

City of San Antonio



Animal Care Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 15, 2024 5:55 PM
4710 State Hwy 151, San Antonio, TX 78227

I. Call to Order:

Board Chair Braeutigam called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call:

Present: Charlene Ducote (Dist. 1), Lorena Havill (Dist. 2), George Garcia (Dist. 3), Rita Braeutigam - Chair (Dist. 4), Karen Speer - Secretary (Dist. 5), Valerie Moore (Dist. 7), Katie Jarl (Dist. 8),
Ex-Officio Member: Shannon Sims, David McCary

Absent: Amin Tohmaz (Mayor), Kathleen Davis (Dist. 6), Susan Beldon – Vice Chair (Dist. 9), Sallie Scott (Dist. 10)
Ex-Officio Members: Dr. Marilyn Gotbeter

Board Member Tohmaz arrived at 6:04pm

Ex-Officio Member Gotbeter arrived at 6:23pm

III. Chair's Statement

IV. Director's Report

ACS Director, Shannon Sims, discussed the following items:

1. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Expo that would be taking place in San Antonio, as well as staff presence at the Expo.
2. Sims stated that ACS is on track to open up two additional community-focused, spay/neuter clinics. These facilities are anticipated to operate and provide similar services as the Brackenridge and Brooks spay/neuter clinics.
3. ACS worked in partnership with Chewy.com and HSUS to coordinate a large-scale community food drive for residents to pick up dog/cat food for their pets. This was the second collaboration of this type and has been met with great reception from the community.

Director Sims turned the floor over to Ex-Officio Member and Assistant City Manager, David McCary to discuss the timeline and recruiting process for the new ACS Director.

V. Public Comment

- a. Laura Linam of District 10 expressed frustrations about picking up dogs for transport that had health concerns and fleas/ticks that were not treated. She stated this is a continuous issue. She also shared a personal account of being advised against taking parvo-positive puppies to ACS and was instead advised to work with Austin Pets Alive. She stated that working with Austin Pets Alive was a pleasant and compassionate experience.
- b. Vicki Steerman of District 7 shared her gratitude for the efforts and progress Director Sims has made during his career at ACS. She thanked him for many of programs and changes he helped implement such as getting funding for a new hospital, starting the Ambassador Program, starting the CASA division, helping “bully” breeds, working more collaboratively with Municipal Courts, and improving the ACS campus. She stated that by Director Sims getting additional funding for ACS that she felt there was some brief hope for the dogs of San Antonio.

VI. Consent Agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes from the ACS Advisory Board Meeting on March 20, 2024
2. Approval of ACS Advisory Board Statistical Reports for March and April 2024
3. Approval of the ACS Advisory Board Contracts Performance Report
4. Approval of the ACS Advisory Board Facility Inspections for March and May 2024
5. Approval of the ACS Fiscal Year 2024 Quarter 2 Report

Motion: Board Member Moore moved to approve the Consent Agenda.
Board Member Tohmaz seconded the motion.

Vote: Ayes: Tohmaz, Ducote, Havill, Garcia, Braeutigam, Speer, Moore,
Jarl

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Davis, Beldon, Scott

Action: **MOTION PASSED WITH 8 AYES, 0 NAY, 0 ABSTAIN, AND 3 ABSENT.**

VII. Items for Individual Consideration

5. A Briefing on the Spay Neuter Network.

Spay Neuter Network (SNN) Executive Director, Jordan Craig, provided a briefing on the overall progress of SNN since the start of their contract with the City of San Antonio to operate out of the Brackenridge spay/neuter clinic.

Craig provided a high-level overview of current services provided as well as the zip codes they are currently seeing the highest volume of residents utilizing their services. She also discussed plans to improve engagement to ensure residents that need the services are aware of SNN's presence and offerings. There was also mention of future plans to have an off-site presence through vaccine clinics in the community.

Craig also discussed the recently launched SNN Transport Program to assist residents with getting their pets to the services they need. She stated that for the current year they are looking to transport 1,000 pets, with a goal to double that number in following years.

6. A Briefing on the ACS "Paw"-changa Event.

ACS Managers, Claudia Balarin and Jessica Travis, provided a brief on the recent ACS community-focused celebration that was titled, "Paw"-changa. Balarin and Travis discussed that during preparations for the event they spent more time on making the event focused on the community's enjoyment, rather than dire circumstances or reduced adoption fees.

The event saw the ACS campus transformed into a celebration of not just animals, but of San Antonio culture. Residents could bring their children for face paintings and story time (provided in partnership with the San Antonio Public Library), while all participants could enjoy local vendors, folklorico dancing, a pet parade, and much more.

Travis and Balarin shared that the result was not only an overwhelmingly positive response from community attendees, but that between ACS and their on-site partner, San Antonio Pets Alive! (SAPA), the two organizations saw a total of 123 pets adopted that day. Travis provided a comparison stating that a "good Saturday", which is historically the busiest day of the week for ACS' Placement teams, would see approximately 14-18 adoptions.

They concluded the brief with a requesting more support from the community by signing up to be a foster parent since that was one of the greatest contributing factors to being able to place so many pets in forever homes that day. They also ended with plans to look for new and exciting ways to create engaging community events, such as partnering with the San Antonio Missions and an upcoming event in October.

7. A Briefing on the Unrestrained Dog Survey.

ACS Assistant to the Director, Shannon Oster-Gabrielson, provided a high-level brief on an upcoming survey aimed at determining the number of unrestrained dogs in the San Antonio area.

The first survey of this kind conducted by ACS was completed in Fiscal Year 2018 and Oster-Gabrielson stated that ACS will be improving the methodology as well as partnering with multiple organizations such as St. Mary's University, University of Texas at San Antonio, and the Southwest Research Institute.

Oster-Gabrielson said that while contracts for the project are still pending, they should have results available by the end of Fiscal Year 2024.

8. A Briefing on ACS Metrics Update.

ACS Director, Shannon Sims, provided a comparison of current key ACS metrics (October 2024 – April 204) to the same timeframe last Fiscal Year. He discussed such key metrics as Calls for Service, Citations, Intake, Adoptions, Rescues, and Live Release Rate.

VIII. Point of Personal Privilege

ACS Advisory Board Chair, Rita Braeutigam, took a point of personal privilege to provide the floor to ACS Director, Shannon Sims.

Sims took the point of personal privilege to discuss his retirement, the struggles ACS staff face, gratefulness to the ACS Advisory Board, and issues and concerns with some members of the animal welfare community.

IX. Determination of Next Meeting Date

The next ACS Advisory Board meeting was scheduled for July 17, 2024.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

APPROVED

Rita Braeutigam, Chair
Animal Care Services Advisory Board
City of San Antonio