



Coachella Valley Animal Campus

Animal Campus Commission

City of Cathedral City
Councilmember Mark Carnevale
Mayor Stan Henry
(Alternate)

City of Coachella
Councilmember Betty Sanchez
Vacant (Alternate)

City of Desert Hot Springs
Councilmember Joe McKee

City of Indian Wells
Mayor Ty Peabody
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed
(Alternate)

City of Indio
Councilmember Michael Wilson
Jason Chan
(Alternate)

City of La Quinta
Councilmember John Pena
Mayor Pro Tem Kristy Franklin
(Alternate)

City of Palm Desert
Frankie Riddle

**Palm Springs
Animal Shelter**
Dr. Shayda Ahkami,
Shelter Director

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

City of Rancho Mirage
Mayor G. Dana Hobart
Chairman
Mayor Pro Tem Ted Weill
(Alternate)

County of Riverside
John J. Benoit, 4th District
Patricia Cooper,
Board Assistant
Vice-Chair
Marion Ashley, 5th District

Animal Samaritans
Len D. Betz, President
Ex-Officio

County Staff
Laurie Dozier
Interim Executive Assistant I

Thursday, January 14, 2016
9:30 a.m.
Commission Meeting
Coachella Valley Animal Campus
72050 Pet Land Place
Thousand Palms, CA 92276

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Animal Campus Commission Meeting was called to order on Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 9:36 a.m. at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus, 72050 Pet Land Place, Thousand Palms, CA 92276, by Chairman Dana Hobart, Mayor with the City of Rancho Mirage.

A roll call was conducted by **Chairman** and it was determined that there was a quorum. The following were present:

Members in Attendance:

Dana Hobart, Mayor, Rancho Mirage
Patricia Cooper, County of Riverside
John Pena, Councilmember, La Quinta
Ty Peabody, Mayor, Indian Wells
Frankie Riddle, City of Palm Desert

Others in attendance:

Jason Chan, Sr. Management Analyst, Indio
Dr. Shayda Ahkami, Director, Palm Springs Animal Shelter
Tamara Hedges, Vice-President, Friends of Palm Springs Animal Shelter
Earl Moss, Police Captain, Cathedral City
Tom Snyder, Chief Executive Officer, Animal Samaritans
Robert Miller, Director, County Animal Services
Frank Corvino, Deputy Director, County Animal Services
Dr. Allan Drusys, Chief Veterinarian, County Animal Services
Veronica Ramos, Customer Service Manager, County Animal Services
John Welsh, Public Information Officer, County Animal Services
Laurie Dozier, Interim Executive Assistant, County Animal Services

3. FINALIZATION OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as submitted.

4. APPROVAL OF November MINUTES: Minutes approved as submitted Peabody/Pena m/s. Chairman Mayor Dana Hobart abstained.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2016: Ty Peabody was nominated for 2016 Chairman and John Pena was nominated for 2016 Vice-Chair.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Janet McAfee (Loving All Animals): There will be a happy hour this Wednesday for people and rescue dogs at Don Diego's monthly happy hour. Janet provided a flyer for the event Calling All Pet Adopters, Limo Shelter Tours. This includes a tour of the Bird Gardens and then you will visit several shelters/rescues to find your forever pet.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONTINUED:

The tour will help to educate the public and help make rescuing glamorous. Dates for this event are being set-up now.

Kim Hardee: Flyers were distributed for two weekend low cost pet clinics. They will include Zeuterin, spay, neuter, vaccines, microchipping and pet licensing. See flyers for specific dates and location. There will also be two feral TNR Clinics at the Date Festival Fair grounds. Donations and support are needed for lunches for the veterinarians. Kim will solicit local restaurants for possible donated lunches. Please come out and support.

