

Animal Care & Control



AD HOC TASK FORCE

PROCESS & SERVICE SUBCOMMITTEE

March 4, 2015 from 3:45 pm – 5:15 pm

The Vice-Chair led the meeting in the Chair's absence.

The notes from the Feb. 18th meeting were accepted without change.

As requested, staff provided comments on the recommendations from the Behavioral Assessment subgroup.

1. **Consistent area for assessments.** Staff identified areas that are suitable for assessments at East and West and these areas will be used consistently.
2. **Behavioral information on kennel cards.** MCACC is working to reformat the paper kennel cards to include more information. A sample kennel card for adoptable animals was shared with the members, who agreed that the new design was a big improvement over the current kennel cards.

The results of the SAFER modified assessment and notes received from the owner on owner-surrendered animals will be included on the kennel card. A member asked how would the SAFER score be transferred into notes that are understandable to the public? Staff acknowledged the challenge and is working on how to best translate the results of the SAFER assessment into standardized phrases to include on the kennel cards. The Vice-Chair suggested that the members submit recommended phrases that staff may consider and use to describe positive and negative behaviors. Staff stressed that the focus has been on the negative behaviors and more attention will be given to the positive, i.e., "I know my basic commands." "I'm potty trained."

A member noted that the kennel card lists an available date for stray animals. This prompted a question as to whether it is possible that the animal will be euthanized prior to the shelter opening for business on the available date. After a short discussion, the subcommittee decided to **RECOMMEND** that the kennel cards include a statement similar to ***"I'm looking for my owner, but if I can't find him by <INSERT DATE>, I might be able to go home with you. Ask about me at the front desk."*** Staff will then take the person's contact information and call them before the animal is euthanized.

ACTION ITEM: Add recommendation that language is added to the kennel card for stray animals to encourage people to leave their name and contact information at the front desk if they are interested in adopting the animal. Staff will call the person prior to disposition of the animal.

3. **Continuing education for evaluation staff.**
4. **Certification for staff conducting assessments.** The West shelter supervisor is going through SAFER certification. MCACC will determine if it is worthwhile for all staff to



complete the SAFER certification. Members clarified that the recommendation wasn't for staff to obtain a third-party certification, but rather for staff to be required to demonstrate the skills learned during the in-house training through a test. The documentation that they passed the skills demonstration should be kept in their personnel file.

5. **Supervisors observe evaluation process on a regular basis.** Shelter supervisors will conduct quarterly check of staff doing evaluations.

A member suggested periodically spot-checking for evaluation teams for consistency by having two teams test the same dog and compare the results. Staff commented that to do this regularly would require additional staffing.

6. **Institute an enrichment program.** East shelter has a day foster program and a number of volunteers who walk the dogs that have been there a long time. West does not have the volunteer resources available to implement enrichment programs at this time.

What defines a long-term resident? Staff responded an animal that has been in the shelter for at least 30 days.

Is there a protocol for conducting follow-up evaluations for long-term residents? No, such protocol has been established.

Who decides which dogs are able to stay in the long-term? Staff advised that if a dog stays mentally and physically healthy and there is available space, the dog will stay at MCACC until adopted.

7. **Educate staff on breed characteristics.** The SAFER assessment is designed to remove breed-bias. It is an impartial assessment tool.
8. **Educate staff on breed identification.** Staff reported there is not a lot of formal training available on breed identification. MCACC does have a poster with pictures of 60 different dog breeds hanging on the wall.

A member suggested that for dogs mixed with pit bull, the pit bull breed should be listed second on the kennel card (i.e., lab/pit bull as opposed to pit bull/lab). Another member asked if the dog could be listed just as "mixed breed" instead of specifying a breed. Staff explained they have had incidents in which people will return a dog if they find out the dog is part pit bull and MCACC did not have the dog identified as a pit bull. How often does this happen? Staff reported this occurs approximately twice a month.

Members stated that the Arizona Humane Society and Arizona Animal Welfare League do not label dogs as pit bulls. They classify dogs using breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club such as American Staffordshire Terrier or American Pit Bull Terrier. This has been met with mixed reviews at Arizona Humane Society and has not reduced the length of time the dog spends at the shelter waiting to be adopted. Arizona State University is conducting a research study at the Arizona Animal Welfare League. ASU is interested in how often visual identification of dog breeds by shelter staff match DNA breed identification. So far, some dogs that staff thought were pit bulls actually

weren't pit bulls per the DNA test. A few dogs that didn't resemble pit bulls were part pit bulls according to the DNA test.

