

DogsBite.org
P.O. Box 12443
Austin, TX 78711

August 6, 2012

Austin Public Safety Commission Meeting

DogsBite.org is a national dog bite victims' group dedicated to reducing serious dog attacks. My name is Colleen Lynn and I am the founder of this organization.

In April 2010, DogsBite.org relocated to East Austin from the City of Seattle.

Dog Bites on the Rise (2007-2011)

DogsBite.org recently reviewed 5-years of dog bite data gained from the City of Austin under the Freedom of Information Act. The data shows that dog bites have increased substantially since the City of Austin adopted a No-Kill policy in 2010. Between 2009 and 2011, dog bites increased 35%.

The primary offenders of these bites are pit bulls and their mixes, responsible for 22% of all bites (1,288). Though not the most popular dog breed in the City of Austin, pit bulls are out biting -- by nearly a 2 to 1 ratio -- the breed that is the most popular, Labradors and their mixes, which inflicted 12% of all bites (682) during this period.

Year	Bites
2007	1,015
2008	1,065
2009	1,074
2010	1,222
2011	1,449
Total	5,825

Unwanted pit bulls flood open admission shelters across the United States; Austin is no different. The combination of this reality with a No-Kill policy, which often leads to the reduction of screening of potential adopters and behavior testing, is a considerable public safety risk. I urge the Public Safety Commission to recognize this risk.

Pet Licensing Program Ends in 2008

According to Austin Animal Services, the city ended its Pet Licensing Program in 2008/2009. Such programs are employed extensively across the country by city and county animal service departments for two primary purposes 1.) To fund animal control services and 2.) To gage the population of domesticated pets within a city.

Currently and moving forward, Austin Animal Services has no such funding or population data. Furthermore, Austin animal owners are not contributing even modestly more than non-animal owners through annual pet licensing fees to benefit citywide animal control services.

I thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

Colleen Lynn
President and Founder
DogsBite.org

Talking Points In Favor of a Spay/Neuter A.K.A. Differential Licensing Ordinance

-Ordinances and laws are how a Society tells the individual members of that Society what is expected of them. Through those laws and ordinances, we as a people establish the rules of behavior and expectations necessary to maintain a safe and healthy living environment. All a spay/neuter ordinance/differential licensing does is tell our citizens Society requires they spay/neuter their pet or bear some of the financial responsibility for the costs of managing Austin's burgeoning pet population and the additional costs for the increasing threat to public safety.

Things the Current No Kill Plan doesn't address that a spay/neuter A.K.A. Differential licensing ordinance will:

- 1) Dog fighting. Dog fighters will not be able to keep an unspayed or unneutered dog in the City limits. (Dog fights and fighters in Montopolis)
- 2) Dangerous dogs in the neighborhoods (Montopolis resident severely mauled by dogs trying to save a two year old girl from them; 265 stitches, broken jaw, lost her teeth, spent almost a week in intensive care)
- 3) no more puppy mills in the City limits
- 4) statistics show that about 70% of all animal owners spay/neuter. An ordinance will encourage the other 30% and hold them fiscally responsible for not S/Ning
- 5) 50% of all serious dog attack victims are under 12 years of age (Texas Zoonosis website)
- 5) 76% of all serious dog attacks are from unspayed and neutered dogs (American Veterinarian Association)
- 6) decrease in shelter intake leading to a
- 7) higher quality adoption program and hopefully reining in their spiraling budget
- 8) increase in public safety

Current State or City law requires:

- Food
 - Water
 - Shelter
 - Current Rabies Vaccines
 - Necessary Veterinary Care
 - 2 point tether to ride in back of truck
 - No unattended chained or tethered dogs
 - No leaving cat or dog in a hot car
- All we are asking is to add one more requirement that will increase public safety, make for a healthier pet population and help make our City's current animal policies fiscally responsible. This ordinance will have a positive impact on Austin and its neighborhoods in so many different ways.

14,000 pen on paper signatures asking the City to pass a S/N ordinance all gathered in East Austin

Letters or resolutions of support for a spay/neuter A.K.A. differential licensing ordinance.

- Austin Neighborhoods Council 30 years
- Animal Trustee's of Austin 17 years
- Emancipet 11 years
- Austin Humane Society 63 years
- Texas Federation of Animal Care Societies 30 years

Things that won't happen because of provisions in the proposed ordinance

S/N isn't mandatory there are options but the owners of unfixed cats and dogs will be required to shoulder some of the financial burden due to the problems caused by unfixed dogs and cats

No sweeps

No impounding of unS/Ned animals solely because they aren't fixed

Not asking for increases in A/C staff or budget increases to fund enforcement. Current PD and Animal Control staff is adequate.