Dr. Linda Boone: Linda discussed sterilization with Zeuterin and is very impressed with the procedure and how much less time and manpower needed for this method.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Received a letter appointing Captain Earl Moss to serve as the alternate for Councilmember Mark Carnevale, Cathedral City. Received a letter appointing Councilmember Betty Sanchez as the new representative for the City of Coachella. Received a letter appointing Councilmember Michael Wilson as the new representative for the City of Indio. Acknowledged a letter from Fred Saunders announcing his retirement.
8. **ANIMAL COMMISSION BYLAWS:** Bylaws were distributed by Laurie Dozier. This item will be revisited at the next meeting for discussion and approval with County Counsel present. Rob Miller stated that the RCDAS group has just had Brown Act Training. A few items were reviewed, discussed and corrected in the bylaws and will be addressed further at the next commission meeting. Rob also reminded the commission that all emails must be blind copied when sent between members to avoid a violation of the Brown Act.
9. **THE IMBALANCE OF DOG VS. CAT/LICENSING:** Rob Miller stated that there is an injustice in the difference between dog and cat ownership and enforcement is almost impossible. Cat owners can more easily deny ownership. Unsocialized cats that are impounded do not recover well in shelters. There is an estimated 8,000 feral cats in Coachella Valley. A viable solution is TNR, however resources are not available in the Coachella Valley. Dr. Shayda indicated she speaks to all constituents bringing in TNR cats to learn the location of where the cats originated. Rob Miller reminded the board that the County is not mandated to accept owner surrenders. Palm Springs does not support licensing cats but they are in support of microchipping. Dr. Shayda said typically constituents want to do the right thing, but it can be cost prohibitive. Discussion held regarding providing free services and the opinion that it makes animals seem disposable as opposed to charging low fees for services or asking for a donation, a gesture which may make people value their animals more.

ANIMAL CAMPUS COMMISSION MEMBERS AND DIRECTOR COMMENTS:

10. **RIVERSIDE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES:** Robert Miller, Director

- **Robert Miller, Director:**

Over the last 12 months, we have seen an 80% live release rate for dogs, but cat live releases need improvement. There is a new Community Commission being brought together that includes great committed people for the CVAC area to work on initiatives and try to forge a new path forward. A press release will be coming shortly. The County will be partnering with several organizations to do some public education campaigning and launching serious advertising with the intent of increasing visibility to the public and community members. There is a new trend in the industry to spay/neuter impounded cats and return them to the community, with some jurisdictions already practicing this. An ongoing debate is taking place regarding this practice. How would Riverside County release 2,700 cats into the community? It's amazing that 50 million people watch cat videos, but there are only 20% of live outcomes for cats from shelters across the country.

- **Frank Corvino, Deputy Director:**

Case Updates: Frank Corvino offered updates on pending cruelty cases. The individual involved in the shovel cruelty case in the desert was found mentally incompetent and will more than likely remain in a facility. The case for the dogs that overheated in the car is still under review by the District Attorney, as is the hoarder case in Cathedral City with 109 cats. There are six cases pending with Bernadette Shwenn with no new updates at this time. The Date Festival will begin on February 12, 2016, and we are hoping to meet a new adoption goal set by Supervisor Benoit of 350 animals for this year.

- **John Welsh, Senior Public Information Specialist:**

Media Updates: A copy of the 2015 media related updates was e-mailed to the Board by Laurie Dozier. Per John, Field Services Commander Rita Gutierrez has indicated that the District Attorney always encourages the department to file charges even if someone is suspected of being mentally ill.

ANIMAL SAMARITANS (Tom Snyder, CEO): Tom thanked everyone for recognizing Fred Saunders and then spoke about comments made at the last meeting regarding layoffs and program funding. Programs are still intact, however the Feral Cat Program has been negatively affected. It has not stopped, but is being postponed while seeking money for funding and grants. Tom has applied for new grants and is aware of the issues with cats. He stated he is willing to talk about partnerships with anyone who would like to speak with him. On March 12, 2016 there will be a Super Heroes 5k walk event at the newly renovated Rancho Mirage Park.

Adoption Alliance Update (Michelle Bergeron): Since 2011, 8,900 animals were saved. The last story of 2015 with Loving All Animals was a small poodle that was not eating and fearful. Please visit the Adoption Alliance Facebook page for a video. There are some positive stories and videos for viewing.

11. **PALM SPRINGS ANIMAL SHELTER (Dr. Shayda Ahkami):** Dr. Shayda and Tamara Hedges reviewed and discussed their yearly handout which includes statistics, intakes, adoptions, surgeries, volunteer hours and fosters. They hope to increase TNR numbers with the assistance of new volunteer veterinarians. They are up 40% from last year. Discussed the animal shelter monthly activities handout.

12. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2016 at 9:30AM at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus: 72-050 Pet Land Place, Thousand Palms, and CA 92276.

13. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Mayor Ty Peabody adjourned the meeting at 10:36 a.m.