

**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EQUITY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2020 2:00PM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Ana Sandoval, Chair, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Robert Treviño, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i>
Staff Present:	Dr. Colleen Bridger, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; David McCary, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Alma Lozano, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Heber Lefgren, <i>Director, Animal Care Services</i> ; Shannon Sims, <i>SAPD, Assistant Director, Animal Care Services</i> ; Jeff Coyle, <i>Director, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Laura Mayes, <i>Assistant Director, Government & Public Affairs</i> ; Chase Fosse, <i>Assistant to Director, Animal Care Services</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>

Call to order

Chairwoman Sandoval called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Public Comments have been submitted through the Comment system and are attached to the minutes.

LIVE TESTIMONY

None.

1. Approval of the meeting minutes for the August 7, 2020 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting.

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve the minutes for the August 7, 2020 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting. Councilmember Treviño seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Approval of the meeting minutes for the August 28, 2020 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting.

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve the minutes for the August 28, 2020 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting. Councilmember Treviño seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Review of proposed amendments to Chapter 5 entitled Animals and Chapter 20 entitled Municipal Court of the City Code to regulate the retail sale of pets, expand eligibility for the animal care compliance assistance account, and to make additional changes consistent with the strategic priorities of Animal Care Services. [David McCary, Assistant City Manager; Heber Lefgren, Director, Animal Care Services]

Heber Lefgren reported that Animal Care Services (ACS) conducted a best practice analysis of the restrictions to the retail sale of dogs and cats in FY 2019 and found that the City's regulatory framework for retail pet store sales needed improvement. He stated that over 280 cities had passed restrictions or bans on the retail sale of dogs and cats at pet stores and many national animal welfare organizations supported a more aggressive restriction on retail establishments as a method to help manage and reduce improper animal care standards frequently associated with puppy mills.

Mr. Lefgren reported that ACS launched a SA Speakup Survey to gauge resident feedback on how to address retail pet sales which indicated an overwhelming majority would support the proposed Amendments to Chapter 5. He added that the ACS Advisory Board reviewed the survey results and also voiced strong support for the new regulations. He stated that a second SA Speakup Survey was conducted in February 2020 to gather additional feedback on specific policy procedures and the findings were presented to the ACS Advisory Board which expressed full support for the proposed procedures.

Mr. Lefgren reported that the proposed Amendments to Chapter 5 consisted of three main categories, as follows:

Pet Sales:

- New Retail dog and cat sales restrictions:
 - Must be sourced from a shelter, animal control agency, or licensed rescue organization
 - Must be sterilized, microchipped, immunized, free of parasites, and come with documentation
- Minimum fines for all pet sales raised from \$100 to \$500 for first time offenses
- Only 1 seller permit available per year per address (previously unlimited)
- Seller permit violations would require sterilization of all pets located at the place of sale

Compliance:

- Animal Care Compliance Assistance Account was established in FY 2018
- Provides resources to assist residents with coming into compliance with Chapter 5
- Expanding eligibility by no longer:
 - Requiring residents to already be in compliance with microchip and vaccination requirements
 - Limiting improvements to property/premises

Other:

- Establishing a 30-day timeline for compliance with dangerous dog regulations
- Restrictions on "nuisance" feeding of animals
- Improved readability of Permits section
- Grammatical improvements

Mr. Lefgren reported that if the proposed Amendments to Chapter 5 were adopted by City Council, retail pet stores would still be able to sell dogs and cats, but would no longer be able to source those pets from puppy mills. He stated that ACS included proposed changes to Chapter 20 of the City Code which established the Animal Care Compliance Assistant Account in FY 2018 and provided resources to assist vulnerable residents with Chapter 5 compliance measures. He noted that in the past, the account largely focused on fence repairs and providing dog houses and leashes and the proposed Ordinance changes would expand eligibility and funding of free microchips and vaccinations. He reported that other changes would include the establishment of a timeline for how quickly dangerous dogs must come into compliance. He stated that restrictions on nuisance feeding of feral cats would be further clarified by clearly prohibiting open feedings, where residents dumped large amounts of food on the ground that later attract wildlife. He noted that other changes would make the Code easier to understand.

Mr. Lefgren reported that next steps would be to proceed with all proposed Ordinance changes to City Council for consideration by January 2021, with the approval and recommendation of the Committee.

