



Coachella Valley Animal Campus Commission Meeting (Minutes)

Thursday – October 03, 2024
9:30 a.m.
Commission Meeting
In-Person

Animal Campus Commission

Voting Members

Cathedral City

Nancy Ross
Mark Carnevale (Alternate)

City of Coachella

Denise Delgado
Frank Figueroa (Alternate)

City of Desert Hot Springs

Gary Gardner

City of Indian Wells

Ty Peabody **Vice – Chair**
Dana Reed (Alternate)

City of Indio

Lupa Ramos Amith
Rob Rockwell (Alternate)

City of La Quinta

Steve Sanchez
Kathleen Fitzpatrick (Alternate)

City of Palm Desert

Karina Quintanilla **Chair**
Evan Trubee (Alternate)

City of Rancho Mirage

Michael O’Keefe
Lynn Mallotto (Alternate)

District 4

Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Esmeralda Perez (Alternate)

Non-Voting Members

Animal Samaritans Ex-Officio

Tom Snyder

Loving All Animals Ex-Officio

Michael Phipps Russell
Shelley Daily (Alternate)

Palm Springs Animal Shelter

Ex- Officio

Dan Rossi
Tamara Hedges

RCDAS Staff

Charissa Leach
Dr. Kimberly Youngberg
Kasey Saldarelli
Kristen Hassen (Consultant)

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Councilmember Nancy Ross, Cathedral City

2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Animal Campus Commission Meeting was called to order on Thursday, October 03, 2024, at **9:33** a.m. in person by Mayor; Karina Quintanilla (**Chair**), City of Palm Desert.

A roll call was conducted by the Mayor; Karina Quintanilla (**Chair**), City of Palm Desert, and it was determined that there was a quorum. The following were present:

Members in Attendance: Quorum Met

- Cathedral City, Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Ross
- City of Coachella, Councilmember Frank Figueroa
- City of Desert Hot Springs, Councilmember Gary Gardner (**Absent**)
- **Vice Chair:** City of Indian Wells, Councilmember Ty Peabody (**Absent**)
- City of Indio, Mayor Lupa Ramos Amith
- City of La Quinta, Councilmember Steve Sanchez
- **Chair:** City of Palm Desert, Mayor Karina Quintanilla
- City of Rancho Mirage, Councilmember Michael O’Keefe
- County of Riverside, Supervisor V. Manuel Perez, District 4

Ex. Officio’s in Attendance:

- Tom Snyder, CEO, Animal Samaritans
- Michael Phipps Russell, Loving All Animals
- Tamara Hedges, President, Palm Springs Animal Shelter (**Absent**)
- Dan Rossi, Executive Director, Palm Spring Animal Shelter (**Absent**)

Staff in Attendance:

- Charissa Leach Asst. County Exec. Officer, RCDAS
- Kim Youngberg, Assist Director of Operations, RCDAS
- Kristen Hassen (Outcomes for Pets), Outside Consultant for RCDAS
- Kasey Saldarelli, Executive Assistant and Commission Sect., RCDAS

3. Election of Chair (February 2025):

- Motion passed by the Commission to table voting on Chair and Vice Chair at this time. This item will be on the agenda for December 5, 2024. Term starts in February.

4. Updates to the Agenda: No updates brought forward.

5. Approval of Minutes: Motion passed with approval of minutes for August 01, 2024.

6. Staff Reports and Action Items:

Agenda Item 1: Review of the operating budget and request for commission budget.

- Animal Services Presentation: Budget by Shelter Fiscal Year 24-25 with Budget adjustments. – presented by Interim Director Kimberly Youngberg.
- Comprehensive fee study (Rates are on hold per Asst. County Exec. Officer Charissa Leach)
- Commission requested detailed budget breakdown for CVAC only (expenditures & allocated items) – Lupa Ramos Amith
- Supervisor Perez mentioned that it would be a great expense to the cities if the County charged full price. The County would like to offer feasible options by meeting halfway but also have a solution.
- It was suggested by Steve Sanchez that cities might need to consider increasing their contributions.
- Nancy Ross suggested a deadline for the requested budget to be sent out before next Commission meeting.
- Frank Figueroa mentioned that contract operating cost with the county is small compared to each city having their own shelter.
- Commission requested subcategories for itemized items. Separating cost out per shelter location.
- Karina Quintanilla believes that the fee study will help us find the who, what, when and why.
- **Receive and File**

Agenda Item 2: Approve establishment of a new Commission Orientation.

- No presentation at this time and no commission orientation currently exists. Only a staff report exists per Interim Director Kimberly Youngberg.
- Commission is requesting an orientation handbook.
- Supervisor Perez proposed that Commission members and non-profit organizations come up with ideas and best practices for an Orientation. Suggested that staff should follow up with each city and non-profit organizations to make sure we help integrate their ideas which includes best practices.
- Process of intake and euthanasia procedures has been requested by Steve Sanchez and Karina Quintanilla concurs.

