

Minutes from Hurst Animal Services Advisory Committee Meeting
January 17, 2018

On the 17th day of January, 2018, at 12 p.m., the Animal Services Advisory Committee for the City of Hurst convened at the City Hall Council Chambers at 1505 Precinct Line Road in Hurst, Texas.

The following members were present:

Assistant Chief Steven Niekamp – City of Hurst
Animal Services Supervisor Amanda Earl – City of Hurst
Animal Services Officer Michelle Watson – City of Keller
Veterinarian, Dr. Jason Risley
Kim Leach, Hurst Resident

There were six members of the public present as well as two City of Hurst employees.

A quorum was present.

Assistant Chief Steven Niekamp called the meeting to order and conducted the following business:

Consent Agenda

1. Assistant Chief Steven Niekamp entertained a motion to approve minutes from the previous meeting held August 23, 2017. Animal Services Supervisor Amanda Earl moved to approve the minutes. Animal Services Officer Michelle Watson seconded. The motion prevailed.

Discussion Items

1. Animal Services Officer Amanda Earl welcomed Kim Leach as the newest member of the Animal Services Advisory Committee as she fulfills the citizen position on the board.
2. Animal Services Officer Amanda Earl addressed the 2017 calendar year shelter statistics as outlined in her statistics handouts. Animal intake was reduced in 2017 while owner reclaims and adoptions were up. The overall live release rate for 2017 was 95%. The euthanasia rate decreased – only 66 animals were euthanized in 2017. Feral cat intake decreased by 60% in large part due to the shelter's partnership with Mid-Cities Community Cats (MCCC). Wildlife intake has decreased as shelter staff have worked to educate members of the public on coexisting with wildlife. Bite reports and quarantines have decreased as well. Field service numbers have increased as a result of more frequent directed patrols. Shelter staff have begun recording statistics for animals returned to their homes in the field (Field Return to Owner).

Shelter visitors have decreased, but this is likely due to the shelter's increased social media presence. Potential patrons are using Petfinder and Facebook to browse through available shelter pets rather than making a trip to the shelter. Shelter donations have increased by 82%. The year's statistics were shared on Facebook and received positive feedback and productive questions from citizens. Steven Niekamp asked about the public's response to the feral cat trap-neuter-vaccinate-release (TNVR) program. Amanda Earl stated that MCCC volunteers do an excellent job of responding to requests for assistance with feral cats, as well as educating the public about the benefits of TNVR. Fewer citizens are contacting the shelter about feral cats and shelter statistics show that the TNVR program is a success. There has been no increase in complaints from citizens about a TNVR approach to the feral cat problem in the City. Steven Niekamp asked if there was a way to track "hits" on the shelter's various social media sites. Amanda Earl stated that the shelter page on the City's website, as well as the Petfinder and Facebook pages all have a way to track page views.


3. Assistant Chief Steven Niekamp addressed the current status of the shelter project. He stated that the architect has explained his ideas for the exterior and interior of the new shelter. Some concerns with line of sight and flow in the new plans have arisen. The project managers are still looking at options for land and hope to have that question settled by the next shelter project meeting. The new shelter will likely have an attached dog park for public use. There may be a slight pause in progress while the City Council goes through the election process for three Council seats – Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and one Council Place. The prospective new Mayor is anxious to push forward with the shelter project. Steven Niekamp has been offered the job of Chief of Police and will assume his new duties on February 1, 2018. This change will vacate his seat on the Animal Services Advisory Committee. Once the Council, Chief, and Assistant Chief positions are settled, the shelter project should be able to quickly move forward. Steven Niekamp also stated that the City is no longer considering a partnership with the City of Richland Hills and the City of Haltom City, but the City is still considering a partnership with the Humane Society of North Texas. Steven Niekamp added that he hopes to see the shelter project completed within a year and half.
4. Assistant Chief Steven Niekamp opened the floor for public comments. Hurst resident Sandra Bitz thanked the Committee for adding a Citizen position to the board and for appointing Kim Leach to that position. Sandra Bitz stated that, in her dealings with Hurst residents experiencing feral cat problems, she has encountered very little opposition to TNVR. She added the few residents who seem to be adamantly opposed to TNVR typically welcome assistance from MCCC once they are made aware of the benefits of TNVR programs.
5. Assistant Chief Niekamp set the next meeting for Wednesday, May 16, 2018 at noon in the Council Chambers in Hurst City Hall, located at 1505 Precinct Line Rd, Hurst, TX 76054.

Adjournment

Assistant Chief Steven Niekamp entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Animal Services Supervisor Amanda Earl moved. Kim Leach seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

Approved this 25 day of January, 2018.

Attest:



Animal Services Supervisor Amanda Earl

Approved:



Assistant Chief Steven Niekamp