

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

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

Present: Chair Michael Angelo Torres, Vice Chair - Irina Ozernoy Commissioners: Lisa Fagundes, Jane Tobin, Mikaila Garfinkel, Michael Reed

Absent: Commissioner Brian Van Horn Advisers\*: Christopher Campbell, SF RPD, Dr. George Han, SFDPUH. Officer Greg Sutherland, SFPD, Deputy Director Amy Corso SFACC (will report in February)

\*Advisers will attend as needed.

**General Public Comment**

- Chair Torres noted that the Board of Supervisors had amended the remote public comment policy rule at commission meetings. Moving forward, remote public comment will only be available for those with a disability.
- A member of the public provided additional pages missing from a previous Live Animal Market series of documents that was provided to the Commission.

**Draft Minutes from October 12, 2023 - Approved**

**Chairperson's and Commissioners' Reports**

No new reports.

**New Business**

**A. Preserving Ecosystem Harmony: A Case Study in Rat Birth Control for Sustainable Pest Management, Safeguarding Non-Target Pets, Wildlife & Children** [Discussion Item]

[Commissioner Garfinkel] Tanea Stephens, Raptors Are The Solution's (RATS) Washington State Coordinator, will present on the dangers of toxic rodenticides, and Raptors Are the Solution's Queen Anne study. The presentation is available on the Commission website.

- The state of CA is leading in protecting wildlife by eliminating the use of rodenticides (rat poisons). The question remains: how do we manage the rat population?
- Role of raptors - rats are food, but too many rats and rat poisons kill the raptors (predators). Many pest control companies were using less potent blood-thinning poisons, but those will also be eliminated from the market in January 2024. Rat poisons move up the food chain and impact far too many animals. For example, earthworms are poisoned by soil where rat poisons have been.
- Other poison-free alternatives work. Rat birth control is promising. It is both humane and safe. Continues to manage the rat population, whereas rat poisons may be effective initially, but then the rat populations rebound. Rat birth control doesn't impact other animals. The Queen Anne study in Washington State showcased the effectiveness of rat population control via rat birth control. The study was conducted at the demolition of a grocery store. The results showed 91% reduction in the rat population. All done poison-free.

## How we can help

- Advocate for Poison-Free methods with the SF Board of Supervisors.
- Demolition permits requiring poison-free solutions to rat management at the construction sites.
- Provide animal-proof containers.
- Report any violations of rodenticide use to authorities.

## Recommendations

- Liquid from Senestech - Contrapest
- Use of bait stations for gardeners and DIYers that are poison-free
- Use rat birth control pellets which are easy to use and less expensive.

Q: Chair Torres - SF Rec and Park, what are they using? Follow-up needed.  
More follow-up is needed with other partners in the City.

Q: Vice Chair Ozernoy noted that her experience with another nonprofit was having trouble with rats not taking the bait.

A: Placement may be wrong, or bait is not refilled.

Q: Commissioner Reed asked about controlling mice with birth control. Also asked if the rat birth control was impacting other rodents fertility.

A: One of the products works for both rats and mice. Animal needs two doses of rat birth control and it is effective for 7-8 months - Rats only live 8-9 months

Public Comment - do retail stores still sell rat poison in SF? Also asked about Farallon Islands - Rodenticides are being used as an exception to the policy. RATS is advocating for using rat birth control.

No Remote Public Comments

## Old Business

**A. Reporting from Animal Care & Control** is postponed until the February 2024 meeting.

**B. Commission Governance** [Discussion/Action Item] [Commissioner Torres] The Commission will discuss future work plans and vote on commission officers for 2024.

- Chair Torres shared his work plan for 2024 including administrative work and a legislative working group on future and past legislative recommendations.
- Commissioner Garfinkel also interested in legislative progress in other cities and states. More centralized resource for historical documentation on the issues.
- Vice Chair Ozernoy suggested reestablishing connections with the Board of Supervisors and their legislative aides. Vice Chair Ozernoy will take on updating the commissioner directory and Board of Supervisor assignments.
- Commissioner Tobin – discussed the presentaiton/agenda spreadsheet and having database categories potentially link to past topics in a central repository.
- Commissioners voted reappointment of Michael Angelo Torres for the Chari, Irina Ozernoy for the Vice Chair and Jane Tobin as Secretary.

## Items to be put on the agenda for future Commission meetings

Commissioners discussed possibly meeting in December for 2024 planning.

**Adjournment** 6:50pm