

On the Positive Side: Animal Advocacy to Consider Proposal for Reducing Pet Euthanasia
by Frank Bryce
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In a positive step, on Saturday, December 17 from 9 AM to 11 AM, an important meeting of interested individuals, members of animal advocacy organizations, the animal shelter, and animal control officers will take place at the Spay Neuter Action Program (SNAP) Office at 2405 W. Picacho Avenue). The following is taken from notification of this meeting provided by the coalition facilitator Billy Garrett, County Commissioner and Animal Services of Mesilla Valley Board of Directors Chairperson. A draft proposal summarizing several months of discussions and open meetings to develop an approach to reducing euthanasia rates at our public shelter while addressing a variety of other animal-related issues will be presented to participants.

This proposed approach to addressing our animal issues is thought to be comprehensive and community-based, and an effort to increase public health and safety while enhancing animal welfare and increasing the effectiveness of public expenditures. It is hoped the document will be seen as a reflection of the group effort and will be used to make informed decisions. The need to reduce euthanasia while maintaining or improving on other animal issues is a significant challenge and the decision to take this on should not be made lightly. It is believed that the draft proposal contains the scope and level of detail needed to make informed decisions.

The animal control effort by Las Cruces and Dona Ana County addresses rabies control, protection of the public and prevention of cruelty and neglect of animals, and provides a repository for unwanted, stray, injured or dangerous animals. However, because more healthy or treatable dogs and cats are taken to the shelter than can be successfully adopted or re-homed, as many as seven out of every ten animals taken there are killed every year. Chair Garrett states quite simply, "This situation can be corrected if the placement of animals in good homes can be greatly increased, and if the number of animals going to the shelter can be significantly reduced."

The entire draft proposal can be reviewed at the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico website hssnm.org and the public is invited to join us at the SNAP Office for this meeting. Interested residents from the north and south valley areas are encouraged to participate and those who cannot attend can submit comments via e-mail to billyg4dac@gmail.com. Due to limited seating, participants are encouraged to bring their own chairs.

The following questions are posed by Chair Garrett:

Do you concur with the overall theme and main points raised in the "Introduction"? What changes are essential at this point?

Do you concur with the substance of the 12-Point Plan? What changes are essential at this point?

Do you concur with the assumptions of the "Strategic Frame", the name of the consortium, stated objective, & initial marketing theme? What changes are essential at this point?

Do you concur with the idea of the council, the work groups, and the ground rules? What changes are essential at this point?

What changes do you feel are essential at this point regarding the content of the four appendices?

Are you ready, willing and able to do this?

Frank Bryce is President of the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Interested guest authors can contact the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at 575-523-8020.