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# **Mayor and City Council Candidate Survey City of Sugar Land, Texas Municipal Election 2017**

## **Candidates' views on the state of Sugar Land's animal sheltering system**

**Fort Bend Pets Alive!**

## Introduction

Fort Bend Pets Alive! has initiatives to increase the Save Rate of companion animals at City of Sugar Land's taxpayer funded animal control facility/shelter. The purpose of this survey is to understand the stances and intentions of the candidates running for mayoral and city council positions regarding animal welfare issues generally and related to City of Sugar Land becoming a No Kill community.

Definition of a No Kill community:

A No Kill community is a community in which all healthy and treatable shelter pets are saved, including at Open Admission facilities like the animal shelter in City of Sugar Land. The only animals euthanized are those who are irremediably sick or injured and suffering or who pose a genuine danger to the public. The benchmark to be recognized as a No Kill community is the ability to save all healthy and treatable pets (generally 90% to 98% of all animals). There are currently hundreds of shelters/communities who are saving 90% or more of all shelter pets.

For instance:

- Roughly 1,000,000 people live in communities saving between 98% and 99% of dogs and cats in their shelters.
- About 9,000,000 people live in communities saving between 90% and 99% of dogs and cats in their shelters.
- Over 40,000,000 people live in communities saving at least 80% of dogs and cats in their shelters. (See Saving90.org)

Those No Kill communities have very little in common other than a commitment to save the lives of shelter pets, while saving money in the process. These communities have achieved their life saving successes by rigorously implementing the No Kill Equation, which is a suite of fiscally-responsible, humane, 21<sup>st</sup> century animal sheltering programs that have been proven to work. The programs of the No Kill Equation or No Kill model of sheltering are:

- Rescue Partnerships
- Volunteers
- Foster Care
- Trap, Neuter, Return
- Pet Retention
- Comprehensive Adoption Program
- Public Relations/Community Involvement
- Medical & Behavior Prevention & Rehabilitation
- High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay & Neuter
- Proactive Redemption
- **Hard-working, Compassionate Shelter Director**

Every candidate is being asked to complete this survey. Candidates' responses will be compiled as part of a voting guide that will be distributed to City of Sugar Land voters in preparation for the May 2017 election.

As part of an awareness campaign by Fort Bend Pets Alive!, candidates' responses will also be rated, and then released to the media and posted on some or all of our websites and social media sites. **Responses, as well as non-responses, will be reported.**

Thank you for your participation in this opportunity for the voters to get to know you better.

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The survey is composed of 11 questions. Candidates are encouraged to respond in writing with enough detail to adequately represent the candidate's view of the current state of the ordinance that mandates animal shelter operation, and his or her views on how the animal shelter should operate in coming years.

### Survey Questions

1. Do you see animal welfare as an issue the municipal government should care about? If elected or re-elected to City of Sugar Land city council, are you committed to supporting/enforcing the No Kill Implementation plan recommended by Fort Bend Pets Alive? ?

Response: Yes

No

Yes, I see animal welfare as an issue the municipal government should care about. In light of the upcoming annexation of Greatwood and New Territory, I think the Sugar Land animal shelter should be expanded. I support the idea of a No Kill Implementation Plan.

2. If the animal welfare issue were to come before you, would you commit to making "No Kill" the official policy of City of Sugar Land and support any laws or policy changes necessary to allow provisions of life saving programs and appropriate funding to implement no kill initiatives in City of Sugar Land?

Response: Yes

No

Yes, I would vote in support of making No Kill the official policy. But it takes four votes to pass an ordinance, so I would need the support of at least 3 other Council members to make this happen.

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3. If elected or re-elected to City of Sugar Land city council, would you support the animal shelter taking proactive measures to ensure the shelter adoption program would have adopter friendly hours such as open for longer hours on Saturday or Sunday and staying open till 7:00pm during the week?

