

**STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF BEXAR
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

A BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO WAS HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL PLAZA BUILDING, TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2009.

The San Antonio City Council convened in a Budget Work Session at 2:00 pm Tuesday, **August 25, 2009**, Municipal Plaza Building with the following Councilmembers present: Cisneros, Taylor, Ramos, Cortez, Medina, Lopez, Rodriguez, Williams, and Chan. **ABSENT:** Clamp and Mayor Castro.

1. STAFF PRESENTATION ON THE FY 2010 PROPOSED BUDGET, FOCUSING ON, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

A. PARKS AND RECREATION

In the absence of Mayor Castro; Mayor Pro Tem Cisneros chaired the meeting. Ms. Sculley provided an overview of the FY 2010 budget events and noted that a Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget would be held on September 1, 2009. She also mentioned that the FY 2010 Budget was scheduled for adoption on September 17, 2009.

Xavier Urrutia, Parks and Recreation Director provided a Five-Year Budget Summary, noting that the difference between the FY 2006 and FY 2007 Budgets was due to the creation of the Downtown Operations Department and the Golf Operations being managed by a non-profit. Ms. Sculley added that the Downtown Operations Department had been created to address the maintenance and cleanliness of the Downtown Area and that Golf Operations was no longer subsidized by the General Fund.

Mr. Urrutia outlined FY 2009 accomplishments, noting that 14 park projects had been completed that included Bonnie Conner Park and the Enrique Barrera Community Center. He spoke of the City-Toyota Green Clean-Up, a volunteer effort to clean up 23 parks. He stated that the Greenway Program was funded with 2000 and 2005 Sales Tax Initiative Funds and that 12.5 miles had been completed. He mentioned that the Summer Youth Recreation Program was a supervised all-day program at school and community center sites that provided lunch and a snack. He noted that there were 75 sites and that 91% of participants qualified for a reduced fee of \$20.

Mr. Urrutia spoke of the Five-Year Park Renovation Program, noting that in FY 2009, renovations to Martinez Park included park amenities, new skate plaza, and a playground. He stated that planned renovations for FY 2010 included Concepcion Park; Rainbow Hills Park; Olympia Park; and Woodlawn Lake Park. He reported that current playground inventory included 146 playground structures. He noted that each structure received an inspection and that identified maintenance and repair issues had been completed. He stated that in the Playground Replacement Program, the FY 2009 Playgrounds completed included Tejada Park, Dafoste Park,

and Crockett Park. He reported that in FY 2010, replacement of playground equipment for Farias Park would be completed in collaboration with USAA, and the West End would be done through a KaBoom! Grant in partnership with the Department of Community Initiatives.

Mr. Urrutia stated that the Tree Planting Program was funded through the Development Services Tree Mitigation Fund and Tree Canopy Fees. He noted that 2,800 trees were planted in FY 2009 and that staff would work with the Alamo Forest Partnership on a Strategic Plan to increase the tree canopy of the city. He reported that the Office of Environmental Policy had received Stimulus Funds to address energy conservation and included a tree planting component. Mayor Pro Tem Cisneros asked of the Tree Mitigation Fund. Mr. Urrutia mentioned that the funds were utilized to address tree planting efforts throughout the City. He stated that the drought issue would be addressed through an additional year of watering. He added that the City had a 9% tree survival rate that was above industry standard.

Mr. Urrutia presented the FY 2010 Budget Summary, noting a budget decrease of 3.6% and a reduction of 62 positions. He spoke of efficiencies that would be realized through the realignment of sanitation, trades and horticulture staff to create twelve Clean and Green Teams. He noted that community center hours would be revised to optimize service during peak hours and that no centers would be closed. He stated that there would be consolidation of various Summer Youth and After School Program Sites but would continue to provide services to same number of children. He reported that the mowing frequency at parks would be reduced and that adult athletic programs would also be reduced.

Mayor Pro Tem Cisneros highlighted the McAllister Little League Team that would be playing in the Little League World Series that evening wishing them success.

Councilmember Ramos thanked staff for their work at Harlandale Park and asked of funding for Southside Lions Park. Mr. Urrutia stated that funds for Southside Lions were available through the Capital Budget. Councilmember Ramos asked of the structuring of Community Centers within District 3. Mr. Urrutia reported that Southside Lions would be a Super Center; Father Roman and Harlandale would be Regular Centers; and Bodie would be an Open Play Center. He added that Open Play Center hours were targeted to operate after school hours with open play activities from 3:00-7:00 pm. Councilmember Ramos asked of the After School and Summer Youth Programs. Mr. Urrutia reported that 10 sites had not been available this year and would not be available again next year. Additionally, ten other sites were not at capacity and could be combined with existing locations. Councilmember Ramos requested that the site at CentroMed remain in operation.

