

Memorandum



DATE April 7, 2011

TO Honorable Members of the Quality of Life Committee: Pauline Medrano (Chair),
Vonciel Jones Hill (Vice Chair), Carolyn R. Davis, Sheffie Kadane, David A.
Neumann, Steve Salazar

SUBJECT Dallas Animal Services Update Briefing

On Monday, April 11, 2011, you will be updated on Dallas Animal Services. The material is attached for your review.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.



Forest E. Turner
Assistant City Manager

Attachment

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
Mary K. Suhm, City Manager
Deborah A. Watkins, City Secretary
Thomas P. Perkins, Jr., City Attorney
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor
C. Victor Lander, Administrative Judge
Ryan S. Evans, First Assistant City Manager
A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer
Frank Libro, Public Information Office
Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager

Dallas Animal Services Update

Presented to the
City Council Quality of Life Committee
April 11, 2011



Overview

- Background
- Overview of Animal Services Operations
- Animal Services Manager Search
- HSUS Evaluation Update
- Proposed ordinance for discounted pet adoption fees

Background

- May 2, 1998 – Citizens approved \$3.5M bond investment for a new animal shelter
- June 27, 2001 – City Council awarded contract to Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to analyze animal control division operations
- November 12, 2001 – Code Compliance briefed the Council Health, Environment & Human Services Committee on preliminary HSUS report, the need for an expanded facility, size and scope of a proposed replacement shelter, and staff recommendations
 - Identified inadequate boarding/treatment capacity at existing sites:
 - Forney Road Shelter, 8414 Forney Road, opened in 1959
 - Oak Cliff Shelter, 525 Shelter Place, opened in 1965

Background

- November 15, 2001 – Animal Shelter Commission unanimously recommended construction of a 41,000 square foot shelter
- December 28, 2001 – City receives final HSUS report with recommendations for improving outreach, live releases, staff training and safety, protocols for cleaning, feeding, vaccinations and euthanasia, and management (Appendix A)
- May 3, 2003 – Bond Proposition 7 is approved by Dallas voters for \$11.7M to supplement 1998 Bond Program funds (\$3.5M) for the design and construction of a replacement shelter

Background

- October 20, 2007 – Dallas Animal Services and Adoption Center opened on Westmoreland at I-30
 - Total cost \$16.2M and included:
 - \$3.5M from the 1998 Bond Program
 - \$11.7M from the 2003 Bond Program
 - \$1.0M from the Ivor O'Connor Morgan Trust
 - Building is 100% complete for all required program functions
 - Living Machine on-site waste-water treatment system remains for completion
 - Recycled grey water intended to offset use of potable water for washing dog kennel areas
 - Scheduled to be commissioned April 2010, but sub-surface plumbing issues continued to cause problems in maintaining a stable water level at one of the six constructed wetland cells
 - No negative operational impact

Background

- In 2007, the Commission recommended that the city modify its animal ordinances
- Over eight months, staff met with animal advocates, interest groups and commission members to develop ordinances
- Council approved new ordinances that focused on pet owner responsibility in June 2008
 - Limited pets to 6
 - Established guidelines for anti-tethering
 - Established Spay/Neuter and Intact Animal requirements
 - Strengthened rules for Dangerous Dogs

Background

- In October 2009, the Animal Shelter Commission recommended a follow-up review of Animal Services division by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
 - Metroplex Animal Coalition donated \$25,000 to fund the review
- HSUS review was initiated in April 2010 and final report was received November 2010
 - Status report provided in this briefing

Overview of Animal Services Operations

- Animal Services is a division of Code Compliance and has 135 positions with a budget of \$7.06M for FY10-11
- Provides for care and control of animals in the City through enforcement of Chapter 7 of the Dallas City Code and Texas Rabies Control Act
- Dallas responds to more than 50,000 service calls annually for animals on a 24/7 basis
 - Average 148 calls every day in FY09-10
- 73% of the total calls are for loose, confined and sick/injured animals (Appendix B)

Overview of Animal Services Operations

- FY09-10 Performance compared to FY08-09
 - Adoptions increased 8%
 - Rescues (animals transferred to area rescue groups for subsequent adoption) increased 55%
 - Calls to 311 for loose animals decreased by 31%
 - Impoundments (animals caught by animal officers or surrendered by people at the shelter) decreased by 6%
 - Loose animal concerns continue to be a critical issue to Dallas residents and Dallas Animal Services continues to coordinate sweeps and education

Animal Services Manager Search

- Search for permanent Animal Services Manager is in progress and on-schedule for completion in April 2011
 - Kittleman & Associates, a search firm with extensive experience in recruiting animal shelter staffing, is facilitating the City's search for a new Animal Services division manager
 - Interviews with finalists held April 7, 2011
- Dallas Police Lieutenant continues to serve as interim manager of the Animal Services division since September 2010
 - Visited municipal shelters in Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth and Plano to identify best practices
 - Managing daily operations
 - Developing standard operating procedures and plan of action to assist the next manager in making improvements to the organization