- Chair Karina Quintanilla nominated Frank Figueroa and Lupa Ramos Amith as possible candidates for Commission orientation.
- Supervisor Perez suggested that Michael Phipps Russell take the lead moving forward since he knows the history and diversity of the beginning of the Commission.
- The issue with animal welfare is complex. This orientation should include underlying laws that built the animal campus. The requested orientation should educate the overall history from the beginning per Michael Phipps Russell.
- Nancy Ross suggested a brief orientation for new commissioners but also have 20-minute orientations at various meetings to institute our knowledge.
- **Motion Approved Consensus Vote**

Agenda Item 3: Approve creation of an education committee and 4 proposed educational sessions.

- Candidates: Frank Figueroa, Lupe Ramos Amith, and Steve. (3 voting members)
- It was mentioned by Supervisor Perez to bring in community members for outreach at a later time.
- Michael Phipps Russell suggested to educate the commission and public on policy. This was submitted to create an education committee to oversee the workshops. The purpose is to educate and present to the public. Education is separate from orientation.
- The Commission requested education on policies.
- Workshops to be presented to the public.
- **Motion Approved Consensus Vote**

Agenda Item 4: Request funding from BOS for support of education sessions by education committee.

- Supervisor Perez stated that the education committee should come up with ideas for the budget in order to put together a funding stream to tackle all points. BOS will then try to incorporate funding for orientation of education. Funding that is raised out of the 4 districts needs to stay here. He would also like to see that funding be restricted for the 4th district. Efforts with raffles, give aways should be itemized in a restricted budget. Supervisor Perez believes that grants, philanthropy, private interest should come into play. He advised that his colleagues will be supportive once ideas from the education committee have been submitted.
- Michael Phipps Russell was not requesting a budget when submitting Item 4, he was hoping to use the mechanism to accept sponsorships, accept money from the public and find community-based partnerships. Example of a sponsored program: The County has adopted Petco Love Lost. Possibly invite them to talk.
- Karina Quintanilla proposed an audit on already received funds from the 2 designated sub-category funds. She also brought up that there is a Mercedes car that has been donated to raise funds for the love of animals. QR code on Loving All Animals website. She mentioned that we are on our way to community-based partnerships.
- Motion to request funding from the BOS for education session and ensure items are itemized and restricted for the 4th district.
- Steve Sanchez concurs to having a master plan and to be good stewards of our taxpayer's money.
- **Motion Approved Consensus Vote**

Agenda Item 5: Update of state legislation impacting animal welfare.

- DAS provided a staff report that highlights legislation Laws. Within handout, it indicated detailed items that California Welfare Association and DAS supports. It was suggested that Commissioners review.
- Supervisor Perez would like Legislation laws to be available to the public at every Commission. He suggested that the Commission pick their top 3 of suggested legislation and share it with DAS staff. Supervisor mentioned policy efforts on a much larger scale where we have a policy analyst. Engaging at all levels it ideally.
- Commission requested legislation staff report to be updated at every Commission meeting.
- Michael Phipps Russell emphasized the importance of monitoring legislation, there were bills last year that had they been passed, this year's budget would be much different. Mr. Russell suggested that we might want to lend our voice if we expect Riverside County to endorse specific bills. Every voice makes a difference, and everyone should monitor what is going on in Sacramento. The governor did sign 1233. Everyone needs to be in constant communication with legislation. If DAS is endorsing, you are too.
- Karina Quintanilla suggested that links be provided to offer maximum transparency on what positions we are taking. It was confirmed that links were emailed to all Commissioners prior to meeting.
- [Advocacy | California | California Animal Welfare Association](#)
- **Motion Approved Consensus Vote**

Agenda Item 6: Study session/workshop schedule and status.

- Charissa Leach Asst. County Executive gave an update on progress and goals of the Ad Hoc committee. The BOS approved the Ad Hoc on July 30th, 2024. There have been 3 meetings held since approved. We have a large problem; we have 4 county shelters that are completely diverse in animal population and people population. This is a nationwide problem. We need help but also need to focus on building better relationships. We have made programs with support services. 8,000 people and animals have been assisted through grants: rental assistance, pet deposit, food, vet bills, and blankets. We are currently fostering 900 plus animals shelter wide. There are 5 priorities with number one being to increase positive outcomes. Outcomes for Pets is our new consultant that we brought on to assist. They bring with us their history, knowledge of the shelter systems. They helped get us started with support services, bringing in national leaders in shelter care, shelter outcome, and shelter flow. We must be able to train our staff and present opportunities for spay and neuter. We cover 16 different cities. We appreciate the advocates and would like to engage. We need time to get to work, community problem and community solution. Just know we are ready to have a sustainable program. A monthly progress report will be generated and posted on our website and emailed to the Commission members.
- Kristen Hassen started animal sheltering in 1999. Euthanasia rates were 80-85% in the Midwest. We were called humane agents at that time. Kristian decided to start a different career but came back to animal welfare in 2013. Last ten years, lead 3 open admission county shelters: Fairfax County Virginia, Austin Texas, and Pima County, Arizona. A challenge that we face is that we don't have a lot of national best practice standards, nor state standards. Kristian tries hard to balance public health and safety, live outcomes, humane care of animals, engagement, and pet support. She is grateful to be here and promises that every penny spent will be used in saving more lives. Kristian built the largest municipal foster program in the country with more than 5000 animals going to

