

**City asks SNAP for more 'concrete' numbers**  
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LAS CRUCES - Before the city council decides if the Spay and Neuter Action Program (SNAP) should receive city funding, it wants some proof from the organization that providing funds would lower operating costs of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (ASCMV).

SNAP representatives Sherry Gara and Janice English appeared before the council, at Monday's work session, to request that \$50,000 in city funds be allocated to help the nonprofit organization continue its work to end pet overpopulation in Doña Ana County. Gara, SNAP president, and English, who is listed on the organization's website as the office manager, presented lots of statistics, data and numbers to back up their financial request, and show the strides the organization has made to reduce pet overpopulation and the costs associated from the problems caused by too many pets.

"A lot of things in the community will cost less if we take care of the animal population," Gara said. "We're doing close to 170 spay-and-neuter operations a month. We could get a lot more compliance (from city and county residents), we just don't have the money for it.

"... It's money, money, money. We need money, money, money."

Gara added there have been 8,750 pets that have been euthanized in the past year, and the city's cost to have the ASCMV to handle each of those pets has been about \$130 per pet. The quick math showed it has cost the ASCMV \$1,137,500 to handle, and dispose of those pets.

But Mayor Ken Miyagishima wants SNAP to provide some hard, cold numbers that would show how the grassroots organization's efforts to reduce pet overpopulation would directly affect the Animal Services Center's bottom-line costs.

"If \$1 of what you spend saves us \$3 to operate the Animal Services Center that's something we strongly need to look at," Miyagishima said. "We need a little bit more concise numbers from you."

Councilor Miguel Silva agreed.

"I was looking forward to more concrete numbers," Silva said.

The city did not allocate funding to SNAP last year, and English said the costs of spay-and-neuter surgeries for pets of city residents amounted to \$46,571, or 53.3 percent of all the pets that were spayed or neutered in 2010. While the city did not provide funding to SNAP, Doña Ana County allotted \$10,000 to help offset the organization's costs.

But Councilor Dolores Connor, a member of ASCMV board of directors, said it would be hard for the city to come up with \$50,000 for SNAP. City Manager Robert Garza has recommended in the city's proposed budget for the 2012 fiscal year, beginning July 1, an additional \$147,000 in funding sought for the ASCMV for operations not be granted. The request for \$147,000 is in addition to the money the city has provided as its share to operate ASCMV during the current fiscal year.

"If we don't have \$147,000 for the shelter I don't know where we're going to get \$50,000," Connor said.

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## **Spay and Neuter Action Program**

- Spay and Neuter Action Program (SNAP) is a nonprofit organization working to end pet overpopulation in Doña Ana County.
- SNAP had an approximate budget of \$170,000 last year to pay for spay-and-neuter operations.
- The city did not contribute to SNAP, but Doña Ana County gave the organization \$10,000 to offset costs.
- SNAP is attempting to persuade the Las Cruces City Council to allocate \$50,000 to help the organization control the city's pet population.