



Coachella Valley Animal Campus Commission Meeting (Minutes)

Thursday – February 2, 2023
9:30 a.m.
Commission Meeting
ZOOM

Animal Campus Commission

City of Indian Wells
Councilmember Ty Peabody
Vice - Chairman

City of Desert Hot Springs

City of Cathedral City
Councilmember Mark Carnevale
Mayor Ernesto Gutierrez
(Alternate)

City of Coachella
Councilmember Denise Delgado
Vacant (Alternate)

City of Indio
Councilmember 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 Karina Quintanilla
Chairman

**Palm Springs
Animal Shelter**
Dan Rossi
Executive Director

**Friends of Palm Springs
Animal Shelter**
Tamara Hedges- President
Ex- Officio

City of Rancho Mirage
Councilmember Meg Marker
Councilmember Lynn Mallotto
(Alternate)

County of Riverside
V. Manuel Perez, 4th District
Alexis Perez, Board Assistant

Animal Samaritans
Len D. Betz, President
Ex-Officio
Tom Snyder, CEO

County Staff
Laurie Dozier
Executive Assistant I

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Chairman

2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Animal Campus Commission Meeting was called to order on Thursday, February 2, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. via ZOOM by Chairman Mark Carnevale, Cathedral City.

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:

Board Assistant Alexis Perez, Riverside County
Councilmember Steve Sanchez, City of La Quinta
Councilmember Mark Carnevale, Cathedral City
Councilmember Ty Peabody, City of Indian Wells
Councilmember Meg Marker, City of Rancho Mirage
Assistant City Manager Scott Trujillo, city of Indio
Councilmember Karina Quintanilla, City of Palm Desert

Others in attendance:

Erin Gettis, Director, County of Riverside Animal Services
Kim McWhorter, Deputy Director of Operations, County of Riverside Animal Services
Josh Sisler, Commander of Field, Riverside Animal Services
Michelle Bergeron, Animal Samaritans, Coachella Valley
Dr. Sara Strongin, Chief Veterinarian, County of Riverside Animal Services
Laurie Dozier, Executive Assistant, County of Riverside Animal Services
Dan Rossi, Executive Director, Palm Springs Animal Shelter
Tamara Hedges, President, Friends of Palm Springs Animal Shelter
Tom Snyder, CEO, Animal Samaritans

3. FINALIZATION OF AGENDA:

The agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes from November 2, 2022 were approved.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2023:

The election of officers took place and Karina Quintanilla, City of Palm Desert was voted Chairman, and Ty Peabody, City of Indian Wells was voted Vice-Chairman.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Kim Hardee stated she has been doing low cost spay and neuter clinics for the city of Indio since 2013 and has done over 17,000 surgeries to date. Discussed recruiting of more veterinarians and the struggle to pay higher wages for per diem veterinarians. Kim Hardee stated she does a TNR (Trap, neuter, and release) program at no cost and can spay/neuter 40-50 cats at each clinic. She is currently working out of the ABC Recovery Center, which is very accommodating. She is looking for more space for these services and has asked the City of Indio and the County to assist in obtaining more space for these services.

7. CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence was received appointing Ty Peabody, City of Indian Wells as representative, Meg Marker, City of Rancho Mirage as representative, and Lynn Mallotto, City of Rancho Mirage as alternate for the Coachella Valley Animal Campus Commission meeting.

8. ANIMAL CAMPUS COMMISSION MEMBERS AND DIRECTOR COMMENTS:

Karina Quintanilla has suggested that the commission and animal services lobby for the efforts needed in their areas to make more of an impact to assist with the needs of animal services. Tamara Hedges stated she will continue to pitch the vet program to UCR. Karina would like to see Animal Services send a letter to each city to lobby for their support and let them know of our efforts, concerns, current services, need to send letter to the cities, and projected solutions.

A special meeting was requested and will be set within the next two weeks to vote and discuss holding in person, virtual, or hybrid meetings moving forward. Erin Gettis will check on the guidelines from county counsel in the meantime. Laurie Dozier will send out a meeting request.

9. RIVERSIDE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES:

Erin Gettis, Director: Riverside Animal Services has four veterinarians on staff, which is the most animal services has ever had. Discussed veterinarian shortages and the need to adjust pay and raise the per diem wage for the county due to other areas average rate of pay. There are only two veterinarian schools in the state of California. That would be Western University and UC Davis. There is a community cat program in the Jurupa Valley, and they do free spay and neuters but with a cap on it. The shelter is struggling to keep up with spay and neuters of adoptions and return to owners of their own internal animals. Animal Services may possibly be opening the San Jacinto Valley Animal Campus for surgeries and also add a surgery suite at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus as well. This would include two surgery tables within the year. The DAS mobile bus is currently out of commission. DAS has ordered two new busses for replacement. The cost is \$250k each. One should be ready this calendar year and the 2nd bus during the next calendar year. Animal Services budget has been improved over the last three years. Funding has been

received to do essential upgrades, adjusting of the fees which are now fixed, no cuts to our budget, and the Board of Supervisors has been very supportive.

Kim Youngberg, Deputy Director of Operations: Riverside Animal Services just received a \$300,000 grant from UC Davis providing training and a trainer to teach animal services staff veterinarians how to enhance their skills to provide high volume spay and neuters. Once trained, our own staff vets will be able to train other veterinarians.

Dr. Sara Strongin, Chief Veterinarian: Dr. Sara Strongin discussed a deadly disease that shelters are facing county wide, Strep Zoo. Animal Services press release was emailed to each of you for review. When animals are leaving the shelter after spaying or neuter or returning to their owner, they are given an antibiotic injection to help with this disease. We have only seen cases in the Jurupa Valley shelter, not in the Coachella Valley Animal Campus yet. The deadly disease can appear quickly. A dog could appear healthy one moment and then die quickly the next. The goal is to recognize it and catch it early. If caught early enough penicillin can treat Strep Zoo and some oral medications as well. The response from the public has been positive. We have asked for foster help from foster parents that do not have animals in their homes to foster dogs during this outbreak. Animal Services had 59 new foster parents sign up just last week. Be aware and be proactive.

10. ANIMAL SAMARITANS (Tom Snyder, CEO):

Tom Snyder stated that their spay and neuter appointments are six to eight weeks out. Animal Samaritans now has two highly skilled doctors, and they can do 20-25 surgeries a day. They have opened more surgery slots for animal services. They just received a \$40k grant for spay and neuters for the east valley. Large dogs are a challenge on the bus, and they must transport them to the clinic for surgeries. They have held three spay and neuter clinics this year. Animal Samaritans also has a certified vet oncologist on staff and will also have a specialized doctor joining them from Los Angeles.

11. PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER (Dan Rossi, Executive Director):

Dan Rossi stated he is seeing the same trends with veterinarians. He did hire a full-time vet who will start early march. This is the highest salary they have ever paid for a veterinarian. It is also difficult getting support vet technicians as well. There is no where local to certify vet techs. This should be added to the lobbying efforts. He is seeing a crisis with large dogs as well. They are doubled up in the kennel and the stress level is high. The large dogs are mostly Huskies, Shephard's and Malinois. A long-term strategy is needed.

12. FRIENDS OF PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER (Tamara Hedges, President):

Tamara Hedges was in attendance.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the Animal Campus Commission is scheduled for May 4, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.