

Animal Care & Control



AD HOC TASK FORCE

PROCESS & SERVICE SUBCOMMITTEE

November 24, 2014 from 3:45 pm – 5:15 pm

Members introduced themselves.

The Chair, Cheryl Naumann, distributed a handout titled “Levels of Consensus” (*attached*). The handout listed six levels of consensus. Levels 1 and 2 mean that the committee member finds the group’s decision acceptable. Levels 3 and 4 mean that the member is not enthusiastic about the decision but can live with it. Level 5 and 6 indicate that the member disagrees with the decision and will attempt to block the group from moving forward with that particular recommendation.

DECISION: The members agreed to use the levels of consensus handout as a tool for reaching agreement on recommendations. If all members are at a level 4 or below, the subcommittee can move forward with the recommendation. If a committee member indicates that they are at Level 5 or 6, further discussion is needed before a decision or recommendation is finalized.

The Chair facilitated an open discussion on developing a set of Guiding Principles or Rules of Engagement to foster the principles of a well-functioning team:

1. Be respectful (no rolling of your eyes, and be aware of your tone and body language.)
2. Stay on topic.
3. Seek to be acknowledged by the Chair by raising your hand before speaking.
4. The Chair will ask the committee if they are ready to move on before closing discussion on a topic and switching to a new discussion topic.
5. No side conversations.
6. Address the issue, not the person.
7. Approach all discussions with a spirit of collaboration.
8. At the end of each meeting, identify an immediate action item(s) the subcommittee can do now or before the next meeting to save or improve the lives of shelter animals.
9. Assume positive intent from all subcommittee members, staff and invited speakers.
10. Follow through on commitments.
11. Verify or confirm who is accountable for each action item.
12. Maximize our time together – Utilize the entire scheduled time. Don’t end the meeting early.
13. No idea is a bad idea. The group should vet all ideas.
14. All goals established by the committee will be strategic and realistic.
15. Create an environment where everyone feels comfortable speaking.



The Chair asked if the committee was comfortable with adopting the Rules of Engagement.

A member pointed out that the committee members are the “good guys” and even though members may have different perspectives everyone is on the same team helping animals.

A member asked if the committee should establish guidelines for what members can discuss outside the meeting. Another member pointed out that this is an open meeting and the meeting summaries are posted on the CitizensForPets website.

The committee agreed that it was important for members to share the information discussed by the committee with their respective organizations in order to encourage comments from the public. The most important thing is that people should be factual and objective about what they decide to share outside the committee. A member shouldn't undermine what the whole committee is trying to do just because he or she is unhappy with a particular discussion or issue.

The Chair said that this raises the issue of defining what is consensus. Consensus is not unanimity. Recognize that not everyone is going to get everything exactly the way they want it but if we get a better overall product then we have succeeded in creating positive change.

A member suggested that we consider the Guiding Principles or Rules of Engagement in all of our outside discussions about the work of the committee. The goal is to support the collective wisdom of the team in all of our discussions within and outside of the committee.

DECISION: Based on this discussion, the committee added “Support the collective wisdom of the team when we adjourn” to the Rules of Engagement. The committee agreed to the Rules of Engagement.

Dr. Rodrigo Silva gave a presentation on MCACC's organizational structure and intake and disposition statistics. The presentation will be posted on the CitizensForPets website.

Dr. Silva reviewed the organizational chart as well as the job titles and number of staff in each division/department. In addition to the Director's office, there are six departments: Budget and Finance, Field Enforcement Services, Shelter Services, Chief Veterinarian/Medical services, Operational Support and Community Outreach. Staffing numbers were provided for both the east and west shelters.

A member asked what is the difference between a supervisor and a lead? Dr. Silva explained that a lead is similar to a supervisor in that they are subject matter experts; however, only the supervisor conducts performance evaluations and human resource related actions.

The Operational Support division is responsible for the call center and licensing. A member asked if the licensing component was previously outsourced to a third party vendor? Dr. Silva



said yes, licensing was previously outsourced, but is now done in-house. When licensing was outsourced the turnaround time was 100 days. Turnaround time is now less than three days.

A member asked if the licensing and the call center staff are cross-trained? Dr. Silva responded yes.

Dr. Silva reviewed the impound and disposition statistics from July to October 2014. Intake has decreased 11%, adoptions have decreased 2% and redemptions have increased 8% this year compared to the same period last year.

