

**San Francisco Animal Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
January 11, 2024**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

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

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

\*Advisors attend as needed.

**2. General Public Comment**

A member of the public commented on the Daylighting to Save Lives legislation, and live animal markets.

Two members of the public commented on SF ACC's response to, and the systems in place to address, a situation involving cruelty and neglect complaints regarding two dogs kept in a backyard.

**3. Approval of draft Minutes from November 2023**

Approved.

**4. Chairperson's and Commissioners' Reports**

No new reports.

**5. New Business**

**A. Wild Parrots of San Francisco – Rescue and Rehabilitation Efforts by Mickaboo**

[Discussion Item] [Commissioner Torres] Sarah Lemarie, CEO of Mickaboo Companion Bird Rescue, presented on her organization's work helping wild birds in the bay area.

The focus was mostly on the wild parrots population - our City's official animal - and the care of them in cooperation with national bird support populations. The Bay Area has three active flocks (Palo Alto and Sunnyvale/San Jose and San Francisco). San Francisco has a hybrid flock population, and Palo Alto and Sunnyvale/San Jose populations differ slightly.

San Francisco has the largest population with an estimated population of 220. Injured parrots are cared for by Mickaboo Companion Bird Rescue. Main causes of injury: 1) rat poison, 2) physical trauma, 3) fledging injuries, 4) predator attacks.

It costs at least \$3,500 to care for a single bird and requires a 3-month hospitalization. Increase in the number of intakes for various reasons.

Bromethalin (rat poison) causes numerous ailments in a bird, including brain damage, digestive/weight loss, and seizures. Although they can stabilize, they never fully recover. Half of those brought in survive. Mickaboo helped fund research, and the evidence from that research determined it is Bromethalin that is poisoning the birds. It is likely that private individuals using Bromethalin are the main source of the poison, and an educational campaign is necessary to inform the public of the poison's impact.

Mickaboo's numbers don't include parrots who are deceased and not brought in. As part of the City's maintenance of public parks and areas, Mickaboo would like to receive any deceased parrots in order to understand the cause of the death.

### **How to help**

1. Let the wild parrots be wild. Don't feed or tame. People interfering is an issue.
2. Fosters are needed.
3. Take a bird care class
4. Don't use rat poison
5. Volunteer
6. Strategies to reduce # of birds sold at pet stores.

Mickaboo needs includes funding for care, more partnerships/a wider network, and a study at UCSF on the genetics of the flocks.

Upcoming - Wild Parrots film at The Roxie in January. Q&A and parrots will be there.

### **Questions from Commissioners**

- Q: Commissioner Ozernoy - how are released birds tracked?
- A: Birds are not banded but exploring microchips (chips are small and affordable)
  
- Q: Commissioner Ozernoy - are babies generally releasable and accepted by the flock
- A: Yes, once treated, they can be released to the flock.
  
- Q: Commissioner VanHorn - any comparison of local flock to South American flocks?
- A: Have not been able to, but it's an interesting idea. Perhaps partners have more info on their native population.
  
- Q: Commissioner VanHorn - Bromethalin intake - is one form more attractive to birds than others?
- A: Likely pellet form
  
- Q: Commissioner Reed - concerning funding, does the Park Alliance donate? Any funding available since parrots are the official animal of San Francisco?
- A: Not that aware of any funding.
  
- Q: Commissioner VanHorn - asked if creating secure nesting areas are needed to protect the parrots
- A: Not really needed. There are many safe places to nest.

### **Public Comment:**

A member of the public thanked Mickaboo for the presentation and wondered if there were specific areas of the city where the parrots have digested poison.

A member of the public on getting pet stores to stop selling live animals.

**B. Sulala Animal Rescue [Discussion/Action Item] [Commissioner Torres]** The Commission discussed the challenges faced by Sulala Animal Rescue in the Gaza Strip and voted on sending letters in support of them.

Chairperson Torres shared information on Sulala Rescue Group and their request for support helping them to receive their much-delayed delivery of pet food and supplies.

Letters expressing Commission support addressed to Israeli Ambassador Herzog, Congressperson Pelosi, and California Senators Butler and Padilla were presented for a vote. Three Commissioners voted in support of sending the letters, and three Commissioners abstained. The Commission discussed concerns that some of the Commissioners had with the language in the letters and revised the wording. Another vote was taken on the revised letters clarifying the language. The revised letters were approved by all the Commissioners.

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

SF ACC will be sharing quarterly reports.

**7 Adjournment 7:06 pm**