gemmill, License Center & Revenue Processing Manager, reviewed the actual Commercial Animal Establishment Application and advised that the applicant should be the manager or someone in charge. That person has to provide their driver's license number for the background check to be completed. Commissioner Chair Savage asked if the application could be revised to specify that the manager should complete and provide his/her personal information. Ms. Gemmill advised that the application could be updated. Commissioner Burkett advised that similar applications require a 30-day notice for change of management to allow a new background check to be run in order to keep the license/permit valid. Mr. Wagner advised these changes are more administrative than policy, however since the Ordinance is being review, it may be a good opportunity to clarify these expectations.

Commissioner Ballenger noted that the public outcry/Council concern is because the origin of pets being sold at Pet Land is unknown. Mr. Wagner advised that the application includes self-certifying statements regarding the origin of pets that ties back to the Ordinance. Commissioner Chair Savage questioned the enforcement of the provision under #2 asking how bad actors are addressed. Mr. Wagner and Mr. Midget pointed out that the ordinance states if a complaint is received, Animal Control would investigate. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Burkett advised that since the Humane Treatment and Animal Cruelty Enforcement subcommittee is wrapping up, the committee can refocus to ensure enforcement of the ordinance and application provisions in regard to animal origin. Discussion ensued, and it was agreed that the subcommittee would further evaluate, consult with City staff and legal, and propose ordinance revision to tighten controls

that are of concerned to the Council and Commission. Commissioners requested that City staff look into what changes in the ordinance would mean to existing licensees. Mr. Wagner advised that staff could investigate into what animals are actually being sold and if applicants used for the background checks are still employed at the establishments. Commissioner Chair Savage asked Mr. Wagner what he anticipated the workload/turnaround would be since this issue is of concern to the Council. He advised that he and Ms. Gemmill could review the current licenses over the next couple of weeks. Mr. Midget advised that WIN staff is available to assist with review in order to expedite it.

Commissioner Chair Savage requested that Mr. Bouldin report back to the Council that the Humane Treatment and Animal Cruelty Enforcement subcommittee will be researching how ordinance revisions would impact current establishments as well as Pet. Land.

Spay & Neuter Subcommittee Status Report

Commissioner Ballenger advised that there is nothing new to report.

Humane Treatment and Animal Cruelty Enforcement

Commissioner Burkett advised that as reported to Council at the UED meeting, there is a limited on what can be done concerning enforcement as a city because it would be preempted by State Statute. To the extent of beefing up requirements, working with State Legislators would be required to do so. She went on to happily accept the additional task of reviewing Commercial Animal Establishments since there's not much more that can be done on enforcement at this time.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Public Comments

Ms. Linda Adkins asked Commissioner Burkett if she had a date on when the subcommittee would meet to discuss Pet Land. Commissioner Burkett advised that she didn't but would be glad to meet and hear her ideas receive input. Ms. Adkins went on to advise that she signed the petition against Pet Land because they have gotten in trouble before for falsifying documents. It looks like our Ordinance wouldn't catch the bad actors because sometimes the manager the background check is run on doesn't even know where some of their animals come from. Seems strange that with a pet overpopulation problem, the city would let someone like Pet Land open up to sell cats and dogs.

Ms. Adkins went on to share that the shelter is in a horrible location and the Commissioners should go to the philanthropic community and request donations to build a world class shelter elsewhere.

Adjourn

Commissioner Savage entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Burkett motioned and Commissioner Kunzweiler seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

TAW UPDATES

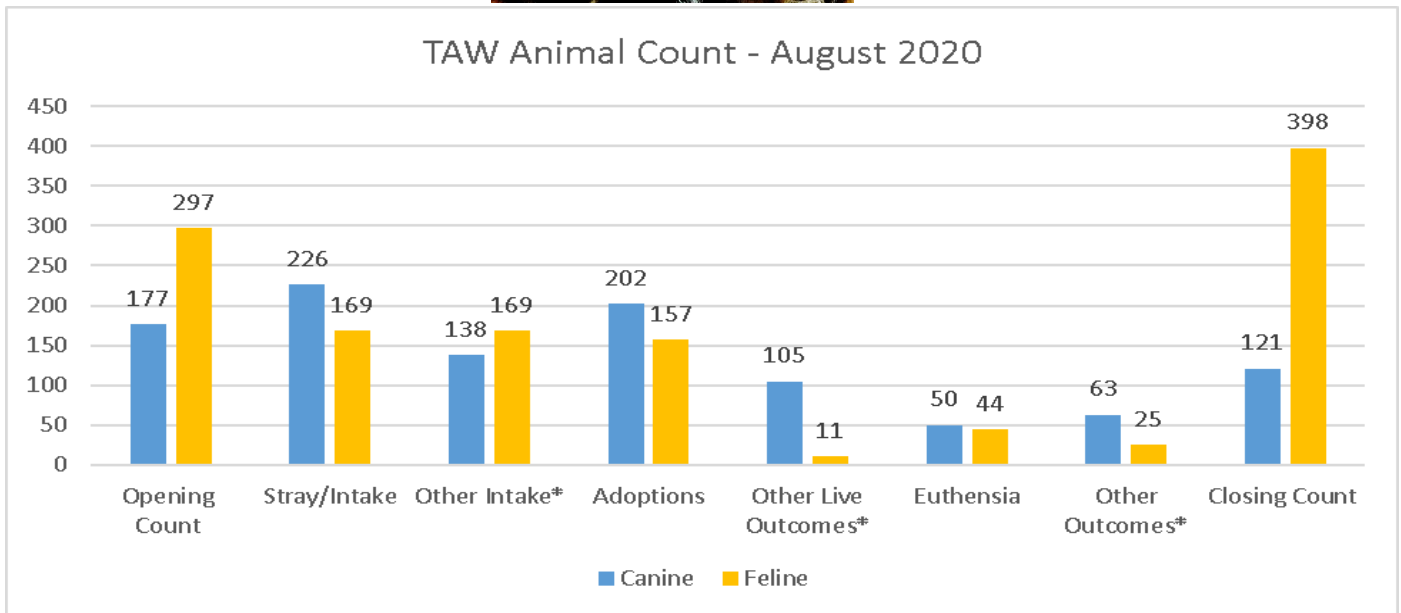
Animal Welfare Commission Monthly Report