A member asked if animals are counted twice? Dr. Silva said yes animals could be counted twice. For example, if HALO takes a dog and the dog is then returned, the dog is counted twice. This allows AC&C to track why the animal is being returned.

Dr. Silva said that the statistics are “outcome” based. This means that if a stray dog enters the shelter it is not counted in the intake numbers until the dog is redeemed, adopted, transferred or euthanized. Therefore, the statistics in the presentation do not include the number of animals that are currently in the shelter.

A stray animal that is redeemed by its owner in the field is not included in the shelter intake or redemption numbers. A member suggested that the number of animals returned in the field should be tracked. Dr. Silva said that the number is tracked and published in the annual report. Animals returned in the field total about 500 animals annually.

Shelter intake has decreased from 51,865 in 2010 to 36,607 by 2014 (projected). Dr. Silva projects that 28,507 animals will be admitted to the shelter in 2018.

Cat intake started decreasing significantly in 2011 after the AC&C (per an action by the Board of Supervisors) initiated a fee for accepting stray cats. AC&C is not mandated to accept stray cats unless the cat has bitten someone. At the same time, the Arizona Humane Society started seeing an increase in the number of cats entering their shelter. Just because the number of cats entering AC&C is decreasing does not mean that there still isn't a cat problem in Maricopa County. The problem has just been transferred to other shelters.

Dr. Silva said that he would like to improve the return-to-owner rate for cats.

A member asked if the cat intake numbers include feral cats. Dr. Silva confirmed that feral cats are included in the intake numbers.

Dog intake has also decreased from 40,604 in 2011 to 27,366 in 2014 (projected). Dr. Silva attributes the decrease to spay/neuter programs that are funded in part by a three-year grant from PetSmart Charities and the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust. The grant was awarded in 2013.



A member asked if the 2018 shelter intake projection assumed that the PetSmart/Pulliam grant would be renewed? Dr. Silva said no. He said that thanks to donations raised by Friends of Animal Care and Control he believes that they will have the funding to continue to provide spay and neuter surgeries and sustain the decrease in shelter intake.

A member asked if the decrease in shelter intake is due to spay/neuter or from more animals going to alternative placement? Dr. Silva said that based on statistical analysis of the data spay/neuter is the most effective method to reduce animal intake. Spay and neuter is more effective than adoption.

Adoptions have decreased since 2010. Dr. Silva said that the decrease in adoptions is primarily due to the reduction in cat intakes. Because fewer cats are entering the shelter, fewer cats are available for adoption. In addition, when shelter intake rates are reduced there is less variety of dogs available for adoption, which is why dog adoption rates have stayed the same or decreased.

Dr. Silva said that increasing spending on promoting adoption does not result in significant increases in adoption rates. Investing in spay/neuter programs is the most effective way to save lives.

A member asked if the adoption numbers include animals that are transferred to rescue organizations. Dr. Silva said no. Animals that are taken by rescue groups are categorized as "transfers."

Over 22% of the dogs entering AC&C are Chihuahuas and 28% are pit bulls. A member suggested that the breed identification process at AC&C may be flawed and that dogs are incorrectly identified as pit bulls. Dr. Silva agreed that the evaluation and breed identification process is flawed. He said that the evaluators are not professional behaviorists and do not have enough time to evaluate the animals.

Another member suggested that more pit bulls end up in the shelter because more people call to complain when a pit bull is at-large because people are afraid of the breed.

The Vice-Chair stated that Dr. Silva presented a wish list of items he would like to change at the earlier Budget & Funding subcommittee.

ACTION ITEM: Valerie Beckett will post Dr. Silva's presentation to the CitizensForPets website.

As outlined in the agenda, the Chair reviewed the following areas of operation that have been raised by members previously:

- a) Intake for owner surrender (including fees, process and criteria)

- b) Intake OTC stray (including fees, process and criteria)
- c) Intake in the field (including fees, process and criteria)
- d) Medical triage and assessment (for example, how are treatment plans developed, protocols for managing contagious disease, etc.)
- e) Behavioral assessment – Day 1 (Owner Surrender – how and where and when)
- f) Behavioral assessment – At Disposition
- g) Animal Classification – How are animals classified (what happens with un-weaned animals? What happens with animals that are resource guarding?)
- h) The New Hope process – Which animals go to New Hope?
- i) The HALO relationship, process handoffs, RACI model?
- j) Return-to-Owner (Decisions, Charter, Mandated fees?)
- k) Adoption screening and placement
- l) Days and hours for shelter and field services
- m) What is AC&C's jurisdiction (geographically)?
- n) What is the process for investigating cruelty/neglect allegations?
- o) Euthanasia – List creation, timing, processes
- p) Overall Customer Experience

The Chair suggested that the committee identify three or four of these processes to research. Small interdisciplinary groups of not more than three to four people should conduct the research. The small groups will report back to the subcommittee at the next meeting and make recommendations.