Councilmember Cortez requested a status of Pearsall Park. Mr. Urrutia reported that staff was reviewing options to house maintenance or customer service liaisons and expressed concern with the structure being utilized as a community center. Councilmember Cortez stated that Pearsall Park was part of the Master Plan adopted by the community and would like to have City Services provided at this site. Ms. Sculley noted that she would identify a City Department in need of space to occupy the facility. Councilmember Williams noted that although there were proposed reductions, the department expenditures would increase in FY 2010. He asked of Voelcker Park.

Mr. Urrutia noted that the mandates and positions for Voelcker Park were still in effect and would not be eliminated.

Councilmember Rodriguez asked of the revisions to the After School Program and expressed concern that the Joe Ward Community Center would not be utilized for the program. He asked of outreach provided to families regarding the changes. Mr. Urrutia stated that the After School Challenge Program was a licensed childcare program provided through the Department of Community Initiatives (DCI) and that the Parks Department provided after-school programming at community centers that were recreation-based. He noted that they were providing outreach to the community to inform them of all of the opportunities available and that no centers would be closed. Councilmember Rodriguez asked of the mowing frequencies and if they applied to drainage channels. Ms. Sculley confirmed that they did not and that drainage channels were addressed by the Public Works Department.

Councilmember Chan asked of the difference in community centers among DCI and the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Urrutia stated that DCI Centers focused on providing Social Services and Human Development programming. The Parks Centers were recreation-based. He outlined the three categories of Community Centers and noted that there were no Parks Community Centers in Districts 8 and 9 due to the fact that there were partners in those communities that provided recreation services. Councilmember Medina asked of community centers within District 5. Mr. Urrutia reported that there were two regular centers and two open play centers in District 5. Councilmember Medina asked of the 10 sites that would no longer be utilized for the Summer Youth Program. Mr. Urrutia stated that the sites had not been determined and would depend upon school availability.

Councilmember Medina expressed concern with the reassignment of Community Center Staff and asked that there be minimum disruption to services. Ms. Sculley stated that the realignment of employees was based on seniority and was being implemented for efficiency purposes. Mr. Urrutia stated that they would maintain staff where possible for continuity. Councilmember Lopez asked of utilizing the Tree Planting Program to supplement the tree canopy within large Storm Water Projects. Mr. Urrutia stated that they could do so and would work with Public Works, Developers, and the Texas Department of Transportation to plant and maintain trees within their respective projects. Councilmember Lopez asked of tree maintenance for large scale forestation efforts. Mr. Urrutia noted that the Tree Mitigation Program allowed for two-year maintenance but were proposing to add a third year of maintenance in FY 2010. Mayor Pro Tem Cisneros expressed support for tree planting efforts.

B. ANIMAL CARE SERVICES

Gary Hendel, Animal Care Services Director spoke of the four main goals to achieve a No-Kill Status including increasing spay and neuter programs as well as adoptions, Stray Pickup/Return to Owner, and increased fundraising and partnerships. He provided a 3-Year Improvement History, noting that in FY 2009, \$864,000 had been added to increase spay/neuter services, a mobile unit, and two Animal Care Officers. He reported that \$104,111 had been reduced mid-year in various line items. He stated that in April, an Interlocal Agreement extension with Bexar County was approved to continue providing animal care services in the County.

Mr. Hendel reported that partnerships had been developed with the San Antonio Area Foundation Consortium of Partners to promote community awareness of adoptions, spay/neuter services and education. He noted that other key collaborations were with the Alamo Area Partners for Animal Welfare (AAPAW), a rescue organization that took in 2,500 animals that would have been euthanized. He stated that staff responded to calls based on priority and that an estimated 99,000 field calls would be addressed in FY 2009. He noted that 670 presentations had been made to children in the community and that more than 6,000 citations would be issued for ordinance violations in FY 2009.

Mr. Hendel reported that for FY 2009, the Animal Care Services Facility would take in approximately 24,000 animals and euthanize 15,500, a significant decrease from the 26,500 that were euthanized in FY 2008. He stated that they were required to hold all animals for three days. Ms. Sculley thanked the community and volunteers for helping to reduce the amount of animals euthanized. Mr. Hendel noted that the Department was focusing efforts on low-cost spay/neuter programs and that an average of 105 animals were sterilized each week in a surgical suite facility. He spoke of enhanced customer service and reported that through owner surrender counseling, 45% of animals brought to the facility did not remain at the shelter. He mentioned the community awareness campaign that included billboards, printed materials, radio ads and promotional items. He reported that they had increased the level of training for all staff to include State-Mandated Animal Control Officer Training and were looking to bring the schools and training to San Antonio.