HSUS Evaluation Update

- The HSUS evaluation report was provided to City Council by memorandum on November 29, 2010
 - Key findings in the report included:
 - The need for additional written standard operating procedures;
 - The need to clarify the mission and vision of DAS and align the Commission's goal with that of the City of Dallas; and
 - Recommendations for improvements in the use of equipment and maintenance of the shelter facility.
 - The report also noted:
 - A well-organized shelter website;
 - Commendable investment in community education;
 - Well-documented adoption procedures;
 - Accurate accounting of controlled substances and impressive competence by staff in the euthanasia process; and
 - Good systems for employee performance management and recognition.
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HSUS Evaluation Update

- Several improvements have already been implemented or are on schedule for completion since the on-site evaluation by HSUS in April 2010 (See Appendix B and C)
- As recommended by The HSUS, a task force was formed and completed a review of the 253 findings and established priorities on April 1, 2011
 - Task force members included staff from the shelter and various City departments, James Bias, President of the SPCA of Texas and Mary Spencer, an appointee to the Animal Shelter Commission
 - Actions with budgetary impact changes will be considered in the budget development process for FY11-12

HSUS Evaluation Update

- Task force utilized a score sheet system to prioritize rankings for each recommendation based on:
 - Benefit to animal health and welfare
 - Impact from management improvement
 - Potential overall benefit
 - High/low financial cost
 - Amount of labor necessary to implement or sustain
- Deadlines will be established based on rankings and implementation plan completed by May 31, 2011
- Implementation results will be documented and provided in regular updates to the Quality of Life Committee

HSUS Evaluation Update

SCORE SHEET SAMPLE

Use Rating of 0 to 5. 0 = None and 5 = High

Rank	Recommendation	Fine Focus	Broad focus	Animal Health, Welfare	Management Improvement	Potential Overall Benefit	Financial Cost	Labor Intensive	Final Rating
1.	38.) Affix identification on animal before placement into enclosure to prevent confusion, mistakes.	Animal Intake Procedures and Identification	Policy and Procedures	13	42	10	6	2	80
2.	89.) Define categories of critically ill/injured, and non-weaned animals to protect from euthanizing owned stray animal.	Incoming Animal Examination / Vaccination Protocols	Policy and Procedures	16	9	16	0	1	72
3.	90.) Develop a program and train all applicable staff in recognizing and reporting signs of common shelter diseases...and how to recognize signs of pain and suffering...	Incoming Animal Examination / Vaccination Protocols	Training	17	10	16	1	5	70

Discounted Pet Adoption Fees

- Shelter adoption fees are established in Dallas City Code, Section 7-2.7(a)(3)(A)
 - \$85 for dogs
 - \$55 for cats
 - Adoption fees partially offset City costs for spay/neuter, vaccination, microchip, heartworm test, and a free veterinary check-up at participating clinics

Discounted Pet Adoption Fees

- Recent on-site surveys of comparable shelters found that other cities promote adoptions through adoption fee discounts
 - San Antonio
 - Adoption costs are \$81 for dogs and \$29 for cats
 - City Code Section 5-160(d): “As an incentive for the adoption of animals, the director is authorized to advertise and reduce or waive adoption fees.”
 - Ft. Worth
 - Adoption costs are \$49 for dogs and \$25 for cats
 - City Code Section 6-23(e): “The director may, in his or her discretion, periodically reduce the license fees adopted by the city council in order to encourage adoption in conjunction with special events.”
 - Also, half-off adoption fees are offered to seniors and for the adoption of older animals

Discounted Pet Adoption Fees

- Quality of Life Committee was briefed December 13, 2010 and requested input from members of the Animal Shelter Commission
- Commission Members supported discounted adoptions and an ordinance stating:
 - “As an incentive for the adoption of animals, the director is authorized to reduce adoption fees.”

Examples of Pet Adoption Discounts

Examples	Benefit to customer
50% Discounts on Adoption Fees offered for holidays and special events	Adoptions fees reduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ From \$85 to \$43 for dogs■ From \$55 to \$27 for cats
Companion Adoptions offered throughout the year	Adoptions fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ \$42.50 for 1st dog/\$42.50 for 2nd dog■ \$27.50 for 1st cat/\$27.50 for 2nd cat
Senior Discount offered throughout the year	Adoptions fees reduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ From \$85 to \$43 for dogs■ From \$55 to \$27 for cats

Next Steps

- With direction from Council, develop an ordinance to amend Dallas City Code Section 7-2.7 to allow for discounted pet adoptions
 - Add the ordinance to the Council Agenda for May 11, 2011, for consideration by the City Council
- Provide a follow-up Animal Services update to Quality of Life Committee in June 2011

