

# Commission of Animal Control and Welfare

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

**TO THE SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**



# Commissioners

Nina Irani - Commission Chair  
Jane Tobin - Commission Vice Chair  
Michael Angelo Torres - Commission Secretary  
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Russell Tenofsky  
Brian Van Horn, DVM  
Shari O'Neill, DMV - SF Animal Care and Control Representative  
Joe Majeski - SF Police Department Representative  
Lisa Wayne - SF Recreation and Park Department Representative

(voice contact) 415 554-6074 (e-mail contact) michaelangelotorres@sfdph.org

The Commission of Animal Control and Welfare advises the Board of Supervisors on all issues related to animals. Commissioners study and make policy recommendations that include issues of interest from members of the public and Supervisors. This report fulfills the Commission's responsibility to render a written report of its activities to the Board in accordance with San Francisco Health Code section 41.3.

## **In 2020, the Commission took action on the following items:**

### **Enforcement of California's Animal Cruelty Law**

In January, the Commission recommended a resolution supporting enforcement of California's anti-cruelty law (Penal Code section 597) as it pertains to farm animals, and in support of local activists investigating conditions at nearby commercial farming facilities. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution on June 9th.

### **Animal Care and Control Reporting on Animal Outcomes, Policies, and Operations**

In July, the Commission voted in favor of Animal Care and Control ("ACC") providing ongoing monthly reporting and data on animal intake and outcomes and shelter operations. Regular reporting was proposed to address issues raised by members of the public beginning in 2019, including concerns regarding changes to the City's feral (community) cat management program, ACC's euthanasia policy, and general transparency and communication with the public. The Commission had previously acted to notify the Board and meet with Supervisors regarding community cat management and transparency, and to consider a change to the City's code requiring public disclosure and a specific release protocol prior to euthanasia, which the Commission voted not to recommend in June.

## **Local Live Animal Markets**

At its first meeting held in accordance with City emergency orders (in May), the Commission initiated discussion of live animal markets, including their regulation and connection with COVID-19. The Commission conducted outreach to the Board and community on this issue, and sought input from the Department of Public Health (“DPH”) on the health risk and the enforcement of state law regulating such markets. Community members responded with interest. Following efforts to secure Supervisor interest and DPH input, the Commission shifted focus to tracking progress on state and federal legislation on this issue.

## **Support for Companion Animals and Homeless Youth**

In June and July, individual Commissioners volunteered to provide animal care services and support to animals sheltering with their guardians at the Stanyan Street safe sleeping site in the Haight-Ashbury.

## **The City’s Good Food Purchasing Program**

In July, the Commission recommended that the Board support proposed legislation requiring City departments to commit to purchasing goals mandating a decrease in animal-based food purchases. The Commission also proposed that DPH match the commitment of the Sherriff’s Department (i.e. a 50% reduction of animal-based food purchases). The Board voted unanimously in favor of the legislation on July 28th. Members of the public commented in favor of a citywide 50% reduction. Although that amendment was not made, the goals may be increased in the future.

## **Resolution Supporting Proposition 12**

In August, the Commission recommended a resolution supporting compliance with California Proposition 12 (passed in 2018) to ensure that local businesses are prepared to meet the law’s requirements by only selling eggs, pork, and veal from cage-free facilities. The resolution will also reaffirm San Francisco’s commitment to enforcing animal cruelty laws. The Commission is working to secure sponsorship from a Supervisor for this resolution.

## **Companion Animals and Emergency Preparedness**

The Commission is recommending that the City move towards ensuring that at least some, and eventually all, of its emergency shelters be cohabitation shelters (i.e. with the capability of sheltering companion animals and their guardians together in the same areas and with guardians being the primary caregivers for their animals). Cohabitation shelters are considered to be the “gold standard” in emergency sheltering by ACC’s Chief Shelter Veterinarian and have been previously utilized by the Red Cross. They are more effective than open/evacuation shelters (where animals are sheltered in a separate facility not in proximity to their guardians) and colocation/pet-friendly shelters (where animals are sheltered in the same or a nearby facility as their guardians but in separate areas), as the other shelter types are resource intensive and can cause increased stress to animals separated from their guardians. Additionally, the Commission recommends that all City rescue planning prioritize protecting the lives of animals over property.

## **Outreach for Administrative Support**

The Commission’s actions to secure formal administrative support from a City department and a representative from the Department of Public Health (in accordance with Health Code section 41.1) are ongoing. As the City’s shelter-in-place orders went into effect, the Commission devoted substantial efforts to securing the resources required to resume public meetings, including obtaining access to and training in the use of digital platforms, and securing authorization from the Mayor’s office. As the Commission does not have an official supporting agency, it has relied on support from various City departments, most notably the Department of Technology/SFGovTV and Digital Services. The Commission notified City Administrator Kelly of its ongoing administrative challenges in August, following-up on outreach from the previous year, and also reached out to the offices of Supervisors Ronen and Stefani. The Commission also reached out to the Health Commission and DPH for a contact, and was notified in October that DPH did not have the capacity to assign a representative to the Commission. As its next step to secure support and compliance, the Commission is connecting with the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force for assistance.

***Cricket is on the cover of our 2020 Annual Report. Cricket was surrendered to Animal Care and Control back in March, 2019. Through Animal Care and Control's partnership with Muttville Senior Dog Rescue, Cricket was adopted within days and is now enjoying the good life in his forever home in downtown San Francisco.***