Mr. Hendel outlined the FY 2010 Proposed reductions, noting that efficiencies would be realized through the reduction of various line items and five positions would be replaced with interns and volunteers. He spoke of a redirection plan to implement a Field Enforcement and Education Team (FEET) that would be assigned to targeted areas for education on responsible pet ownership and animal care laws. He stated that they would continue to solicit partnerships to achieve the "No-Kill" goal by 2012 and explained that a "No-Kill" shelter was a place where all adoptable and treatable animals were saved and only unadoptable or non-rehabilitatable animals were euthanized. He noted that the City had a live release rate of 32.1% and to attain a "No-Kill" status, the City needed to reach a 70% release rate. He reported that for FY 2010, they would continue the city-wide spay/neuter initiative through partnerships with other city departments and expand collaborations with smaller cities incorporated within Bexar County. He stated that the City would be developing an on-line licensing program to generate revenue and would continue the voucher program so that veterinarians were providing spay/neuter services to the community.

Councilmember Taylor spoke of issues with short-term strategies such as the policy of not picking up all stray animals and expressed concern with the perception that District 2 was being underserved. She asked of the number of kennels at the Animal Care Facility. Mr. Hendel stated that there were 211 dog kennels and all animals were required to be held for three days. Ms. Sculley added that the goal was not to bring in more animals but to manage the pet population and spoke of the importance of educating the community. Councilmember Taylor asked of increasing the number of kennels and the criteria for picking up stray animals. Mr. Hendel stated that there were five priorities dealing with dispatched calls. Priorities 1 and 2 were based on

animal to animal or animal to human aggression. If there is space at the shelter, other animals are brought in on a case-by-case basis. He requested additional support for spay/neuter programs and noted that pet owners must be held accountable for their animals.

Councilmember Ramos expressed concern with the large amount of stray animals at South Side Lions Park and requested signage to discourage individuals from feeding strays. Mr. Hendel explained that the greatest way to address issues with stray animals was to educate the community and promote spay/neuter programs. He added that they had recently instituted a program assigning Animal Care Officers to specific Council Districts to focus their efforts and identify problem areas within the District. He noted that they had also formed a committee to review possible Chapter 5 Code Amendments. Councilmember Ramos spoke to the reduction in uniforms and asked that the same reduction be made by all pertinent city departments, which could then be utilized for an employee cost of living adjustment.

Councilmember Cortez asked of the two Animal Care Officers that had been added to the budget in FY 2009. Ms. Sculley confirmed that all of the Animal Care Officer positions were filled. Councilmember Cortez expressed concern with the large stray population within District 4 and noted the importance of spaying and neutering animals. He asked of the policy for picking up stray cats. Mr. Hendel stated that cats were not picked up unless they were exhibiting aggressive behavior toward a human and spoke of the Trap-Neuter-Release Program. Councilmember Medina recognized the Animal Care Services Department for their quick response to picking up 14 stray animals in District 5. He spoke of a resident within the district that had been attacked by a stray dog while passing out flyers and noted the importance of educating the community. He offered to participate in media campaigns and stated that he was interested in walking District 5 with the FEET Team.

Councilmember Williams asked if the Animal Care Facility had room for additional kennels and of the status of design issues with the drains. Mr. Hendel reported that drain issues had been addressed and that there was no room for additional kennels inside the facility. Councilmember Williams asked of collaboration with the Neighborhood Services Sweeps Program. Mr. Hendel confirmed that they worked in coordination with the Sweeps Program. Councilmember Williams expressed support for the implementation of an animal permit program. Councilmember Chan noted the importance of safety in the community and asked of the spay/neuter goals for FY 2009. Mr. Hendel explained that the FY 2009 goal was based on veterinarians providing spay/neuter services at \$20 but there had been no response to the contract offer. He reported that SPAYSA and SNAP were providing spay/neuter services at \$50 and that a total of 11,558 surgeries would be provided.

Mayor Pro Tem Cisneros encouraged staff to partner with veterinary clinics to provide spay/neuter services. She asked staff to research what other states were doing in regard to banning certain breeds of vicious animals. Councilmember Cortez expressed concern with individuals that parked their vehicles on the side of the road and sold dogs. Mr. Hendel stated that staff could address issues within the city limits. Councilmember Cortez requested that Item C on the agenda be postponed.

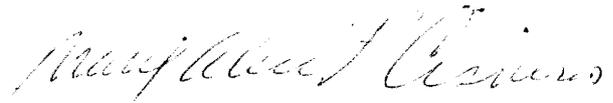
C. CODE ENFORCEMENT AND GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

Said item was not addressed.

ADJOURNMENT

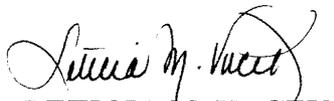
There being no further discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Cisneros adjourned the meeting at 4:56 pm.

A P P R O V E D



MARY ALICE P. CISNEROS
MAYOR PRO TEM

Attest:



LETICIA M. VACEK
City Clerk