
Overview of Dallas Animal Control Operations

City Council Retreat
October 19, 2010



City of Dallas



102662

Overview

- ❑ Background
- ❑ Animal Control Operations
- ❑ Recent Incidents and Actions Taken
- ❑ Comparisons to other cities
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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 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 control operations 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
- Final report is due in October 2010

Animal Control Operations

- Animal Services is a division of Code Compliance which has 135 positions with a budget of \$7.06M for FY10-11
 - Animal Officers – 62
 - Animal Keepers – 45
 - Support Staff – 9
 - Supervisors – 5
 - Veterinary Assistants – 7
 - Veterinarians – 3
 - Mid-level Managers – 3
 - Manager of Animal Control – 1
- Care and control of animals in the city through enforcement of Chapter 7 of the Dallas City Code and Texas Rabies Control Act
- Dallas is required to have an Animal Shelter Commission per State law (Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 823, Animal Shelters)
 - Purpose is to advise cities in operation of animal shelters
 - State requires commissions have at least four members who meet at least three times a year
 - City Code requires 15 commission members to meet no less than once per quarter

Animal Control Operations

- 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)

Recent Events

- Employee A: Grand jury indictment of one of three mid-level managers at the shelter for cruelty
 - Employee A placed on administrative leave and hired experienced retiree to temporarily fill position
- Employee B: Accused of animal cruelty - mishandling an injured animal
 - Employee B was placed on administrative leave
- Employee C: Accused of animal cruelty - injuring an animal at the shelter
 - Employee C was placed on administrative leave
- Contracted an outside attorney to investigate these events

Recent Events

- Manager of Animal Control resigned
 - Hiring search firm to conduct nation-wide search for permanent shelter manager
- DPD Lieutenant was assigned as Interim Manager of Animal Control in September 2010
 - Manage daily operations
 - Visit and research best practices and challenges in other cities
 - Develop a plan of action to improve the organization

City Comparisons

Comparison	Dallas	Fort Worth	Houston	Austin	San Antonio
Does City operate a shelter?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is there a commission? How many members?	Yes, 15	Yes, 6	Yes, 7	Yes, 6	Yes, 14
Annual Impoundments	34,390	19,000	26,000*	23,000	22,000
Are loose animals released to owners in the field?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are all animals surrendered by owners accepted at shelter?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are drop boxes available for after-hours surrender of pets?	Yes	No	No	No	No

* 2005 Estimate, Report of the Mayor's Animal Protection Task Force, Houston, TX

Evaluation

- Key findings from on-site visits to shelters in other cities:
 - Impoundments in Dallas are higher
 - Loose animals are not returned to owners in the field and are impounded until owners comply with regulations
 - All animals surrendered by owners to the shelter are accepted
 - Dallas offers the convenience of night-drop boxes for after-hours surrenders
 - Identified best practices for improved staff training and oversight
 - Dallas shelter facility is newer, larger and offers more amenities
- Identified areas in need of improvement
 - Creation of clear, detailed standard operating procedures for health, sanitation and animal handling
 - Review and implement best practices for animal intake and tracking throughout the shelter
 - Assess and improve procurement process and internal controls for equipment and supplies
 - Establish training regimen and implement on-going training for employees
 - Evaluate additional recommendations from forthcoming HSUS report

Next Steps

- Complete updates of standard operating procedures by January 31, 2011
- Train employees on revised standard operating procedures by April 1, 2011
- Hire new Shelter Division Manager by April 1, 2011
- Review HSUS report due to be received in October 2010
- Provide monthly updates to Quality of Life Committee

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%