City Budget

I attended every one of the Town Hall Budget Hearings in 2010. We were told that there is no extra money. We were asked to make hard choices. We worked long and hard to choose between library hours, public safety, parks, the arts, after school programs, prenatal nutrition programs, mental health programs, trails. Some of these programs cost as little as \$ 30,000 a year but they were on the table. Two mandates came out of them. While we are a little better off financially ; we are still struggling for funding.

1)Fund the police academy class

2) Do not reduce funding for Emancipet's Free S/N days. (Two different University of Texas studies reached the conclusion that every dollar that goes into spay/neuter saves almost two dollars the next year in animal intake) All the citizens of this City; not just animal issue people but the whole broad spectrum, support spay/neuter as a solution

I hoped I would never live to see a city in the United States that put the welfare of cats and dogs above the health and safety of it's families and it's neighborhoods.

 Every City in Texas Houston , San Antonio, Dallas, Ft Worth, Plano Arlington, El Paso, even Waco, all except for Lubbock and Austin have looked at the problem, they've done the research and they have all reached the same conclusion.

A spay/neuter ordinance is not going to be a magic bullet. Even if Council passes it, by itself, it will not work miracles. It's taken Austin decades to get to the point at which we find ourselves . We need every tool at our disposal to "Fix" this problem in a humane manner. We need to educate. We need to upgrade

our adoption and return to owner programs. We need increased funding for low cost and free spay/neuter surgeries (which has almost a 2 for 1 payback) And we need to add a spay/neuter ordinance to the "No Kill Resolution" Why try to build something and leave out the one tool that can have an impact on so many different levels?

If you have additional questions please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Delwin Goss
President
Montopolis Community Alliance (M.C.A.)
Vice President
C.L.A.S.P.
Citizen Lead Austin Safety Partnership<http://clasp.weebly.com/>
Recipient:
Central Texas Crime Prevention Association 2011 Citizen Award
Texas Habitat for Humanity Leadership Conference 2010 Exceptional Service Award
Presidential Service Award for Community Service 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011
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\$1 Million: The Next Price Tag on No-Kill

The new Austin Animal Center is overflowing with animals

By [Josh Rosenblatt](#), [Fri., July 27, 2012](#)



The new Austin Animal Center and the old Town Lake Animal Center are filled to the gills with animals.

Photo by Jana Birchum

Last week **Austin Animal Services** reported that the city's live animal outcome rate for the month of June had clocked in at 92%. Indeed, 721 animals found permanent homes during the month, smashing the record for most adoptions recorded in June; 200 more animals left the AAC than came in.

That's the good news.

The less-than-good news is that the demands of maintaining no-kill status for some 17 months have resulted in Animal Services struggling to keep two undersized and overcapacity shelters up and running with the money and manpower needed for one. "We're limping along and doing our best to keep up," Chief Animal Services Officer **Abigail Smith** told the Council's **Health and Human Services Committee** during her monthly presentation last week. "But we are not prepared to run two shelters. And I think we weren't prepared to run the new shelter with enough staff."

That Animal Services isn't able to handle the demands of two shelters should come as no surprise – when Council signed off the Health and Human Services Budget last fall, there was no license agreement between the city and rescue nonprofit **Austin Pets Alive!** to run an overflow shelter at **Town Lake Animal Center** for \$12,000 a month, much less to allow APA! to move its entire operation to the site. In fact, back then there was still hope that the new \$12 million shelter on Levander Loop would be adequate for the needs of a growing, no-kill city, and that TLAC could be converted into a central city adoption site – perhaps one of several to be established around town.

Instead, the old TLAC site is full, and the new AAC is way past full. Hundreds of animals are in foster homes, and shelter staff have had to be creative in order to house the overabundance of animals sleeping under AAC's quonset hut roofs. As of last week, wire crates filled with kittens could be found on tables in the shelter's main conference room. For months, staff has been finding room for dogs in cages in the stray- and surgery-holding areas. At last week's HHS meeting, Council Member **Mike Martinez** referenced anonymous statements from shelter volunteers claiming that the staff is overburdened, that health and safety issues are being overlooked, that they'd seen one dog receive chemical burns on the pads of its paws after being returned too quickly to a recently cleaned cage.

Martinez said he wanted to make sure "we're not neglecting things in our quest to up the live-outcome rate."