foster. When a recommendation is brought forth, it will be backed up by data and research with numerous experts weighing in.

- Frank requesting communication update and holding DAS accountable.
- Asst. County Executive Charissa Leach confirmed this is a public outreach and that we are working on a campaign but also working on bringing in a public information specialist. Want to accomplish live outcomes by engaging people.
- Lupe Ramos Amith suggested that the Commission be posted on dates and locations. Consultant should speak to each of the commissioners to get perspective.
- Karina Quintanilla wanted to know if there was an RFP process put forward and how was this organization picked and what was the cost. It was confirmed by Asst. County Executive Charissa Leach that it was a sole source contract. Outcomes for Pets had worked with DAS before, we needed someone that new our system and could bring in national leaders. Contract for 2 years was 2.5 million.
- **Motion Approved Consensus Vote**

Agenda Item 7: Remote attendance of commission meetings.

- Remote Attendance (Brown Act allows under 2449 & 3220)
- Brown Act allows for Just Cause.
- Supervisor Perez suggested that we as a Commission revisit this in six months once we are moving in the right direction.
- Nancy Ross has done this out of state, location must be posted, and the public can join. – Example: hotel room.
- Lupa Ramos Amith – attending remotely can be subject to options, example ADA laws which allow additional provisions. It's better for the conversation to be present.
- Karina Quintanilla – this item was brought up due to absences with no alternate in place. Wanted to ensure someone would be present. Whatever increases our ability to hold quorum and allow actions to move forward would be what's best. We should exercise this option when in need.
- **Receive and File**

Agenda Item 8: Change of meeting location.

- Potentially use the CVAG location. - Frank Figueroa
- Cathedral City would like to offer their chambers.
- Palm Desert would like to offer their chambers.
- Michael Phipps Russell strongly encourages you to please take the time to walk by the kennels. So many elected officials who were funding the shelters had never stepped foot in it! This room was built for the Commission, so that everyone would have the opportunity to walk the shelter.
- City of Rancho Mirage offers their chambers.
- Supervisor Perez proposed that we have our Commission meetings at all commission city locations. Proposed evening meetings.
- Frank Figueroa would like for you to consider staff moral and the service that is provided to the public, it takes up a whole morning.
- Karina Quintanilla proposed to have every other meeting at the animal shelter.
- Hold Commission meetings at alternating locations both onsite and offsite and to establish a secondary location as alternate.
- **Motion Approved Consensus Vote**

7. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Judy Garland – Has an idea for media and dog help. Use more imagination when running the shelter. Bring Cesar Milan and other for best practices.
- Miss Christine – Supporter of the animals. Does not agree with euthanasia or the new contract with Kristen Hassen.
- Erin Highland – Left Commission meeting.
- Conner Bennett Sharpe – Left Commission meeting.
- Janet McAfee – Public Safety issue, call to action, end contract, and offer free spay and neuter. Cancel contract with Kristen Hassen.
- Bruce Krider – We need dramatic change at the Riverside County shelters and leadership. Received 6 additional minutes from Chris Jones and Pam Murray. Distributed handout: In Defense of Animal.
- Chris Jones – Yielded time to Bruce Krider.
- Pam Murray – Yielded time to Bruce Krider.
- Georgia L. – Fix our shelter coalition and end contact with Kristen Hassen.
- Peggie Crowley – Would like for us to pay for calming shot before euthanasia and lower surrender fee. Wishes to give remaining time to Janet McAfee.
- Valerie Masi – The county has wasteful spendings. Employees are not animal people.
- Stephen Morison – Left Commission Meeting.
- Tabitha Davies – Speaks on new contract, reform management, and removal of public information. Distributed handout.
- Wendy Aragon – End contract with Hassen. Abandonment laws need to be enforced.
- Julie Virga – Cancel Hassen contract. Reduce intake protocols. Distributed handout.
- Sharon Logan – End contract with Hassen. Her model is not for animals. It is all business. Distributed handout
- Sharon Malone – End contract with Hassen. Asked to hear supervisors’ point of view on this contract.
- Sara Suepanelson – Left Commission meeting.
- Jazmin Villanueva – End contract, why not fund spay and neuter, show up for your cities and community, and educate.
- Laura Marie – Left Commission meeting.
- Laurie Deane – Believes we all need to connect; we can defeat the holocaust we have caused. Let us join and show what an active rescue does.
- Laura Mangiaracina – Agrees with Laurie Deane.
- Alan T Woodrow – Left Commission meeting.
- Christine Ziegler – Has a problem with rendering, and it should be outlawed. We should vote you people out because of the people you hire.
- Tonya Petrovna – Wrote on speaker card. “The no kill solution is the way to go.”
- Lisa Lebowski – Attached a statement stating that transparency is needed for Red listed dogs. Yielded time to Georgia L. Georgia continues: We must stop Hassen protocol’s as she is looking to profit off animals. Failed leadership is behind failed shelters.

