

# Animal Care & Control



## AD HOC TASK FORCE

### PROCESS & SERVICE SUBCOMMITTEE

January 7, 2015 from 3:45 pm – 5:15 pm

The subcommittee approved the meeting summary from the December 10, 2014 meeting. A member noted that he had a few minor changes to the notes, which would be sent directly to Valerie Beckett to make the changes and repost the notes.

**ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Beckett will send the comments received on the Citizens for Pets website since December 10 to the members by close of business 1/8/2015.

The Chair suggested that the committee start focusing on suggesting recommendations in which the members agreed. The developing recommendations will be noted and staff will research to provide insight on impact, resources, timeline, etc. These developing recommendations may then be reviewed in the form of status reports at subsequent meetings.

The Chair then outlined some of the measures that should be considered when making recommendations.

- a. Does the recommendation fall under the scope of responsibility for Maricopa County Animal Care and Control (MCACC)?
- b. What level of resources would be needed to support the recommendation?
- c. Can the recommendation be implemented immediately (without action by the Board of Supervisors)?
- d. Who is the appropriate staff person to lead the implementation of the recommendation if approved?

#### Medical Triage Sub-Group

The Chair asked for two to three additional volunteers and someone to serve as Lead on this group.

Ed Buford, Sherry Garcia and Tarah Berry volunteered to serve on the sub-group with Jason Carey serving as Lead.

Al Aguinaga stated the best time to visit the clinic for the medical evaluation process is between 5:30-8:00 AM weekdays. The sub-group should contact Al to schedule their visit.

#### Timeline, Holds and Building Logistics Sub-Group

Tarah Berry distributed a list of questions that the sub-group asked Linda Soto. The list of questions formed the basis of the sub-group's research.

**ACTION ITEM:** Valerie will send an electronic copy of the questions and answers to the entire committee.

Based on the sub-groups research and recommendations, the committee developed the following 22 recommendations.

1. Put white “Off-Hold” Cards on an animal’s kennel as soon as his/her stray hold period expires. The card could say “I’m off-hold. Ask about me.”
2. Establish an isolation ward at the East Shelter to house sick animals.
3. Explore the feasibility of adding another wing of kennels for adoptable animals at the East Shelter.
4. Evaluate the timing and frequency of feedings. For example, feed animals at intake that are pregnant, lactating, emaciated or arrive after the last meal of the day has been served. Feed animals twice per day.

There was significant discussion regarding the feeding practices at the shelter. Dr. Silva said that feeding is done once daily. At East they are fed in the morning. At West the animals are fed in the afternoon. Some animals are fed twice a day if the veterinarian deems it medically necessary.

5. Evaluate if animals are fed the appropriate amount of food. The committee is concerned that the feeding bowls are too small and the same size bowl is used for small and large dogs.

AI pointed out that there are limitations to the bowl size because of the kennel design.

A member asked if the availability or cost of the food is an issue? Is there not enough food available to feed the animals twice a day? Dr. Silva said that food availability is not an issue. At the East Shelter animals are fed whatever is donated. Animals are fed Purina food at West because HALO has a contract with Purina.

Another member suggested that MCACC use gravity feeders. Other members raised the concern that free feeding may not be appropriate in a shelter situation because animals may overeat.

A member said that more staff should be hired in order to accommodate additional feedings.

**ACTION ITEM:** Valerie will send the feeding guidelines and protocols to the committee.

6. Use Department of Correction or MCSO inmates at the West Shelter to help feed animals.
7. Post the notes associated with the “BEHAV-Other” category for each animal on the e-list.
8. Post a large easy-to-read pricing sign in the lobby.
9. Post directional signage on walls and walkways.

10. Post the Lost and Found board in the area of the lobby that makes the most sense for traffic flow. At the West Shelter, the Lost and Found board is on the HALO side, which is where people come to look for animals to adopt, not to find a lost animal.
11. Create signage that helps customers navigate the shelters (find a lost pet or adopt an animal) with minimal assistance from staff. For example, post instructions on how to read the kennel cards –explain the kennel card colors, collar colors (e.g., red Mylar collar indicates animal selected by HALO), classification, dates, and other data. Supplement the signage with handouts.