**Response: Yes**

**No**

Yes, being open until 7 pm one evening a week or being open longer on Saturday or Sunday is something I would support, if there was room in the budget to do so.

4. People frequently surrender animals to shelters when they perceive they cannot feed, train or medically care for them.

If elected or re-elected to City of Sugar Land city council, would you support programs which have been proven to keep pets in their homes and out of shelters, such as surrender counseling, a pet food bank, pet behavior assistance, and distribution of heartworm preventative?

**Response: Yes**

**No**

Yes, it should be less expensive to support programs that keep pets in their homes and out of shelters. It would be much better for the animals, too.

- 5 If elected or re-elected to City of Sugar Land city council, would you support an internal review, and if necessary, a restructuring of the City's "Return to Owner" program to a higher success rate? The quicker an animal is reunited with owner, the less the cost of care will be incurred.

**Response: Yes**

**No**

Yes, I would support an internal review of the City's "Return to Owner" program. Yes, the quicker an animal is reunited with its owner, the lower the cost of temporary care will be.

6. Many dog breeds are being banned in many of the rental housing markets in Fort Bend County. This makes finding appropriate housing very difficult for owners of these dogs, despite high levels of owner responsibility and great dog temperaments and training. This slows adoptions of these breeds and forces many owners to surrender their pets to shelters or abandon them.

If elected or re-elected to City of Sugar Land city council, would you take proactive action to find lasting solutions to this problem, in working with the apartment associations and property managers in Sugar Land?

**Response: Yes**

**No**

Yes, I would talk with the apartment associations and property managers in Sugar Land to try to find lasting solutions to this problem, but they will have the final say on their own properties.

7. If elected or re-elected to City of Sugar Land city council, would you support the implementation of performance standards that measure for the city shelter leadership's performance, particularly with regard to the number of live releases, to salary increments or continued employment at the city shelter? If not, please explain why not.

**Response: Yes**

**No**

Yes, I would support the implementation of performance standards that measure the City shelter leadership's performance.

8. If elected, or re-elected, what do you envision as the role of Fort Bend Pets Alive! in providing oversight for the city shelter?

What kind of person will you appoint to the Animal Advisory Committee as the terms of current members expire?

Would you consider appointing No Kill advocates as members to provide an alternative viewpoint to others already on the committee?

**Response: Yes**

**No**

I think it is very important to hear alternative viewpoints. I would consider appointing No Kill advocates as members as long as they meet the qualifications as set forth by state law.

9. If elected or re-elected to City of Sugar Land city council, would you support a city mandate that the animal shelter in Sugar Land to provide and publish statistics, on their websites, regarding the numbers and types of animals that the shelter takes in and euthanizes? (Note: some states, such as Colorado, already mandate that all shelters and rescue groups must provide their statistics to the state so that it is available to the public).

If so, why do you feel this important? If not, why not?

**Response: Yes No**

Yes, I support transparency with respect to reporting these statistics.

10. With so many community cats roaming in neighborhoods, do you believe and support Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) to be the only humane solution to control population of outdoor cats in City of Sugar Land ? Would you support any laws or policy changes necessary to allow appropriate provisions and to provide funding to implement TNR in City of Sugar Land ?

**Response: Yes No**

Yes, Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) is reported to be the most humane and effective method of controlling free-roaming, community cats. This is a program that should be looked into.

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- 11) Do you agree with the saying “Helping people help pets” makes the community a better place?

**Response: Yes**

**No**

I definitely agree that “Helping people help pets” makes the community a better place.

Thank you for responding to this survey. **Please make sure your response is returned to Fort Bend Pets Alive! by Friday April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017.** If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact [info@FortBendPetsAlive.org](mailto:info@FortBendPetsAlive.org)

You may email your completed survey form to:  
[info@FortBendPetsAlive.org](mailto:info@FortBendPetsAlive.org)



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Name: Carol McCutcheon  
Please print

Signature: *Carol McCutcheon*

Date: 4/13/17