

**CITY OF COSTA MESA
ANIMAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES: MAY 24, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER: The Animal Services Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Walls at 5:30 p.m. on May 24, 2023.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Becca Walls, Vice Chair Angela Minjares, Committee Members Lisa A. Harker, Christina Poulos, and Jennifer Tanaka

Absent: Committee Members Diana Gardiner and Alternate Committee Members Emily Cummings-Nelson and Elise Gates.

Staff Present: Jessica Torrejon, Recreation Coordinator; Ashley Thomas, Senior Recreation Supervisor; Monique Villasenor, Recreation Manager; Jason Minter, Parks and Community Services Director; Joyce LaPointe, Deputy Chief of Police; and David Casarez, Acting Captain

Let the record show that Committee Member Lisa A. Harker arrived to the Committee meeting at 5:31 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Walls opened Public Comments.

Chair Walls asked to move Public Comments to a later time, as a member of the public was running late.

Ms. Thomas approved moving Public Comments.

Chair Walls reopened Public Comments following item 3a.

Lisa Price of Priceless Pet Rescue spoke about bottle kittens and asked if the City can provide education on feral kittens as to increase their survival rate.

Seeing no additional speakers, Public Comments was closed.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AND LIAISON COMMENTS

Vice Chair Minjares updated the committee on the “Spring Bark Bash” event, stated the event went well overall, and shared that she assisted with providing giveaways to the public. She added that the interactive element to the prizes was received positively by the participants.

Chair Walls asked about the status for the Animal Services Request for Proposals (RFP), shared her experience at the “Spring Bark Bash” with the microchip clinic, and expressed that people were deterred from getting their pets microchipped because did not want to register for a pet license. She spoke about an upcoming microchip clinic that Priceless Pet Rescue will be providing on June 24, 2023.

Ms. Torrejon thanked Chair Walls and Vice Chair Minjares for attending the “Spring Bark Bash.”

Ms. Thomas spoke to the committee regarding the free microchips that were offered at the “Spring Bark Bash” and the reason for Costa Mesa residents getting free microchips offered to them was due to the efforts of this committee.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 22, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION/SECOND: Chair Walls motioned to approve the March 22, 2023 meeting minutes. / Second by Committee Member Poulos. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Walls, Vice Chair Minjares, Committee Members Harker, Poulos, and Tanaka.

Nays: None

Absent: Committee Member Gardiner

Motion Carries: 5-0

2. OLD BUSINESS

a. Beekeeping Ordinance

Committee Member Tanaka mentioned that former Committee Member Parker spearheaded the research, shared an attachment regarding Beekeeping in New York and how they manage to allow beekeeping in their densely populated City, and spoke about drafting a beekeeping ordinance for Costa Mesa using neighboring cities, but wanted to check in with the Committee and staff before moving forward. She mentioned using the City of Santa Ana as an example of a city that currently allows beekeeping to single family lots, which may be better suited for Costa Mesa.

Committee Member Poulos expressed that there is no reason to withhold this opportunity due to space as long as it is done through a permit similar to the City of Santa Ana.

Chair Walls expressed she is not against the Committee and its beekeeping goal; however, in her opinion, bees do not fall under the Committee’s purview in relation to domestic animals.

Vice Chair Minjares agreed with Chair Walls; however, if the committee wishes to proceed with the Beekeeping Ordinance, she will vote “yes” for the ordinance.

Mr. Minter reminded the Committee this is not a voting item.

Vice Chair Minjares expressed concerns about enforcement of the Beekeeping Ordinance, maintenance, and questioned if the Committee’s efforts could be put to better use, such as

education. She shared that L.A. County is currently having a bee issue where pets and people are being stung.

Ms. Tanaka asked that if the Committee files and receives, does that disband the subcommittee.

Ms. Thomas opened the item for public comments.

Speaker, spoke in support of beekeeping in Costa Mesa, shared the difference between feral and domestic bees, and provided information on bees and their pollination purposes with foods that people consume.

Speaker, spoke in support of beekeeping in Costa Mesa, shared that they rescue bees, informed on the need for bees for pollination purposes, and suggested to find ways to educate residents how to keep bees in a safe manner since beekeeping is already happening in the City.

Ms. Thomas closed public comments.

Chair Walls asked, if a beekeeping ordinance is adopted, how will bees be regulated? Will bees be regulated where they come from? How many community beehives already exist? If a resident finds bees, can they transfer them to an allowed area?

Deputy Chief LaPointe commented that if bees are found within the City of Costa Mesa on public property, residents can call dispatch and a beekeeper will be sent out to that area to safely and humanely remove them from the public area. Deputy Chief LaPointe shared with that they have received some complaints from residents concerned for their children and pets regarding bees.

Ms. Tanaka asked about beekeeping fines.

Deputy Chief LaPointe said fines are a rare occurrence, but did not have that information and stated they would follow up with Costa Mesa Animal Control.

Chair Walls expressed there is the potential of two issues, keeping bees and rescuing bees.

Ms. Tanaka added two other issues might be determining the difference of wild bees and domestic bees, and would like to determine if domestic bees would fall under the Committee's purview. She referenced a New York article in which they require insurance and a beekeeping certificate.

Mr. Minter added that perhaps there should be an educational aspect.

Ms. Tanaka stated she would be working on a draft ordinance for Beekeeping.

MOTION/SECOND: Chair Walls motioned to receive and file the Beekeeping Ordinance until the next meeting in July with more information. / Seconded by Committee Member Harker. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Walls, Vice Chair Minjares, Committee Members Harker, Poulos, and Tanaka.

Nays: None

Absent: Committee Member Gardiner

Motion Carries: 5-0

b. Costa Mesa Foundation Account Funds

Ms. Torrejon mentioned the amount spent through the Costa Mesa Foundation Animal Services account on microchips and the City is preparing for a microchip clinic hosted by Priceless Pet Rescue which will be free to residents.

Chair Walls expressed a push for licensing not working and asked how licensing would be advertised to residents at the microchip clinic.

Ms. Torrejon informed the committee that Animal Care Services staff will be providing a letter to residents who do not currently have a pet license, but attended the microchip clinic.

Chair Walls opened public comments.

Seeing no hands raised, public comments was closed.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Committee Overview Discussion with the City Council Liaisons

Mr. Minter provided a brief update to the Committee and suggested to table the discussion to the next meeting.

Chair Walls provided a brief update on the Committee and asked members to think of the purpose of the Committee and what would be productive uses of the Committee's time.

Chair Walls asked if the Committee meeting could be moved to an earlier meeting date.

Mr. Minter said the meeting could not be moved to an earlier date as the request was not agendized.

Ms. Tanaka recommended that the Committee review the City Council meeting where committees were previously discussed.

Chair Walls asked if links could be sent to the Committee on the creation of the Animal Services Committee and the City Council meeting where the committees were recently

discussed.

MOTION/SECOND: Chair Walls motioned to table the Committee Overview Discussion with the City Council Liaisons to the July 26 Committee meeting. / Seconded by Vice Chair Minjares. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Walls, Vice Chair Minjares, Committee Members Harker, Poulos, and Tanaka.

Nays: None

Absent: Committee Member Gardiner

Motion Carries: 5-0

4. MONTHLY REPORTS

a. Animal Care Services Staff Report

Ms. Torrejon presented the Animal Care Services Staff Report.

Chair Walls asked what “Live Outcomes” on the Animal Statistics means.

Ms. Torrejon defined the ‘Live Outcomes’ as “Return to Owner.”

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Walls adjourned the meeting at 6:22 p.m.