

San Francisco Commission of Animal Control & Welfare Meeting Minutes - February 10, 2022

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Jane Tobin, Michael Angelo Torres, Annemarie Fortier, Irina Ozernoy, Brian Van Horn, DVM, Iris Chan, Shari O'Neill, DVM/ACC

Absent: Commissioner Nina Irani (sick), Christopher Campbell, SF RPD, Officer Joe Majeski SFPD

2. General Public Comment - No public comment

3. Approval of Draft Minutes from the January 13 Meeting - amended to include a point of clarification from Commissioner Irani. Commission approved and is now included in the posted meeting minutes.

4. Chairperson's and Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Fortier announced The Audobon Society's Great Backyard Bird Count is happening 2/18-2/21. Results will be presented at the March Commission meeting when The Audobon Society will be our public education speaker.

Commissioner Tobin updated the Commission on SFDog's news. Pet Pantry is still taking place at the Mission Food Hub. Days vary. Check the SFDog website for updates. SFDog is planning more volunteer events when the Omicron surge subsides.

5. New Business

- A. **SF Animal Control Officer "ACO-ing"** [Commissioner Ozernoy] SF Animal Care and Control Lieutenant Ellie Sadler presented on the role of an animal control officer and shared some of her experiences in the field. ACO's two responsibilities include 1) Helping People (surrender animals, conflicts with wildlife, neighbor disputes, custody and impound of animals. 2) Helping Animals (cruelty cases. Animal welfare complaints, assisting stray, sick, and rescuing animals, wildlife education). Commissioner Sadler provided many examples from her 21.5 years as an ACC and how the community can get involved with video, reporting, etc. Commissioner Sadler's entire presentation may be viewed on the Animal Commission Supporting Docs page for the 2/10/22 meeting.

Commissioner VanHorn shared his experience as an ACO in Central Valley and how important it is for the City of San Francisco to support Animal Care and Control with resources to effectively execute their responsibilities. ACC receives around 40 calls per day, 6 am-6 pm.

- B. **Companion Animal Abductions** [Commissioner Van Horn] The Commission discussed the series of companion animal abductions occurring in the Bay Area. Increasing violent events involving animal abductions. No legislation in CA vs. serious consequences - 10 years in prison in VA. In CA must prove your animal is worth more than \$950 for the crime to be prosecuted as grand theft which is a felony. There are minor charges for threatening, strong-arm, or break-ins. Reporting on animal abductions is not readily available. Dr. VanHorn suggested changing legislation so every licensed pet is worth \$951 so this crime is considered a felony. This would need to be considered at the state level to be effective but lawyers are hesitant to put forth the legislation.

Commission will continue to follow up.

6. Old Business

- A. **Reporting from Animal Care & Control** [Commissioner Torres and Dr. Shari O'Neill] Animal Care & Control will report regarding outcomes for animals and ongoing operations. Dr. O'Neill reported on the number of animals in shelter and foster and kitten season, and the amount of wildlife coming in. The quarterly report is available on the Commission website under "Supporting Documents" 2/10/22.

Chairperson Torres asked about the dog at Animal Care and Control in custody after the SF Public Library incident. The SFPL has a response to the "code of conduct" for animals at the public library. That response is available on the Animal Commission website under "Supporting documents" 2/10/22.

Commissioner Fortier asked about improved numbers of intake for guinea pigs. It may be related to guinea pigs purchased at Petco can be returned to Petco and avoid surrendering at ACC.

A recent news article reported that it was suspected domestic rats were released at a playground near City Hall. The Commission discussed this issue of releasing animals (turtles, pigeons, rabbits, etc) and the need for public education to provide information on the negative impact of releasing animals in the community.

- B. **Commission Governance** [Discussion/Action Item] [Commissioner Torres] The Commission discussed the status of in-person meetings. No further updates on meeting remotely but Commissioners discussed the value of a hybrid model to accommodate the commissioners who cannot meet in person and also public education presenters.

More information to follow.

7. **Items to be put on the Agenda for Future Commission Meetings** Follow-ups on items presented at this meeting.

Backyard Bird Count numbers will be presented at the March meeting

8. **Adjournment** - approximately 7 p.m.