

Animal Care Services
Citizen Advisory
Committee
2022 – 2023 Annual
Report

Presented to
City of Sacramento
Personnel and Public
Employees Committee

September 19, 2023

Front Street Animal Shelter
Animal Care Services Citizen Advisory Committee

Committee Members:

Denise Bell

Kathleen Garcia (past Chair)

Cynthia Karsten, DMV, Vice Chair

Leah C. Morris, Chair

Joe Robustelli (past Vice Chair)

Paula Treat

Purpose of the Committee

Established for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on strategies and policies designed to ensure and enhance animal care services for the City of Sacramento.

Ordinance No. 2001-052, Chapter 2.86 Sacramento City Code

Recent History

- Current Committee seated January 2022, following 3 years of committee suspension due to lack of a quorum.
- This new committee spent 2022 orienting to:
 - administrative rules of open meetings and prohibitions related to inadvertent quorum discussions
 - training on the Sacramento Board, Commission and Committee Handbook
 - orienting to Shelter operations and programs through Shelter Manager and Shelter staff presentations
 - receiving multiple public comments related to animal care services and concerns in and around the city
 - planning a Community Participation Workshop for 2023
 - learning about best practices in shelter animal care services

Moving forward

In 2023, the Committee identified three topics for impact:

1. Community Call Center pilot.

Identify options to support and enhance community contact through a pilot project of a community based 311 Call Center. In partnership with other organizations such as the Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (SSPCA), develop a proposal and identify potential grant funding.

- Animal Care requests generate almost 45,000 contacts with 311 annually, or about 10% of all contacts. Contact issues range from animal cruelty, dead or stray animals, to owned animal complaints and wildlife concerns.

2. Renovate/Relocate the Sacramento Animal Care Shelter.

A *Needs Assessment* proposal was developed and released September 7, 2023. Awaiting responses from interested parties.

- Issues include: dated buildings making public engagement difficult; providing care and cleanliness for animals is hard due to aged structures with heavy chain link fencing, cracked cement and broken doors; animals kept for legal holds remain in isolated cramped enclosures for extended time as investigations proceed; medical care and spay/neuter services are severely limited due to lack of space for post-surgery/recovery care, lack of lift and gurney support due to cramped space (requiring staff to lift 50-60 lb. animals by hand), inadequate anesthesia induction space (one left-hand facing table), and cramped building space with staff flow patterns requiring staff to obstruct each other at times as they move animals about for care.

3. Review Committee scope and purpose going forward. Current prohibitions on working groups and sub-committee processes prove difficult to allow Committee members to engage.

Special note about challenges ahead for animal care services...

- Community advocates are frustrated with the shelter operations and limitations, and they make their complaints clear to the Committee.
- Veterinary recruiting is incredibly difficult. There is a national shortage of veterinarians and the City of Sacramento salary for veterinarians is NOT competitive with the market. Options to supplement staff veterinarian salary seem prohibited by city rules.
- Sacramento's 10,000 persons experiencing homelessness create severe problems for many animals including hunger, exposure, injuries and sadly, animal cruelty. The Shelter Homeless Outreach Assistance Program (HOAP) makes a "huge difference" per the recent Sacramento City Express "City Minute" Headline of August 25, by providing nearly 1,600 visits with pets and people since its launch. However, the program can only do so much...

Animal care services in Sacramento are deeply challenged. Shelter staff are overall caring, creative and committed to animal welfare. The Committee appreciates your support as we work to "ensure and enhance" animal care services for the City of Sacramento.