A member asked what does a brown kennel card signify? Mr. Aguinaga explained that an animal with a brown card is essentially in limbo. The animal may be waiting for a decision on whether or not he is adoptable because of medical or behavioral issues. In other cases, someone other than the owner may have surrendered the animal so staff is trying to reach the animal's owner to confirm that the surrender was authorized.

A member asked if there is a rule for how long animal stays in brown hold? Mr. Aguinaga stated there is not a specified period.

12. Increase the hold time for owner-surrenders to 72-hours (72-hours is the required stray animal hold period).

A member asked if it is worthwhile to hold a cat for 72-hours? At the Arizona Humane Society (AHS) cats without indication of prior ownership (such as a collar) are not held for 72-hours. AHS found that the reduced hold time saves the lives of more cats and has resulted in fewer cats becoming sick with upper respiratory infections. MCACC must hold stray cats for 72-hours per state statute. The committee did not want to make a recommendation to reduce the hold period for cats. Members were concerned that cats would be euthanized in a shorter period of time.

Dr. Silva said that spending more time in the shelter makes the animal more prone to illness. He provided the example of a patient staying longer in the hospital.

13. List animals surrendered by their owners on Pet Harbor.
14. All animals on the e-list should have photographs.

Mr. Aguinaga said that 70-80% of the animals have photo taken during the intake process. Animals that can only be handled with a snare pole do not have their picture taken. The committee recommended that those animals still have their pictures taken through the kennel bars.

15. Recruit volunteers to improve the marketing of adoptable animals. Encourage volunteers to write notes about the animal's activities and personality on the kennel card.
16. Post a sign encouraging people to ask about payment options for the fees associated with reclaiming their stray animal.



17. Develop a process for allowing a person to put a non-refundable deposit down in order to hold an animal.

Mr. Aguinaga explained that people could currently give their name to staff to indicate that they are interested in a particular animal. Staff will call that person before the animal is listed for adoption or euthanized. It was reiterated that HALO has first right-of-refusal for every animal in the shelter.

The committee expressed concerns that HALO was given preference over the public.

18. Reevaluate the third-party adoption contract with regard to the preferential hold/animal selection clause.

A member asked when the HALO contract expires? Dr. Silva said the contract expires in December of 2015. Another member asked if the HALO contract could be amended prior to December of 2015. Ms. Beckett stated no since it is a legal, binding contract and since HALO has met its obligations under the contract.

A member asked about the HALO return policy for adopted animals. Dr. Silva said that animals returned within 30 days of the adoption date are returned to HALO. Animals returned after 30 days are surrendered to MCACC. HALO will need to pay MCACC for the animal if they choose to take that animal into their program again.

19. Explore ways to increase the visibility of small animals housed at the West Shelter. A member asked why the doors to the small dog/cat wards are locked.
20. Rescues that take puppies from MCACC should be required to take the mother too.
21. New Hope contracts should include a requirement for someone from the New Hope rescue to volunteer at MCACC.
22. The final euthanasia list should be published on the website or provided to Friends of Arizona's Shelter Animals to post on Facebook. A member suggested that this could cut down on calls to staff inquiring on the status of an animal that was on the preliminary e-list.

A member commented that the committee appears to be focusing their recommendations on dogs only. The Chair said that the recommendations apply to cats and dogs.

Dr. Silva said that last year a task force reviewed MCACC's process for handling pregnant animals. He encouraged the committee to review the task force's recommendations.

**ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Beckett will send the report from the pregnant animal task force to the members.

The meeting adjourned with Ms. Beckett stating the recommendations noted will be assigned and research by staff. The "work in progress" list may be reviewed at each meeting. Throughout the process, the committee members will decide which recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.



**Next / Follow-up Action Items:**

- Send public comments to members.
- Send information from the task force reviewing the practices related to pregnant animals.
- Hear updates and recommendations from the Behavioral Assessment, Intake/Holds/Bldg Logistics, and Medical Triage/Assessment sub-groups.