



Oakland Animal Shelter Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Date and Time: *Wednesday, November 19, 2014, 4:30 pm*

Meeting Location: *Oakland City Hall, Hearing Room 3*

Meeting Attendance:

Present: *Amelia Funghi, Allison Lindquist, Willow Liroff, Jen Dalmasso, Evan Eustis*

Absent: *Kate O'Connor, Ann Dunn*

Resigned: *Deirdre Strickland*

Staff: *Karen Boyd, City Administrator's Office; Rebecca Katz, Animal Services Director*

Meeting Minutes

The seventh meeting of the Oakland Animal Shelter Community Advisory Committee (Committee) was held on Wednesday, November 19, 2014. The meeting was called to order by the Committee Chairperson Amelia Funghi at approximately 4:30 pm.

1. Welcome & Introductions

At the start of the meeting, Karen Boyd introduced Rebecca Katz, the newly hired Animal Services Director, who started in her new position on Monday, November 17. She also noted that Deirdre Strickland has resigned from the Community Advisory Committee.

2. Open Forum

There was one public speaker during open forum.

3. Review and Approve Minutes

The minutes of the October 22, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved (approval moved by Allison Lindquist and seconded by Evan Eustis).

4. Update on OAS Transition from OPD

New Animal Services Director Rebecca Katz introduced herself and provided an overview of her philosophy of animal welfare and her initial observations of OAS. She said prior to taking the position she did her due diligence and was familiar with the challenges OAS has been facing. Her initial observations reveal a significant challenge with the level of resources available, trust issues, medical concerns, and crowding (she emphasized that she does not believe in warehousing animals or allowing animals to suffer in overcrowded conditions). Her intention is to bring together people from various quarters who are invested in the shelter to make a difference--this includes OAS staff, volunteers, rescue groups and local non-profits. She said a priority is to address overcrowding and medical issues by setting up an isolation ward and that other strategies would be needed as well. Euthanasia is not a first option, and rescues cannot be the only resource for alleviating crowded conditions at the shelter. Adoptions must also be increased through community outreach.

Rebecca stated that she was impressed with the live release numbers at OAS, which demonstrate how much people--staff, rescues and volunteers--care about animals and push for finding homes for them. She noted that staff members often get the brunt of any shortcomings, but never has she seen animal shelter staff work as hard; it is important for staff to be acknowledged and part of the solution.

Her short-term focus will be on addressing behavior and training needs, hiring a Shelter Manager and increasing veterinary staff.

Karen Boyd of the City Administrator's Office provided an update on the status of the transition of OAS from OPD to a stand-alone department. The legal transition requires that the City Council adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 2.29 of the Oakland Municipal Code to establish the Oakland Animal Services Department in the City Administrator's Office. The staff report and ordinance was introduced to the City Council on November 18 and will have a second reading on December 9, at which time it will be approved and the administrative process may begin to transfer the staff and bureaucratic structure to support a new department.

Karen also updated the Committee on the status of hiring key OAS staff:

- *Animal Control Officers:* The hiring process is being completed for these positions.
- *Shelter Manager:* Given the urgency of hiring a Shelter Manager and the time it takes to recruit and hire a permanent employee, staff is pursuing the option of making a provisional appointment of an employee who would then be required to compete in the hiring process for the permanent position.
- *Veterinarians:* There are three part-time veterinarians in place sharing the hours of one full-time employee. A fourth is in the process of a background check.

- *Veterinary Technicians:* Two Vet Techs are in the process of a background check.
- *Rescue Coordinator:* Rebecca reported that she is prioritizing the need to have animal behaviorists and trainers under contract to review the behavior assessment tool and provide training for OAS staff in evaluating animals. She is interested in bringing in reliable and trusted professionals with behavior and training expertise under contract to provide these important services.

Karen stated that with respect to the Animal Control Officers (ACOs), there are several options under consideration: 1) the ACOs report to OPD and physically move out of OAS; 2) the ACOs report to OPD and stay at OAS; or 3) the ACOs remain with OAS. These various options are being considered in the context of what will best foster animal welfare and serve the needs of OPD, OAS and the City overall.

5. Review Revised Draft Ordinance

At its September meeting, the Committee had approved a proposed ordinance creating a permanent Animal Services Community Advisory Commission. During the course of legal review by the City Attorney’s Office, several proposed changes and questions were raised which Karen brought back to the Committee for further review, discussion, and clarification. Specifically the Committee was asked to consider whether having few Commissioners would result in a greater likelihood that the Commission would have a quorum and retain the full number of appointments, how terms could be staggered to ensure continuity, term lengths, term limits, and whether appointments would be held over when terms expire. Committee members made a number of modifications and approved the revised ordinance, which will be brought to the City Council for adoption.

6. Subcommittee Reports

The Committee reviewed, modified and approved three policy recommendations:

- Intake, Public Processing and Live Release—moved by Allison Lindquist; seconded by Evan Eustis; unanimously approved
- Volunteer Program—moved by Jen Dalmaso; seconded by Evan Eustis; unanimously approved
- Foster Care Program—moved by Evan Eustis; seconded by Willow Liroff; unanimously approved

These final policy recommendations will be presented to Director Katz for review and implementation.

A last policy area--Community Outreach--was tabled. Overall, the Committee members agreed that there are so many immediate priorities to address that community outreach could be addressed in greater detail at a later date. Allison Lindquist, President and CEO of the East Bay SPCA, offered a number of resources to assist OAS with community outreach. For example, EBSPCA offered to hold shot fairs at OAS and provide spay/neuter vouchers, and that OAS could refer people to the EBSPCA for drop-in assessment and behavior advice to minimize owner surrenders.

7. Next Steps

Karen stated that the original scope of the Committee was to provide advice and guidance to the City Administrator on OAS operations until a permanent Animal Services Commission could be established. She acknowledged the hard work and tremendous dedication that Committee members have contributed to assist the City through a challenging transition to a standalone department, and that they had fulfilled their original mission. She asked if any of the Committee members were interested in staying on until the permanent Commission was established, and the Committee asked Rebecca if their continued participation would be valuable to her in the interim. She said that it would be helpful to hear about the issues facing other shelters and learn from her peers about recommended approaches to address common issues. The Committee agreed to continue to meet until the permanent Commission is seated.

The next meeting of the Community Advisory Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, December 17 at 4:30. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.