The Vice-Chair suggested that the subcommittee tries to complete their recommendations prior to the date when the Board of Supervisors finalizes the budget for the next fiscal year, so they may reverse engineer the process. From the Budget & Funding presentation at the earlier subcommittee meeting, the budget reviews occur in February.

ACTION ITEM: Staff will identify the possible dates in February 2015 in which the final recommendations may be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

A member asked if the group can make suggestions that cost money? The Vice-Chair said yes, but the committee will need more guidance on how to effectively work within the county financial system. The Vice-Chair suggested that the committee review the budget presentation. Understanding the budget process will help the committee realize what recommendations may be feasible. For example, the committee may say that AC&C should hire 25 staff next year but because of specific county budgetary policies that may not be feasible. The committee may need to explore alternative resource allocation scenarios such as having inmates clean cages which frees volunteers up to assist with adoptions.

ACTION ITEM: Valerie Beckett will post the budget presentation on the CitizensForPets website.

The Vice-Chair said that when researching the issues it is also important to determine who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed (RACI Model) for each decision.

The subcommittee decided to create subgroups to research the following three (3) areas / processes before the next meeting.

1. Medical triage and assessment.
 - Volunteers:
 - Cheryl Akers
 - Trish Manes (Lead)
 - Michael Morefield
 - Elizabeth Claxton
 - STAFF support = Al Aguinaga

2. Behavioral assessment.
 - Volunteers:
 - Bob Crough (Lead)
 - Sherry Gillespie
 - Ed Bufford
 - Marcia Hamilton
 - STAFF support = Samantha Spinelle

3. Timeline, Holds, Classification & Building Logistics: This will look at how animals move through the shelter. For example, what happens when the 72-hour stray hold period expires? Can signage be put on the animal's cage indicating that they will be available for adoption? How do people navigate through the shelter and find adoptable pets? What happens on Day 1, Day 2 and Day 3 after an animal is surrendered to shelter? What pet retention strategies are in place to prevent an owner from surrendering their pet in the first place?

A member asked if we could ask for a budget increase right now to implement new signage in the shelters. The committee agreed that the issue should be studied first and then, if necessary, the committee will make a recommendation regarding signage.

- Volunteers:
 - Victoria Cowper
 - Tarah Rider Berry (Lead)
 - Ed Bufford
 - STAFF support = Linda Soto

ACTION ITEM: By the next meeting, the three groups – medical, behavioral, and timeline – will visit the east and west shelters and present to other subcommittee members on their findings and recommendations.



The committee closed the meeting by identifying the following three things that the group can do before next week to save or improve the lives of animals.

1. Collect paper towel/toilet paper rolls and other items that can be used as toys for behavioral enrichment. Bring to the next meeting. AC&C staff will transport to the shelter.
2. Collect blankets/towels and bring to the next meeting. AC&C staff will transport to the shelter.
3. Use larger bowls for puppies to reduce resource guarding behavior – Staff indicated this would be implemented.
4. Spread the word on spay/neuter on Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Next / Follow-up Action Items:

From 11/12/2014 meeting:

- Review available process flowchart information – Under development
- Review policies and procedures – Posted
- Review available report information – Intake, Visitors / Traffic patterns, Fees, How animals leave shelters, Feeding Schedules, Job Descriptions, E-List criteria – To be posted by 12/10/2014
- Review available information assessments and evaluations
- Presentation by Dr. Silva on department (in greater detail than the presentation at the initial Kick-Off meeting) – Completed 11/24/2014
- Review comments summary by member – Ongoing
- Subgroups – Ongoing

From 11/24/2014 meeting:

- Reports from 3 subcommittees – Medical, Behavioral, Timeline/Holds/Bldg Logistics
- Posting of presentations to the CitizensForPets portal – To be completed by 12/10/2014
- Provide possible February 2015 for recommendations to be presented to the Board of Supervisors – To be provided by 12/10/2014