Councilmember Viagran asked for further clarification on nuisance feeding and the selling of dogs and cats on street corners and at flea markets. Mr. Lefgren reported that ACS was in favor of the Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) program to humanely control cat populations, and the Ordinance change would clarify that improper feeding techniques would not be allowed. He stated that the Feral Cat Coalition recommended that food should only be left out for an hour and removed thereafter. Mr. Lefgren reported that many streetside vendors of dogs and cats previously considered the \$100 citations as a cost of doing business and the proposed Ordinance change would increase citations to \$500 per offense.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if the reason why pets could not be sold under 8 weeks of age was because they must be sterilized first. She asked of the appropriate age to spay or neuter cats and dogs. She requested a summary of citations issued and fines assessed. Mr. Lefgren reported that pets required specialized care during the first 8 weeks and could not be vaccinated during that timeframe which made it inappropriate to sell pets less than 8 weeks of age. He added that the 8 week restriction also preserved and protected young pets from catching and transferring deadly diseases in its early stages of life. Mr. Lefgren stated that sterilization did not depend on a pet's age, but on its weight, and cats could be sterilized as soon as they reached 2 pounds in weight. Mr. Lefgren reported that City Council approved funding for an ACS Officer to specifically address the illegal selling of dogs and cats and the additional ACS Officer had investigated 522 cases to date, with many resulting in fines being issued. He stated he would provide a detailed summary.

Councilmember Treviño moved to recommend and forward the proposed amendments to Chapter 5 entitled Animals and Chapter 20 entitled Municipal Court of the City Code to City Council for consideration. Councilmember Viagran seconded the Motion. The Motion carried unanimously.

4. Briefing and review of public participation practices, including selection of a facilitator to work with the City of San Antonio to solicit input from residents. [Carlos J. Contreras, III, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Coyle, Director, Government and Public Affairs]

Jeff Coyle reported that a Council Consideration Request (CCR) to advance public participation was approved by City Council in February 2018; thereafter, an internal review was conducted and recommendations were presented to the Governance Council Committee in June 2018. He stated that an

addendum to the CCR was made in November 2018, followed by the adoption of guiding principles in January 2019, and the issuance of a Public Participation Administrative Directive in February 2019 by the City Manager.

Mr. Coyle stated that every effort was made to ensure that public participation was meaningful, transparent, respectful of divergent views, and inclusive of all residents, with the elimination of all barriers to participation. He noted that the Public eComment system and non-digital opportunities were implemented, Council Committee meetings were now livestreamed, and reports on public participation were produced for the public to view the results.

Mr. Coyle reported that a facilitator was needed to lead the engagement process for public participation. He stated that \$25,000 was allocated in the FY 2020 City Budget for the process. He added that the City solicited five proposals from five local facilitators and received four proposals back and the selection panel selected SA 2020 as the City's public participation facilitator. He noted that extensive public participation was the focus of SA 2020.

Mr. Coyle reported that the City would enter into an annual contract with SA 2020 from September 2020 through February 2021. He presented SA 2020's scope of work under the contract, as follows:

- Review the City's current public participation resources and activities
- Provide recommendations for participants in community focus groups
- Conduct and facilitate focus group discussions with the goal of identifying potential opportunities for improved engagement with the community
- Summarize the feedback of the focus groups and present a final report with recommendations

Mr. Coyle stated that the focus group process would begin in November 2020 and the entire process would be completed by February 2021. He noted that SA 2020 had contracted with the City Manager's Office for other support work and the contract language included their ongoing support of the public participation system which ensured a long-term investment and engagement with the City and the community.

Councilmember Viagran requested follow up data regarding SA 2020's coordinated efforts and approach to feedback obtained from focus groups.

Councilmember Gonzales reported that Council District 5 launched a local pilot program modeled after a national pilot program in Philadelphia to train community-based organizations to be their own facilitators. She stated she was hopeful to obtain feedback from the pilot program and communicate those efforts to local constituents. She noted the importance of effective communication with the public during COVID-19.

Councilmember Viagran reported that Council District 3 had partnered with a hyperlocal group to promote an Arts bond project in the community. She stated that the hyperlocal group was a trusted agent in the area with the ability to utilize the best methods and tools to facilitate public participation. She noted complaints by residents of their inability to attend and participate in City Council meetings during work days, and the need to obtain and incorporate public feedback equitably across digital and language divides. She stated that she was hopeful SA 2020 would connect with the City Clerk's office to learn of new and dynamic processes implemented by City Clerks throughout the United States to obtain public comments.

Mr. Coyle reported that procurement was underway for some IT solutions that would advance the current infrastructure and further assist SA 2020 with their assessments. He cited the success of the two surveys conducted by ACS that generated 4,000 responses each and greatly informed the proposed changes to be made to the Ordinance. He noted that a summarized report of survey feedback was produced and posted on www.SASpeakup.com for public viewing. He emphasized that the overall goal was to open as many doors as possible for public engagement, identify where there might be gaps, and address ever-evolving technology issues.

Chairwoman Sandoval stated that residents engaged in different ways in different Council Districts and it was important that SA 2020 had the tools to connect with various local communities. She noted that the scope of work for SA 2020 would include meeting with Councilmembers to discuss best ways to reach out to members of their communities, and partnering with hyperlocal groups and other organizations that were trusted agents within their local areas.

Chairwoman Sandoval outlined critical outcomes to the public participation process: transparency of the decision-making process; trust building; and having more healthy community engagement.

Future Agenda Items

None.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:03 pm.

Ana Sandoval, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk