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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, 21st 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.

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**

I assume we would need to budget for additional salary/labor costs and/or subsidize solicitation for volunteer support in order to fully-staff extended hours, but this seems reasonable if the adoption program is key to improve care and salvation of healthy/friendly animals. I would not be able to influence and affect budget resources until the following fiscal year because budget planning for the current annum was completed last summer and reviewed in March.

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**

See my response regarding budgeted resources above. Not knowing what these programs cost when properly funded, I would need to see what trade-offs must be made to execute these initiatives the right way. Assuming the benefits are essential to success for our animal protection programs and the costs to achieve success are appropriate – I would support this.

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**

This sounds like a great program to review, and if possible, to whole-heartedly support.

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**

I am eager and happy to work with property owners of all types to better embrace the pet owner community in Sugar Land. This said, I am a passionate advocate of legally-zoned private property rights. I believe the market will provide high-quality options for pet owners when we establish visible and vocal demand for these offerings sufficient to establish viable economic need for their provision by the private sector.

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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

The job description of a City Council Member is to serve in a duly-elected budgetary and governance capacity, focused on the City Manager and her/his performance. The City Manager is essential the hired CEO of the City and the Council serves our residents as a citizen-elected Board of Directors. In fact, the citizens passed a ballot measure last year, re-enforcing these responsibilities and focusing efforts/accountability from the Council to the City Manager alone. I believe there are performance management programs in place for all city staff positions, and career advancement/job security are tied to these measured outcomes already. I would inquire about performance management programs, in general, and would recommend improvements where appropriate; but my focus will have to be on City Manager performance, rather than over-stepping my purview and micro-managing positions that report directly to the City Manager.

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

Per my answer(s) above, I would need to learn more about “No-Kill” designation specifics. I would promote candidates who are qualified, informed, hard-working and demonstrate a track record of understanding and success relative to the position we are endeavoring to fill. I would like to meet the members of Fort Bend Pets Alive!, learn more about what your team needs to be successful and establish where it would be appropriate for the city to assist.

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

I am a passionate advocate for municipal transparency in all forms – with respect individual privacy rights, of course.

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

Regretfully, I am not familiar enough with the TRN program, or any alternative initiatives, to render a definitive position here.

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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 see no way this hampers or hurts a city.

Thank you for responding to this survey. **Please make sure your response is returned to Fort Bend Pets Alive! by Friday April 7th, 2017.** If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact info@FortBendPetsAlive.org

You may email your completed survey form to:
info@FortBendPetsAlive.org

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Name: _____
Please print

Signature: _____

Date: _____