(*Written Comments)

- * Sharon Mastropietro

8. ANIMAL CAMPUS COMMISSION MEMBERS AND DIRECTOR COMMENTS:

- **Cathedral City – Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Ross** – Offered Cathedral City Cambers. Private conversation with Supervisor Perez, he indicated going ½ in on city efforts across CVAC for spay and neuter busses. Take advantage of the generosity. We always try to be helpful with services for the community and cities, but we are unable to be helpful 24/7.
- **City of Indio – Mayor Lupa Ramos Amith** – Will work with active 501C3 that will use buses and take advantage of Supervisor Perez’s offer. Concerned about RFP and off hour service as mentioned in their contract. Shelter must be more proactive for off hour services. It is important to the community. We need a solution for services included in our contract. Interim Director Kimberly Youngberg confirmed that DAS did contact the City of Indio and given a phone number to call for afterhours support. Calls are prioritized by urgency, with priority one being most urgent. The afterhours service is available to anyone who calls in.
- **City of Coachella – Councilmember Frank Figueroa** – Left Commission at 12:21pm. Mentioned that he has concerns with sole source and contract.
- **City of Desert Hot Springs– Gary Gardner** – N/A
- **City of La Quinta – Councilmember Steve Sanchez** – N/A
- **City of Rancho Mirage – Councilmember Michael O’Keefe** – N/A
- **Ex. Officio Tom Snyder – Animal Samaritans CEO** – The flyer received from HARC has a QR code, please scan it and take the survey on pet ownership. 3 animal welfare organizations have contracted with local research nonprofit to conduct a survey of pet owners. Some may have already received an invite by mail. This survey is intended to help improve pet services. The written report will be based on the survey results. This will allow us to request funds from grant providers. Our spay and neuter clinic is under renovation. We have since doubled our spay and neuter efforts with the county. Had 2 free large dog clinic events in east valley, 32 large breed dogs were s/n. Want to thank Kirk Geiger’s group and California Paws Sanctuary for their help. Rescue program update – Tuesday, we had 7 long term residents leave to other safe locations. September – rescued 71 at risk dogs and cats. YTD 475.
- **Ex. Officio Alternate Michael Phipps Russell – Loving All Animals** – Underwriting 4 spay and neuter clinics totaling 1,000 surgeries throughout Coachella Valley, only possible with partnering with PSAS and Riverside County. Agenda items submitted on my behalf are issues that have been discussed for a very long time. Joined the Commission in May. Our emphasis as an agency is education and to participate and facilitate for the community to understand various policies. 2002 meeting minutes gave definition of no kill/adoptable/treatable and shelter purpose. We have yet to speak about 1998 Hayden Act. We should be able to compare and contract.
- **Riverside County Supervisor V. Manuel Perez** – N/A
- **City of Palm Desert Mayor Karina Quintanilla (Chair)** – Encourages to take the HARC survey. We have presented the Hayden Act with the past director; she stated that she was not subject to doing so. Asilomar Accords which also provides information on how

to assign animals with various medical and behavior conditions also needs a revised mandate. Has concerns with the RFP contract for consultant. Read Bylaws (IX A, D, and E). Data will lead to solutions.

- **RCDAS Interim Director Kimberly Youngberg** – We have distributed an updated sheet for the Coachella Valley Campus Commission. Our campuses are now open longer on Wednesdays 10 am to 7pm excluding the Blythe shelter. Just a reminder to everyone, we have a lot of opportunities for volunteering, fostering, and first date. January to present 3400 live outcomes. We have completed 12 spay and neuter/wellness clinics, serving 617 pets. CVAC has administered 11,000 vaccines to animals within communities. On the back of the sheet, it lists all upcoming events. Want to say thank you to Loving all Animals, District 4 and Animal Samaritans for supporting our efforts.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Animal Campus Commission Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 05, 2024; at 9:30 a.m. in person (location TBD).

10. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01p.m.