Though Smith said the burned-paw situation wasn't as bad as had been reported, she doesn't deny that maintaining a 90% live-outcome rate with her current resources is an unsustainable situation, both for her staff and the animals they're tending. "Certainly since the busy season started this summer we have struggled to keep up with enough personnel to adequately take care of all the animals, at both TLAC and AAC," Smith told the *Chronicle*. "There's definitely some improvement that needs to be done there. But it's more difficult to give the highest level of care when you have many more animals than you thought you would have, and we hadn't planned on operating TLAC as a full-service facility. There are a gazillion animals, and we're short-staffed. It's a nightmare. The animals aren't suffering, but we aspire to a higher standard than that."

Hoping to return to that standard, Smith and her office are requesting approximately \$1 million in extra funds in this year's budget cycle. All of that, Smith says, would go toward staffing, including a veterinarian and animal health technicians. All told, Smith is requesting funds for 18 new positions. "Our unmet needs are all about people," Smith says. "We need people." Of that \$1 million, nearly \$300,000 would go toward employees to staff TLAC. "Until we can expand our adoption services elsewhere, we have to staff TLAC," she says. "I don't think anyone thought we would move back in to the extent that we have. There's no baseline for no-kill, for the implementation plan, for how many people we need to operate it. We're figuring this out as we go along." In the meantime, Smith is making do by moving funds around to pay for temps.

If council signs off on Smith's request, it will be the second consecutive substantial increase her office has received, both in money and employees. Between fiscal years 2011 and 2012, during which time the city first hit the no-kill benchmark, the office's budget jumped more than \$1 million, and it increased its number of full-time employees by seven. Other offices in the HHS – such as those dealing with communicable diseases, youth development, and environmental and consumer health – saw almost no increase in budgets and, in some cases, a reduction in the number of employees on staff. So it might seem unlikely that City Council would approve a 13% increase to bump the size of the Animal Services Office's staff by nearly 20%. Then again, it's hard to imagine them balking when they consider the alternative: the possibility of Austin giving up its title as the largest no-kill city in the world. A million dollars is nothing to shrug at, but council members might find going back to the way things were a much bigger price to pay.

Austin Animal Services

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Budget	\$4,091,677	\$4,397,452	\$4,781,021	\$5,066,795	\$5,397,428	\$6,008,659	\$6,883,679	\$7,612,186	\$8,761,186
FTE	77.5	79.5	80.5	81.5	81.5	82.5	88.5	94	
Animal Intake	25,489	24,357	27,163	24,663	22,150	24,026	19,752		
Euthanasia Rate			52%	44%	32%	28%	12%		

2013 Budget Increase Requests from <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=171370>

Staff Veterinarian	\$29,000
Temp. Budget for Staff Vet Services	\$134,000
TLAC Operations	\$291,000
Behavior Program	\$148,000
Animal Services Customer Care Rep	\$205,000
Animal Care Workers	\$140,000
Animal Health Technicians	\$99,000
Business Process Consultant	\$103,000
Total	\$1,149,000

Austin Neighborhoods Council

*Established 1973 • Strength Through Unity
Post Office Box 176 • Austin, Texas 78767*

13 September 2010

Dear Mayor Leffingwell, Mayor Pro Tem and Council Members,

The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC) is an umbrella organization representing 86 neighborhood associations across the city. The following resolution, adopted by general membership vote at ANC's August 25 meeting, makes specific recommendations for a City spay-neuter ordinance to accompany and make practical the city's "no kill" policy for adoptable cats and dogs.

Resolution Supporting a Spay/Neuter Ordinance for Austin

Whereas the City Of Austin's City Council has adopted the "No Kill Resolution;" and

Whereas the intended purpose of the "No Kill Resolution" is to end the killing of healthy adoptable cats and dogs at the City of Austin's animal shelter; and

Whereas there is only an expansion of existing programs in the "No Kill Resolution" to limit the number of healthy adoptable cats and dogs entering the City of Austin's animal shelter; and

Whereas the absence of a Spay/Neuter Ordinance in the "No Kill Resolution" to limit the number of healthy adoptable cats and dogs entering the City of Austin's animal shelter will take an ever-increasing number of tax dollars to fund an ever-increasing number of staff and resources to care for and manage the healthy adoptable cats and dogs entering the City of Austin's animal shelter; and

Whereas, abandoned and stray animals pose a health threat to all Austin neighborhoods; and

Whereas the City has had to allocate an additional \$1,000,000.00 in tax dollars to fund the goal of not killing any healthy adoptable cat or dog at the City of Austin's animal shelter; and

Whereas that additional \$1,000,000.00 will have to come from the dwindling general fund; and

Whereas the citizens of Austin are asked to make some very hard choices in Town Hall Budget meetings purposing cuts to other programs; and

Whereas funds could instead go to more needful programs such as affordable housing, education, health care, programs for "at risk" youth, public safety in our more impoverished neighborhoods, parks and trails through out the City of Austin, and the Arts; and

