



# Coachella Valley Animal Campus

## MINUTES

Thursday – February 6, 2020  
 9:30 a.m.  
Commission Meeting  
 Coachella Valley Animal Campus  
 72050 Pet Land Place  
 Thousand Palms, CA 92276

### Animal Campus Commission

#### City of Indian Wells

Councilmember Ty Peabody

**Chairman**

Councilmember Kimberly Muzik  
(Alternate)

#### City of Desert Hot Springs

#### City of Cathedral City

Councilmember Mark Carnevale

**Vice-Chairman**

Mayor Pro Tem  
Raymond Gregory  
(Alternate)

#### City of Coachella

Mayor Pro Tem Emmanuel

Martinez

Vacant (Alternate)

#### City of Indio

Mayor Lupe Ramos Amith

Councilmember Elaine Holmes

(Alternate)

Scott Trujillo  
(City Representative)

#### City of La Quinta

Councilmember Steve Sanchez

Councilmember Kathleen

Fitzpatrick (Alternate)

#### City of Palm Desert

Councilmember Kathleen Kelly

Councilmember Susan Marie

Weber (Alternate)

#### Palm Springs

##### Animal Shelter

Gabrielle Amster –  
Executive Director

#### Friends of Palm Springs

##### Animal Shelter

Tamara Hedges- President

Ex- Officio

#### City of Rancho Mirage

Mayor G. Dana Hobart

Mayor Pro Tem Ted Weill

(Alternate)

#### County of Riverside

V. Manuel Perez, 4<sup>th</sup> District

Amy Cuen, Board Assistant

Jeff Hewitt, 5<sup>th</sup> District

#### Animal Samaritans

Len D. Betz, President

Ex-Officio

Tom Snyder, CEO

#### County Staff

Laurie Dozier

Executive Assistant I

### 1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### 2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Animal Campus Commission Meeting was called to order on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus, 72050 Pet Land Place, Thousand Palms, CA 92276, by Chairman, Councilmember Ty Peabody.

A roll call was conducted by the County Staff, Laurie Dozier, and it was determined that there was a quorum. The following were present:

#### Members in Attendance:

Councilmember Ty Peabody, City of Indian Wells  
Mayor Pro Tem Susan Marie Weber, City of Palm Desert  
Amy Cuen, Board Assistant, Riverside County  
Councilmember Mark Carnevale, Cathedral City  
Bethany Maciel, City of Indio  
Councilmember Steve Sanchez, City of La Quinta

#### Others in attendance:

Dr. Allan Drusys, Director and Chief Veterinarian, County of Animal Services  
John Welsh, Public Information Officer, County Animal Services  
Chris Mayer, Commander of Field Service, County of Animal Services  
Kim McWhorter, Program Chief, County of Animal Services  
Deanna Burnett, Operations Chief, County of Riverside  
Gabrielle Amster, Executive Director, Palm Springs Animal Shelter  
Tamara Hedges, President, Friends of Palm Springs Animal Shelter  
Michelle Bergeron, Animal Samaritans  
Laurie Dozier, Executive Assistant, County Animal Services

### 3. FINALIZATION OF AGENDA:

The agenda was approved as submitted.

### 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes approved as submitted Cuen/Trujillo m/s.

### 5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2020:

Ty Peabody was re-elected for 2019 Chairman, and Mark Carnevale was elected for 2020 Vice-Chair.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**Tabitha Davies:** I have a couple questions regarding the current treatable euthanasia rates. Who exactly is deeming them treatable and what is their credential? If greater than 70% of dogs are being euthanized and are considered treatable why are they being killed? Is it because they have been here too long, cage stress, or a physical illness? What is considered treatable and untreatable. And why is the euthanasia rate so high for cats at this shelter so out of line with the rest of Riverside county?

**Nancy Scott:** In support of the very same questions as Ms. Davies. Nancy is asking one question and would like a direct answer. Why is this shelter so out of whack? I want to hear from you, why is this shelter so outrageously different than the surrounding areas? If we are raising money and there are grants available, it seems that this isn't happening at this location. The numbers are crazy high at this shelter.

Dr. Allan Drusys stated that over the last six to eight years there has been no changes in the way animals are evaluated or deemed in one of the categories that was reference here of how cats are deemed treatable and untreatable. We have a lot of long-term staff that have dedicated themselves to the animals and the county and do a very good job at providing care and humane euthanasia when it is required or indicated. We have a group called APET who do evaluations daily on every animal every day and moving them into various categories based on their hold times. Decisions are made and approved by the shelter manager daily. We have been doing this for years. Treatable and untreatable realizing can be subjective terms. This is the way we have done business for years.

Tamara Hedges from Palm Springs stated that with their policy, they do not euthanize cats due to behavior ever, only dogs for very severe vicious behavior, which is usually court ordered., occasionally not. But we have our stats that we passed around. Treatable and non-treatable are different for us, because we are non-profit, public open admissions shelter and the city gives us 40% of our funding. We raise funds for conditions that I am imaging that the county may deem untreatable because of resources.