ACTION ITEM: The Arizona Humane Society will send their breed identification protocol to Valerie Beckett to distribute to the subcommittee.

A member said that it would be helpful for online marketing of dogs to list the dog's size on the kennel card such as extra-small, small, medium, large and extra-large. For puppies, the size category would just say "puppy". Staff stated they are supportive and request that members define the standards of each size category.

ACTION ITEM: Members to propose the criteria of defining the size categories.

9. **Second Chance group at West Shelter.** New management at West is supportive of a Second Chance group at West but it may be difficult to recruit volunteers.
10. **Use a personality test to evaluate animals.** Staff is supportive, but incorporating a personality test would require more staff for the assessment as well as to provide the appropriate adoption counseling to potential adopters.
11. **Overhaul behavior assessment protocol.** See response to item #10.
12. **HALO should provide their evaluation notes to MCACC staff.** Staff confirms that HALO does provide a copy of their assessment.
13. **Evaluation teams should have minimal interactions with dogs prior to conducting the assessment.** MCACC does not have adequate staffing levels to implement this recommendation.

A member suggested that maybe a Lean Management process review should be considered. The discussion quickly changed focus to possibly forming and training a **Pole Team** from the pool of volunteers since using the pole on dogs is a big time challenge.

14. **Streamline the logistics of the evaluation process --- reduce the time spent walking back and forth to retrieve animals.** The members discussed the need for developing a volunteer team to pull to dogs from their kennels and deliver them to the evaluation team to save time. Staff advised that the evaluation teams might benefit and resolve this concern by using Microsoft Surface tablets to allow them to enter the evaluation results in real-time.

The Lead member of the Medical Triage Subgroup discussed the group's remaining recommendations.

- Designate veterinary staff to respond immediately to trauma cases. (Additional veterinarian staff has been included in an earlier recommendation.)
- Establish formalized criteria for the minimum standard of comfort or care an animal must receive at the shelter. The subgroup said the criterion is open for discussion. (#42)
- Keep animals in the surgical ward until they recover from surgery. This concern is mentioned quite often on the Citizens for Pets site. It is difficult for people to see animals

in the early stages of recovery. Dr. Rodrigo Silva said that more kennel space is needed in order to implement this recommendation. The animals are returned to their kennels early because the surgical ward needs to be cleaned. (#43)

- Immediately sanitize floors, trashcans and other mobile equipment after contact with urine or feces. Clean food and water bowls regularly. You frequently see urine and feces in the hallways at East for extended periods of time. Frequent cleaning is critical to limit disease transmission. (#52, 53 and 54)
 - A member, who also volunteers at East, offered that improvements in sanitation have been noticed over the past month.
 - A member asked why couldn't inmates do the cleaning? Inmates from the prison in Florence clean cages and socialize animals at Pinal County Animal Control. Dr. Silva said that all inmates must be supervised by a correctional officer at MCACC.
 - How much does it cost to pay a full-time corrections officer to supervise the inmates at MCACC? Dr. Silva said that he didn't know but could find out. Members suggested the contract at Pinal should be reviewed. Staff explained that in Pinal, the Animal Care & Control operation is under or within the law enforcement organizational structure., which may be the difference.

ACTION ITEM: The subcommittee decided to add a recommendation stating that MCACC should investigate funding a dedicated officer to supervise inmates Monday through Friday at both East and West shelters.

- East Shelter needs to be completely remodeled. The shelter is hard to sanitize, has a substandard HVAC system, does not have a quarantine ward and the kennels are too small, especially for long-term residents. (#57)
 - A member suggested that MCACC develop a consolidated list of all the issues with East Shelter. Use this information as a supplement to a budget request to fund the construction of a new shelter.
- At East Shelter, implement space utilization plans that segregate animals more efficiently, construct modular isolation units, split the isolation and special needs animals in C Wing on the east-west axis rather than the north-south axis. This should lower cross-contamination when bringing animals back and forth. Cats should never be housed in the same wards as dogs. (#58)
 - Dr. Silva said that the East Shelter renovations would add 15 small isolation kennels, not a modular unit. A member asked what is the status on the renovations? Dr. Silva said that the contractors are starting on the parking lot on March 5.
- Establish isolation structures at West Shelter. A member of the subcommittee said that he thought West had adequate quarantine facilities.
- Transfer "long-timers" from East to West (#63). Kennels at East are too small for the long timers. Dr. Silva said that there aren't enough volunteers at West to take the long-timers on a daily walk or day foster programs like the dogs experience at East.
 - A member said that MCACC should also actively pursue transfer agreements with other shelters in Arizona and out-of-state.