Whereas more than 30 other cities including San Antonio, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Plano, Arlington and El Paso, Seattle, Los Angeles, California, Denver, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque, have funded research and all of them reached the same conclusion to adopt spay/neuter ordinances;

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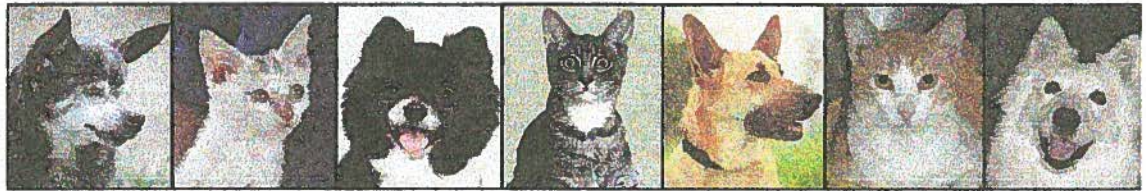
Therefore, be it resolved that the Austin Neighborhoods Council asks the City Council to direct the Animal Advisory Council and city staff to take public input and draft a working and enforceable spay/neuter ordinance that would address the following provisions:

- allow owners who show their cats and/or dogs at cat and/or dog shows accredited by the American Kennel Club and/or the Cat Fanciers Association and/or similar accredited and internationally recognized organizations, which require that the dog and/or cat being shown to be intact, be allowed to keep their cats or dogs intact upon providing proof that their cats or dogs are being shown with out fear of being penalized; and
- allow a dog or cat owner who is willing to pay an annual "intact fee" of \$100.00 and microchip their cat or dog to keep their cat or dog intact; and an animal cannot be seized solely because it is intact; and
- prohibit the City of Austin from collecting fines and penalties from cat and/or dog owners who upon being found in violation of this ordinance; on their first offense, have their cat and/or dogs spayed within 45 days of the date of being cited and provide proof of the spay/neuter to the appropriate city official; and
- Reasonable exemptions shall be made in cases where a licensed veterinarian is of the opinion that spay/neuter surgery could cause harm and that written proof of opinion is provided to the proper authority; and
- provide exemptions for service animals
- include a schedule of fees, fines and penalties for those found in violation of this ordinance; and
- provide a clear provision as to which city department(s) is to provide enforcement of this ordinance and how it is to be enforced; and
- include a clear statement of the intent of the ordinance.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.



Cory Walton, President,
Austin Neighborhoods Council



Serving the Animals and the People who Love Them

Resolution Supporting the "ANC East Draft Spay/Neuter Ordinance Resolution"

Whereas the Austin Neighborhood Council East has unanimously passed a draft of a resolution to recommend that the Austin City Council create a workable spay/neuter ordinance such as Waco, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, and Ft. Worth have already done; and

Whereas many of the 6,000 spay/neuter clients that Animal Trustees of Austin serves a year reside in East Austin, and Animal Trustees wishes to advocate for the needs of our constituents and the pets that live in this community; and

Whereas we believe that a spay/neuter ordinance, when combined with the low-cost spay/neuter services we provide, could increase the number of pets spayed and neutered in target communities, improving the quality of life for those and other pets;

Therefore, the Board of Directors of Animal Trustees of Austin supports the creation of a workable spay/neuter ordinance for the City of Austin. We respectfully encourage the full membership of the ANC to move forward with the recommendation to City Council to create a reasonable spay/neuter ordinance for Austin.

Resolved this 7th day of August, 2010 by:

Carol Adams, Board President
Craig Milius, Vice President
Sandy Rice, Secretary
Carmelita Cabello, Treasurer
Karen Bartoletti, Director
Kent Burress, Director
Tommy Deavenport, Director
Mellie Price, Director
Mike Rovner, Director
Alisa Weldon, Director
Missy McCullough, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol Adams", written over a horizontal line.

Signature of Board President

EMANCIPET+

August 23, 2010

Dear Members of the Austin Neighborhoods Council Executive Committee,

I regret I am unable to attend your August meeting considering the spay/neuter ordinance resolution. Emancipet supporters will be in attendance, but I also wanted to share some background with you.

Unwanted puppies and kittens face uncertain futures from their first moments of life. While some do end up at the shelter (at great cost to taxpayers), many are never even that lucky. Far more suffer silently in backyards, without adequate vet care or the protective love of a human guardian.