We do a lot of orthopedic surgeries, when we treat parvo, we have a very high success rate. We have a very substantial west medical team including a fulltime veterinarian who is an amazing surgeon, and tons of money goes into that program. Probably over \$300,000 a year, and that's what really allows us to save lives. The Best Friends Animal Society grant is a three-year grant of 1.3 million that we brought to the community and that was Valleywide, and it has had tremendous impact on the number of cats being euthanized at this facility unfortunately that grant is over and now where do we go from here. We are continuing our program, the city of palm springs funds that in part, only \$32,000, we raise the rest. I have said in many meetings, how are we going to carry this forward, but I do believe working together under an umbrella of no kill Coachella a valley but there are questions that we talked about before, what is treatable and untreatable, our treatable pie is very big and our untreatable pie is very small, and that's how we are able to handle it with our resources.

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Received a letter appointing Lupe Ramos Amtih as the City Council representative for the City of Indio serving as the liaison to the Coachella Valley Animal Campus. Received a letter from Scott Trujillo giving proxy rights to Bethany Maciel, Management Analyst in the City Manager's office, enabling her to cast his vote on matters at this meeting in his absence for the City of Indio.

## **6. ANIMAL CAMPUS COMMISSION MEMBERS AND DIRECTOR COMMENTS:**

The Commission members agreed to add the public comments questions onto the next scheduled commission meeting agenda to be answered. As stated in the Brown Act, this procedure gives staff the opportunity for research to come back and answer these questions appropriately.

- What does "treatable" mean
  - a. Is it in writing?
  - b. When was the last time it was updated?
  - c. Who is the decision on euthenization up to?
  - d. Who performs the evaluations of behavior and what is their credential?
- What is currently being done to mitigate FAS levels in animals to prevent behavioral euthanasia of "treatable" animals among dogs and cats house in CVAC?
  - a. If no, would they be willing to partner with All Big Canines to create one?
- Does the county currently have an ACDBC, CDBC, CCBC, or PCBC-A on staff or routinely volunteering to train staff and volunteers?
- Why is the number of cats euthanized by CVAC so out of line with the rest of the county?
- Are underage kittens regardless of medical status deemed for euth?
- What is the number of underage kittens euthanized and what % of cats with a URI are treated vs killed?

## **7. RIVERSIDE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES:**

- **Dr. Allan Drusys, Director and Chief Veterinarian:** Dr. Drusys discussed animal services' budget and stated that letters went out to each contract city with the new fee increases. He stated that if any of the cities would like to discuss their letter once it is received, to contact his office to set up a meeting. The billing format has changed. The metric is \$20 a day for each impound. The average stay is 10 days, making that an average of \$200 per animal. There will be a charge for dead pickups due to the time, labor and disposal. Wildlife for the desert cities is very little, although the charge would be the same as a dead pickup due to time, labor, euthanize, relocate or a rescue picks up the animal. Full cost recovery was requested by the Board of Supervisors, so we are moving in that direction. We do provide payment plans daily for owners. If an owner known dog is not picked up or unclaimed, we will send that information and charge to the Franchise Tax Board who will withdraw those fees directly from their tax return and deposit into our account. Dr. Drusys advised all cities to look at their dog licensing fee structure. All revenue comes from dogs, cats have no revenue. Cat owners get a pass and dog owners share the burden. For transparency purposes the recruitment for the new Director of Animal Services closed last week and is moving along quickly. Dr. Drusys may be retiring in the spring after all.
- **John Welsh, Public Information Officer:** John volunteered to man the PIO/media line during the time the flight from Wuhan, China was expected to arrive at March Air Reserve Base to field media calls regarding the coronavirus. We had a story regarding a dog stuck in a wheel go international. It was a great story and the dog was safely saved. We responded to a serious call in December and two horses had to be euthanized at the scene. This is the first year we are struggling to round up dogs for the Date Festival in Indio. We have a total of 80 to date.

- **Chis Mayer, Commander of Field Services:** N/A
- **Kim McWhorter, Program Chief:** The Coachella Valley Animal Campus is in the transition phase for the TNR program. We now have a fulltime staff person, Stefanie Castaneda covering this area.
- 8. **ANIMAL SAMARITANS (Tom Snyder, CEO):** Michelle Bergeron stated that Desert Hot Springs will be issuing breeder licenses within the city limits. We have a capital campaign for an adoption center which will be built next door to Animal Samaritans. This will help relieve some stress for the Coachella Valley Animal Center.
- 9. **PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER (Gabrielle Amster, Executive Director):** We would love to partner with everyone in the room today. We are continuing to move, and we are still doing TNR with Valley Wide. Our numbers are down. Adopts for dogs are at 39, and cats are at 31. Our out-takes is higher than our intakes. We are proud to report that we have no ringworm!

**Friends of Palm Springs Animal Shelter (Tamara Hedges, President):** We have secured \$70,000 in grants for spay and neutering so far this year. We are targeting hot spots and focusing on the west end of Palm Springs. Intaking is still going up. We are hoping for a greater low-cost program that will help. We would love to work with the County and the bus to spay and neuter. We would like to hold events on the weekends, which is best for the public.

#### **10. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next meeting of the Animal Campus Commission is scheduled for May 7, 2020 at 9:30am at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus, 72-050 Pet Land Place, Thousand Palms, CA 92276.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.