COVID-19

We are pleased to announce that there continue to be no major issues relating to the public following all requirements outlined by the CDC and the City of Tulsa. Currently, only one (1) staff member is quarantined due to the virus.

TAW Center - Veterinarian Services

The shelter is still without a full-time veterinarian. Staff and City Employment Analyst have advertised outside of the City through the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine at Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association, American Veterinary Medical Association,. Meanwhile, Drs. Bailey, Frye and Montgomery continue to rotate and keep our clinic afloat.



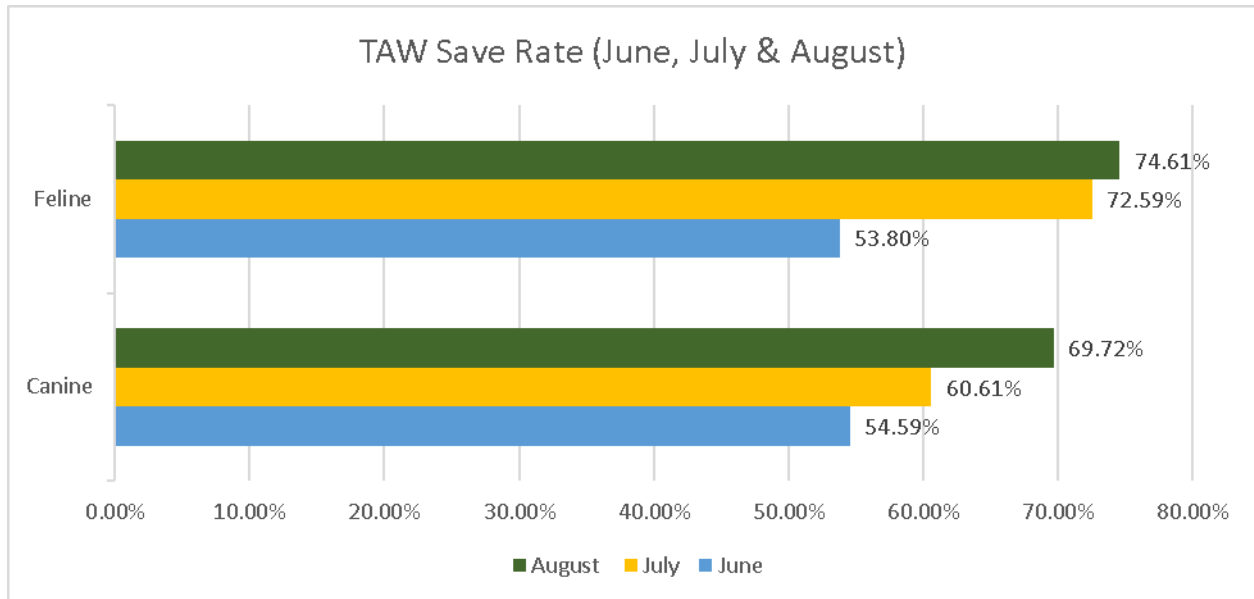
*Other Intake includes: Transferred in from Rescue Group/Shelter, Relinquished by Owner/Request Euthanasia and Miscellaneous

*Other Live Outcomes include: Return to Owner and Transferred to Rescue Group/Shelter.

TAW UPDATES CONTINUED

Parks and Puppies

The “Parks and Puppies” obedience training class scheduled for September was canceled due to low registration.



Facility Expansion

Following an onsite visit by GH2 Architects, Principal Architect, Mr. Mike Hall and his team will provide a simple presentation that summarizes the basic design goals communicated during the site visit. As one of the important stakeholders, we believe the Commission serves as a venue for broader support and buy-in particularly as it relates to fundraising for add alternates. We also believe that the Commission’s feedback will be helpful to the consultant in developing its September 30th report. Basically, the goal is to update the Commission on the design process and receive feedback from the Commission on important design criteria to take into consideration. Ultimately, we would like to circulate design concepts for broader public (online) feedback when appropriate.