A humane community must do everything it can to reduce the unwanted pet population, starting with providing adequate spay/neuter resources for low-income pet owners, and, when appropriate, enacting ordinances. A spay/neuter ordinance is not a silver bullet. It is not appropriate in every community (never in those without adequate free/low-cost spay/neuter resources), and alone, cannot reduce shelter intake. However, in certain communities, a carefully crafted spay/neuter ordinance could contribute to a reduction in shelter intake over time, and could reduce the suffering of unwanted pets.

Emancipet believes that Austin could be one of those communities, based on two facts:

1. Austin and Travis County are committed to public funding for free spay/neuter. Through Emancipet, the City and County already subsidize 4,000 free surgeries per year, and the 2011 draft City Budget allocates even more resources, bringing the total to approximately 5,100, in addition to the approximately 11,000 (and growing) free/low-cost surgeries we fund & provide annually.
2. Austin's Animal Control Department has a long history of working compassionately and collaboratively with pet owners of all income levels to enforce similar ordinances, without harming animals or their families, or increasing owner surrender rates. This ranges from the recent ban on the chaining of dogs, to those requiring rabies vaccinations, or prohibiting pets from riding unrestrained in truckbeds, or being left in parked cars.

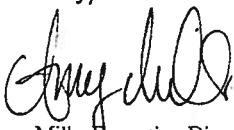
We anticipate that Animal Control Officers will use the ordinance as an opportunity to educate pet owners about the importance of spay/neuter and work with them towards compliance. Further, low-income pet owners who cannot afford the fee or fine for keeping an intact pet will have an affordable option through Emancipet, either for low-cost surgery (\$29 - \$59) or free surgery through a voucher issued by an Animal Control Officer, avoiding any fees associated with the ordinance.

That said, it is of critical importance that provisions are made within the ordinance that ensure that:

1. No animal may ever be seized as a result of this ordinance alone,
2. Any fines may be waived if the pet owners show proof of spay/neuter in a timely way, and
3. All exceptions from veterinarians will be honored.

Thank you so much for your consideration of this important issue. I hope you'll contact me if you have any questions, or would like additional information or data about our program, or the effectiveness of spay/neuter ordinances in general. My personal cell phone is (512) 699-7007.

Sincerely,



Amy Mills, Executive Director



www.emancipet.org / 512.587.7729

MAILING ADDRESS:
PO Box 6396
Austin, Texas 78762

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:
7201 Levander Loop Buildings I & K
Austin, Texas 78721

TEXAS FEDERATION OF ANIMAL CARE SOCIETIES

July 29, 2010

Austin Neighborhood Council
c/o Delwin Goss
6410 Ponca Street
Austin, Texas 78741

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to you to ask for your support of a spay/neuter ordinance for Austin, Texas.

Why? Because we cannot adopt our way out of the pet overpopulation! In addition wishing does not make it so.

For over 25 years we have done education seminars and it has had minimal effect. The responsible pet owners are neutering their animals but it is the irresponsible pet owners who flood Town Lake Animal Center with litters of puppies and kittens.

This summer there was an article in the Statesman stating there were 456 cats and kittens at TLAC and they needed foster homes for them. Obviously that number of cats/kittens cannot be adopted out to loving homes no matter how hard we try. The numbers are staggering as is the cost of the 5.5 million dollars a year that it takes to run the shelter. The cost to taxpayers is not going to go away until something is done to cut down on animal intake and that cannot be achieved without an ordinance that holds people accountable .

We need a spay/neuter ordinance that:

- Gives people who want to keep animals intact the OPTION of purchasing a higher licensing fee- for example \$50.00 per year.
- Reward the people who have neutered their animals with a one-time license fee of a reasonable amount.
- Give people who receive a citation 30 days to have their pet neutered and waive the fine.
- This will cost the city nothing and will, in the long run save money. Consider that one ACO writing 10 citations a day would either have \$500.00 in revenue or 10 animals neutered
- Effectively administered (and these are the key words), this ordinance will bring money into the city and will decrease the number of animals entering the shelter and thus decrease the budget needed to run the shelter.
- Will decrease the number of animals being euthanized.

I urge you to support this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Patt Nordyke

Patt Nordyke
Executive Director

4702 Pinehurst Drive South, Austin, Texas 78747
512-826-8605 email pnordyke@austin.rr.com

Dear Mr. Goss and whom it may concern:

This letter is to note that I was the Policy Aide for Council Member Jennifer Kim during most of her term, which ended in summer of 2008. During Council Member Kim's term, Mr. Goss delivered a petition to the office asking for a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. This petition appeared to have approximately 6500 names on it, though I did not count nor confirm them. All materials from a Council term are given to the Austin History Center after the term ends, and this document would have been turned over with the rest of the materials from Council Member Kim's office.

Thank you-

Heidi Gerbracht