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2 The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **City of Las Cruces - Animal Care**  
3 **Task Force** for November 22, 2019 at 2:30 p.m., at the City of Las Cruces, City Hall,  
4 Conference Room 2007-A, 700 North Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

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6 **Members Present:**

- 7 David Dollahon, Assistant City Manager for Operations
- 8 Kasandra Gandara, City Councilor Dist. 1/ ASCMV Board Chair
- 9 Yvonne Flores, City Councilor Dist. 6
- 10 Gino Jimenez, City ACO Supervisor
- 11 Clint Thacker, ASCMV Executive Director
- 12 Rick Hahn, Coalition for Pets and People
- 13 Athena Huckaby, Cat Colony Manager
- 14 Frank Bryce, Humane Society of Southern NM
- 15 Susan Krueger, Animal Care Advocate
- 16 Gina Roberts, Dona Ana County ACO Case Worker
- 17 Jean Gilbert, Humane Society of Southern NM

18  
19 **Others Present:**

- 20 David Aguayo, City of Las Cruces Codes/Animal Control
- 21 Jo Ruprecht, Citizen
- 22 Marcy Scott, Citizen
- 23 Jennifer Kleitz, Citizen

24  
25 **Call to order** – 2:38 p.m.

26  
27 **Approval of Minutes:** Clint Thacker moved; Susan Krueger seconded to approve the  
28 minutes for November 8, 2019. Motion passed.

29  
30 **Discussion Items:** Mr. Dollahon showed a GIS map that showed 2019 YTD  
31 trap/neuter/release locations based on addresses that Clint has provided from the Animal  
32 Service Center by city council district. There's also outside the county where they have  
33 released. The green dot means it's a singular release. The green dot with a red ring  
34 around it is a multiple release at that location. It was not known whether it's a multiple of the  
35 same animal or multiple animals.

36  
37 Mr. Dollahon said you have to recognize that the council districts are divided by population  
38 not by area. They don't have an equal population, but they have a close to equal population.

39  
40 Mr. Dollahon said he had a meeting with Dr. Gary Roemer who is a wildlife ecologist at  
41 NMSU. He offered some interesting perspective and he is willing to come and meet with us.  
42 He did a study in 2004 related to trap/neuter/release and then there was a further study  
43 based on their study by another university after that related to the fecundity and the survival  
44 rate of feral cats in the community.

45  
46 His issue was that in an open environment you cannot control the feral cat population solely  
47 by trap/neuter/release. Without controlling the migration in and the migration out he

1 said....look at it in a different scale. If you had someone that had an enclosed cat colony  
2 that was not taking any new animals in you can control the fecundity and the survival rate of  
3 those animals for the most part and you can eliminate that cat colony because there's no  
4 new migration in and there's no population growth

5  
6 Dr. Roemer said, and he did explain it a lot better so I'm just simplifying it and I will gladly  
7 have him come to one of our meetings, a closed environment you can control but in a large  
8 city environment you cannot. You may control an isolated area because it's enclosed or  
9 whatever, you may make impacts and improvements to a smaller area but because you  
10 can't control migration in and out it's impossible for you to capture every feral cat at any one  
11 point in time to turn them into trap/neuter/release. His point was you have to have every tool  
12 available to you in the toolbox.

13  
14 Athena Huckaby said I bet I could get agreement from both Animal Control and the Shelter  
15 that most of the (inaudible) is people abandoning their animals.

16  
17 Clint Thacker said and that's how you're never going to control it. And we have the huge  
18 non sterilization issue.

19  
20 Athena Huckaby said, on the big to do this morning on the news about the cat that was  
21 shot, I thought that might be an opportunity for the City of Las Cruces to issue a press  
22 release maybe reminding people that the current ordinance says that you're not suppose to  
23 have your own cat outside at all.

24  
25 Gino Jimenez said he thought Dan Trujillo had already done something on it and would  
26 follow up on that.

27  
28 So, my point is Dr. Roemer said you have to have all your tools available to your toolbox  
29 including euthanasia which affects our community and people are concerned with it. The  
30 other thing is he said you also have to look at low cost or no cost spay or neuter. However;  
31 that's not something that we control under an ordinance and that is a financial implication to  
32 the city and the county.

33  
34 Clint Thacker said we could control it under an ordinance. If your animal is picked up twice  
35 it's an automatic sterilization. However; then we get into the resources. There's no way I'd  
36 be able to keep up with that. Right now, the state law says that if it's impounded twice in a  
37 year then you have to buy a voucher or get it sterilized. So, they pay \$25 for the voucher  
38 and then we never see them again.

39  
40 David Dollahon said there's an enforcement component that we need to look at between the  
41 City and the County. So, it is a matter of resources, when I say the word "resources", picture  
42 the dollar symbol. It's about money. It's either more personnel, more space, more services,  
43 because it they cost things to do that. But it's something we have to consider.

44  
45 Gino Jimenez said it's in the state statute, all we have to do is adopt it and put it in.

46  
47 Clint Thacker said what we're saying is we would make it that in the City the second  
48 impound you're not getting the animal until it's sterilized.

49  
50 David Dollahon said we the City as a home rule municipality can do that. I don't know that  
51 the County could do that because they don't have home rule authority.

1 Marcy Scott talked about the effect's cats had on our bird populations. She said one of the  
2 things I am most concerned about and I touched on it before about most birds in Las Cruces  
3 seem introduced and invasive. I took a closer look at that, house finches were on that list,  
4 they are a native bird to the western United States. Cattle Egrets are self-immigrated from  
5 Africa, so they are considered a native bird. So, there are just 5 or 6 on that list that are  
6 considered introduced species, they aren't protected, but as far as our location is  
7 concerned, none of them are considered invasive.

8  
9 Ms. Scott said by in large the 400 plus species that are native to our county are native, they  
10 are not invasive, they're all protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. None of them are on  
11 the Federal Endangered Species list but 20 plus species are on the Federal Watch list  
12 because their populations have undergone a severe decline. Many of those 400 plus  
13 species are on the New Mexico endangered, threatened or species of concern list. I am  
14 passionate about birds. We need all of our concern devoted to developing a policy that will  
15 not continue to decimate their numbers. We need to do our part. One of the things about  
16 quantifying our problem with how many cats are running at large, if we don't know how  
17 many cats there are, we can't extrapolate how many birds are getting killed. Studies have  
18 been done that basically center on about an average of 20 birds per cat meaning some cats  
19 will get no birds a year and some cats will get as many as 40 or more. That includes house  
20 cats running at large not just feral cats. Twenty birds a year if let's say we had 50,000 cats  
21 running at large, that's 1 million birds every year getting killed. That's a pretty serious  
22 problem.

23  
24 David Dollahon also brought up for discussion the idea of mandating veterinarians to  
25 microchip a pet that they see is not microchipped. The board will discuss this further at  
26 future meetings. David said he will talk with legal counsel on the mandatory sterilization from  
27 the state statute and then putting it in our ordinance and about the mandatory microchipping  
28 by our veterinarians.

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30 Our next meeting will be January 17, 2020 at 2:30 p.m.

31  
32 **Adjourn – 3:55 p.m.**

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36 Chair

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38 Approved: \_\_\_\_\_