ACTION ITEM: The subcommittee directed staff to analyze the costs and process for moving animals from East to West shelter, as well as to different shelters throughout the

state and country. Perhaps MCACC could utilize a vehicle that was seized by the Sheriff's office.

The Vice-Chair explained that it would be best for all recommendations to be recorded, so the members may work through and bring the process close. The Vice-Chair then asked each committee member to offer any other recommendations that have not been already noted:

1. MCACC should institute lean process improvements; review its processes and find ways to make operations more efficient.
2. MCACC should update their policies and procedures manual regularly. The policies should be available online in a searchable format.
3. Add an explanation on the kennel card as to why an animal is quarantined for biting. Why did the animal bite? Was he provoked?
4. Impose an immediate and permanent moratorium on the killing of any animal (except for terminal medical reasons or aggressions validated by trained behaviorists) when there are empty cages and kennels.
5. The shelter should be open during the peak shopping times, until at least 7pm Mon-Sun.
6. All animals are visible online within 1 hour of arrival at the shelter.
7. Medically treat every animal as if it will live.
 - o Enforce intake vaccine policy.
 - All animals over 4 weeks of age are vaccinated without exception (even if sick or fractious) before entering main kennel area or being exposed to other animals.
8. At any one time, over 50% of animals should be in foster. Building a foster network is key to increasing kennel/cage capacity and decreasing costs associated with animal care.
9. Return stray/semi-feral/feral cats back into the community from where they came, after spaying or neutering them. Have MCACC work with community stakeholders to develop related procedures and protocols to address this item to prevent needless killing of stray/semi-feral/feral cats.
10. New Hope partners are never turned down when requesting to pull animals.
11. The public shall have first priority on adoption, foster, etc., of any county animal and shall be enforced with all New Hope partners, including HALO.
12. Immediately increase RTO rate to a minimum of 30% by:
 - o Using the HeLP map (already introduced by Lost Dogs of AZ).
 - o Assign a Lost/Found coordinator to spend time searching for owners of pets in the shelter.
 - o Taking action on received lost/found reports.
 - o Mandate and hold staff accountable to infield microchip scanning.
 - o Provide accurate online data about pets at the shelter so that the system does not depend on the owner being able to come in.
 - o Post signs and advise every owner of payments on reclaimed animals.
 - o Install a big flat screen TV in lobbies for people to view "found animals" that are being held. Many people have phobias about entering the shelter and wards.
 - o Any adopted dog or claimed dog – leaves w/ID tag on a new collar. (Apply for an ASPCA Grant to receive an ID engraving machine). Research shows putting the tag on the collar when the dog leaves a facility increases the likelihood of a reunion. Research shows that more than 80% of Good Samaritans who find dogs want to find their owners.
13. Sign up and participate in the Just One Day nation-wide campaign on June 11, 2015

- www.justoneday.ws
 - Just One Day is a nation-wide event that teaches shelters how to empty their kennels the good old fashioned way. Every participant receives free marketing tools, gets tips and pointers on how to motivate their community, and helps raises staff morale. It is a win-win for all involved.
14. Have door greeters at each shelter location to help provide customer service, find out what customers need, provide directions, etc.
 15. Every shelter animal that leaves is microchipped for free.
 16. Perform surgery on healthy animals before sick animals to prevent cross-contamination.
 17. Re-treat long-timers with flea/tick preventative.
 18. Clean ears and trim the nails of every animal during surgery.
 19. Set up a proper bathing station at East. The bathing station at East does not have hot water.

ACTION ITEM: All subcommittee members should send their recommendations to Valerie by March 9. The members should review the recommendation and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday, Mar. 18, 2015