Appendix A: 2001 HSUS Findings

Item	Finding	Status
A	Make educational materials available at shelter	✓
B	Develop formal, organized on-the-job training for officers	In progress
C	Safety equipment for employees cleaning kennels	✓
D	Facilitate return of stray pets to owners (Lost & Found program)	Not implemented
E	Separate animals available for adoption from general population	✓
F	Open shelter later on mornings and stay open later in the day 8 am – 8 pm M-F and 10 am – 4 pm Saturday	✓ (expanded but not as suggested)
G	Create and implement an animal assessment program	Not implemented
H	Develop animal care and cleaning protocols for kennels	✓
I	Develop feeding and vaccination protocols for dogs and cats	✓
J	Develop more detailed criteria for euthanasia	In progress
K	Develop vision and mission statement	In progress
L	Reassess management structure to ensure duties are divided equitably	✓
M	Hold employees accountable through progressive discipline	In progress
N	Increase # of animal officers	✓

APPENDIX B: 311 Calls for Animal Services in FY09-10

311 Call Type	FY09-10 Count	% of Total
Loose and aggressive animal	12,443	23.1%
Confined animal	11,999	22.2%
Loose animal	8,600	15.9%
Sick/Injured animal	6,232	11.5%
Animal cruelty	2,825	5.2%
Spayed/Neutered/Intact animal violation	2,332	4.3%
Trap request	1,559	2.9%
Animal bite	1,502	2.8%
Noisy animal	1,412	2.6%
Tethering violation	1,126	2.1%
Animal cruelty follow-up investigation	908	1.7%
Unsanitary conditions	674	1.2%
Vaccination/Registration investigation	505	0.9%
Prohibited Rooster	403	0.7%
Wildlife/Livestock- Routine	363	0.7%
Pooper Scooper violation	324	0.6%
Wildlife/Livestock/Exotic	235	0.4%
Pet limits violation	229	0.4%
Confinement Outdoors	118	0.2%
Animal confined in vehicle	96	0.2%
Other - Miscellaneous	90	0.2%
TOTAL	53,975	100.0%

Appendix C: Completed Items from HSUS Evaluation

- No. 10: The operating hours for Lost and Found and the Adoption Center are now the same, and the Adoption Center is now open 7 days a week and is now open to the public 363 days of the year, closing only on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.
- Daily detail meetings for field personnel and shelter staff.
- No. 229: A manager is now on-duty during the weekends.
- No 34: Supervisors perform daily animal census where they compare computer-generated inventory sheets to the actual animal in each kennel.
- No. 42: The Lost and Found bulletin board where citizens post information about missing or found animals has been re-organized. An employee has been designated as the “Lost and Found Coordinator” to facilitate the identification and return of lost pets.
- No. 130: The 45-day hold requirement before an animal in adoption is available to rescue has been reduced to 15 days, allowing adoptable animals to leave the shelter sooner.
- No. 153: Customer Service Surveys has been added to all forms and packets provided to citizens instead of asking them to fill one out as they leave the shelter.
- No. 241: A Dallas Animal Services Facebook page has been launched and is active.
- No. 132: Meetings have been with local rescue groups to encourage partnerships, and these meetings are now scheduled quarterly to continue fostering the relationships.
- Personnel have been attending training on animal handling hosted by the SPCA of Texas.
- No. 177: Provided the Call Center operators with supplementary training in the Animal Control Ordinances so that callers can be better advised of the level of service and/or results that they may expect.
- No. 179: Each officer is required to keep a field logbook, which details everything and everywhere he/she does and goes when not at the shelter.
- No. 180: Implemented a “hot-case” board so that off-duty officers can follow up on cases in process or left uncompleted from the previous day.
- Bedding or a blanket is now provided to all animals in the shelter.
- Veterinarian staff attends detail meetings to provide training or to update staff on operational issues that need correction.

Appendix D: Items In-Progress from HSUS Evaluation

- To be completed in FY10-11
 - Discontinue use of metal identification tags and instead use color coded plastic bands
 - Process for identifying and returning lost pets to their owners will be redesigned to be more effective
 - Assess implementation of vaccination on intake for all dogs and cats
 - Develop and implement written standard operating procedures for feeding animals to ensure sufficient quantity of food based on age, size, weight, overall condition, medical needs, etc.
 - Develop an internal training manual and program specific to Animal Services ordinances, procedures, and expectations to accompany the Work Instructions
 - All new staff should complete the curriculum to ensure consistent application of procedures and protocols
 - Develop short and long-range goals for the volunteer program and conduct a survey of current volunteers to identify their needs, concerns, motivations, and thoughts toward enhancing programs and care at Animal Services