

**San Francisco Animal Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2023**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Michael Angelo Torres, Irina Ozernoy, Jane Tobin, Brian Van Horn, Deputy Director Amy Corso SFACC

Absent: Commissioner - Iris Chan, Christopher Campbell, SF RPD, Officer Greg Sutherland, SFPD

2. General Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Draft Minutes from February - Approved

4. Chairperson's and Commissioners' Reports

Chairperson Torres read former Commissioner Irani's resignation letter. The letter was shared with the City Attorney's Office and City Administrator. The letter focused on the lack of respect and the sometimes-adversarial relationship between the Animal Commission and SF/ACC. The Commission is working together to resolve these issues of respect.

Commissioner Ozernoy spoke with Warden O'Brien of the CA Dept of Fish and Game Wildlife. They would like to be more involved in the Commission. They would like to present, but Commissioner Ozernoy also discussed the potential of a partnership.

5. New Business

A. San Francisco Zoo Conservation Update [Discussion Item] [Commissioner Tobin] Ingrid Russell, Director of Collections at the San Francisco Zoological Gardens, presented on the Zoo's recent conservation efforts, including an overview of the Zoo's Headstart and Behaviorally Research Program and the results of the behavior and disease studies conducted in the Sierras and locally.

Ms. Russell showcased the physical spaces and equipment needed for rearing the animals at the Zoo to be ready for a successful return to the wild.

Behavior reports document the range of behavior and personality types and the response of the animals. A wide range of behavior types may influence the success of adapting in the wild. Trials measured animals over a period of 5 weeks. Findings - frogs' personalities are consistent in different environments.

Disease studies - many Yellow-legged frogs were impacted by a fungal disease. Immunization protocol was introduced. It did lower the intensity of infection and made it non-lethal. Tested this protocol on Red-legged frogs. Animals can clear the fungus on their own without treatment, but the inoculation bolsters the response.

The program is successful, but climate change - drought, and fires have made the fieldwork challenging. Even so, animals are reproducing and creating new habitats and breeding.

Commissioners' Questions/Comments

Q -Commissioner Van Horn shared experiences with Red-Legged Frog counts and asked how the frogs are marked.

A - they are fitted with a microchip.

Q - How many survive in the wild vs. in the headstart? Benefit of Zoo studies for San Francisco - Information for other animals in peril can benefit from these studies.

Q - Commissioner Ozernoy - asked about sharing inoculation protocol with other species impacted by the fungal disease.

Q - Additional written question on large zoo animals - asked about educating visitors and their negative behavior and comments around the animals.

A - Zoo signage exists but people don't read it.

Q - Is there a long-term plan for low-land gorillas, rhinos and other large animals to be moved to sanctuaries to better meet their needs?

A - AZA accredited zoos are better equipped to manage the care of large animals such as these. As an example, the SF Zoo has 3 full-time veterinary care staff. Although the Zoo industry trend is to create larger spaces, the complexity of the space is also very important.

Q - events on properties. Does the Zoo have a policy on who can host events at the zoo.

A- Event space is managed by an outside contractor.

Q - Elephants at the Zoo

A - No current plans for elephants to come back to SF Zoo.

Public comments

No public comments

B. Vector-Borne Diseases Discussion [Discussion Item] [Commissioner Van Horn] Discussion concerning the spread of Vector-Borne Diseases in San Francisco, specifically the increase in the tick and mosquito population in San Francisco.

There is no answer as to why the increase - coyotes? Decrease of opossum population.

Commissioner Van Horn suggested we self-report to aid in data collection on disease. SF needs to make it a priority. Invite the city to put more money into what ticks and insects we are seeing here and what it might mean to the human population. Commissioner Van Horn hopes to get Dr. Chan to speak on this topic.

Commissioners' Questions/Comments

None

Public comments

None

C. SF Animal Care and Control Policy Recommendations [Discussion/Action Item] [Commissioner Torres] The Commission discussed and voted on recommendations to Animal Care and Control following the presentations on cats and kittens that were recently presented to the Commission.

Earlier in the day, Captain Corso responded with the following responses to recommendations. Attached are the documents provided:

- Response to AC&W Recommendations
- Microchip SOP
- Good Samaritan - Finder to Adopt
- Animal Care Division - Pathway Planning Adoption Partners
- Cat Matrix 2023
- Commissioners voted to approve the letter of recommendations

Commissioners' Questions/Comments

Public comments (received before the meetings)

Chair Torres shared letters from the public and letters of support for SF ACC.

In-Public Comments

Attendee disagreed with some of ACC's policies and the science behind them. Attendee thanked the Commission for listening to the community and animal advocates. Also disagreed with policy vs. actual response at ACC. Another attendee shared information on cats and kittens in the community and ACC's selective policies. Another attendee shared her personal experience with cat rescue. A final in-person attendee shared his positive experiences as a rescue.

Caller Comments

Technical issues prevented some callers from being able to comment. Caller supported Animal Commission recommendations and was grateful for ACC's help in her cat rescue.

Result - Animal Commission voted in support of the recommendations with an acknowledgment that some of the recommendations have been met or are in process.

6. Items to be put on the agenda for future Commission meetings

- There will be no meeting in April. The next meeting will be held in Room 408 at City Hall on Thursday, May 11, 2023.
- Discussion on glue traps
- ACC staff issues and quarterly report
- Possibly invite Dr. Chan

7. Adjournment - 8:04 pm