



[Houston PetSet](#) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to ending the homelessness and suffering of companion animals and elevating their status in society. Houston PetSet works to achieve its mission by focusing its efforts in six key impact areas including spay & neuter, transport & rescue, community service & education, cruelty prevention, research, and advocacy. In addition, Houston PetSet provides annual grants to animal welfare-related organizations in the Greater Houston area. By providing critical funds and collaborating with strategic partners, Houston PetSet seeks to end the crisis of animal homelessness in our community.

On behalf of Houston PetSet, our partners, and those in the animal welfare community, we thank you in advance for taking the time to provide your responses to this questionnaire. It is important to note that Houston PetSet will **NOT** be endorsing any candidate in any municipal race and will be using this completed document as a resource for groups and individuals that are interested in learning more about your candidacy. Your responses will be posted to our website and will be accessible for all.

The current animal homelessness population presents a public health and public safety issue that affects the quality of life of many Houstonians. The Houston PetSet questionnaire includes questions covering general animal welfare, city services, and partnerships. **We ask that you complete this questionnaire (by filling in your answers via Microsoft Word) and return it to marketing@houstonpetset.org no later than July 1st, 2019.**

Sincerely,

Tena Lundquist Faust
Co-President

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Animal Welfare

1. To what extent have you been involved with any animal welfare issues, including rescue, spay & neuter, foster, transport programming, legislation, and anti-cruelty?

Over my career working for Rep. Farrar Sen. Sylvia Garcia I witnessed firsthand the poor conditions of animals in Houston, as well as the effects few shelter resources had on the stray animal population. As such, in 2015 drafted and recommended Senate Bill 70 filed by Se. Gacia. The bill would have: 1) Allowed trained BARC staff to administer rabies vaccinations in the field instead of requiring owners to visit a veterinarian for the low-risk procedure, 2) Created more levels of penalties regarding dogs, such as "nuisance" or "aggressive", instead of immediately labeling dogs "dangerous" and initially 3) would have required mandatory microchipping.

2. Do you have a plan to address underserved areas that need low cost spay & neuter programming and other veterinary services?

Yes, my plan includes the following:

- 1) Waiving or sponsoring any fees associated with using City owned facilities for community-facing events that provide spay/neuter services at low or reduced cost, and paying for email blasts and other advertising to get people to participate in these events.
- 2) Inviting partners to all community events to share resources on these low-cost services; and
- 3) Supporting any legislation at the state or federal level that would allow for trained individuals or volunteers to administer certain vaccinations or other low-risk procedures instead of veterinarians exclusively.

3. Do you have, or have you ever had in the past, a companion animal? If so, was it a rescue animal?

Yes, my family has had several family dogs over the years, all rescues. Our current dog, Maya, is now a companion dog to my grandmother and I take care of her when my grandmother travels. During Hurricane Harvey we also rescued a pregnant pit bull, birthed the pups the night Harvey struck Houston, and then we fostered for six weeks before Rescued Pets Movement helped to facilitate their transport to Colorado for adoption.

I am also dating a woman, Erin Molloy, who has four rescue dogs and volunteers regularly with Lola's Lucky Day and other rescue organizations in Houston.

Quality of Life/Public Safety/Public Health

4. What impact, and how will reducing the stray animal population improve the quality of life of all Houstonians, if any?

Vastly! Stray animals, some of which can be perceived as dangerous or aggressive, inhibit people from enjoying or walking in their community. Postal workers fear delivering mail, that might contain time-sensitive documents or medications, because of dog attacks. Animals that wander into roads can cause a traffic hazard, or worse be struck and killed. And animals with declining health can become vectors for rabies, worms, or other animal-borne diseases. Animal welfare isn't just about feeling sad for a dog on the side of the road, it's about a holistic investment in community health and well-being that benefits both animals and people.

5. How do you plan to work with communities that have historically reported high rates of stray animals? Please describe below.

Yes. District H has a high number of stray, loose, aggressive, and bred animals. Across the board we need to increase education of low-cost resources. I think this can be done by supporting community events already proven to work, such as low cost spay-neuter events, but also proactive door-to-door block walks to educate folks about laws and resources. However, I think these are only successful if neighbors are recruited to talk to neighbors, instead of the perception of "outsiders" coming into neighborhoods and then leaving. It's that lesson of community trust and peer-to-peer accountability that are learned lessons from other industries.

6. How do you plan to address animal homelessness and the stray population citywide?

In the short term, I plan to fund more rescue transports and work on inter-local agreements that allow surrounding cities and counties to accept animals from the City of Houston to help with what is a regional problem. The long-term solution involves constantly pushing spay and neuter services, and looking for ways to curb back yard breeding.

City of Houston Services

7. Do you have a strategy to address overcrowding in the city animal shelter? If so, please describe below.

First, there has to be a stronger voice on City Council to continuously advocate for resources to be dedicated to stray animal issues. It may not be a "sexy" issue, but it is one of the primary issues reported by residents as affecting their life and well-being and must be treated as such. There also needs to be a long-term investment in expanding City Shelter Services and staff to manage the constant influx of animals so they don't get dumped on the streets by impatient or desperate owners.

8. Should BARC (City of Houston animal shelter) receive additional funding based on budget comparisons to national standards and peer cities? If so, how much and how would you increase the department's overall budget?

No. I think the main problem is the lack of an advocate on City Council who recognizes stray animal issues are public health issues and thus pushes to fund them as such. Houston is a major city, in a warm climate, that does not have many peers in this regard. I approve of using comparisons to "national standards" and peer cities as a tool to advocate for more funding. But I think a broader solution involves providing more funding to increase the intake shelter size and staff and to defray the cost of spay neuter services without regard to "national standards" or other cities.

9. Will you commit to expanding intake hours for animal surrenders at the city shelter?

Yes – but only with appropriate funding and support from partner organizations. The problem in Houston involves more than insufficient intake hours, we also need to provide enough space to shelter and care for these animals. While some individuals do get turned away because of deferred intake processes or unfavorable hours, that is but a small symptom of a much larger issue.

10. Will you commit to funding additional Animal Control Officers to respond to 311 and BARC calls?

Yes. I'm happy to support funding for more Animal Control Officers and enhanced training for other officers who can assist in these types of calls. However, this should be coupled with additional funding to expand shelter spaces in Houston.

11. What is your plan to address animal abuse, including dog fighting (and cock fighting) in the City of Houston and how would you involve the community to assist in this effort?

Report. Report. Report. Animal abuse and dog fighting are already illegal. What we need is more reporting, either through proactive neighborhood campaigns or educational events. This would then allow us to more effectively direct officers to respond appropriately.

12. There are a number of duplicative services (ex. animal control services, investigative/enforcement, wellness services, etc.) that are offered between the City and County. Do you believe in the existing model, based on geography OR would you explore other options? If you would explore other options, what specific options do you have in mind?

No. I am in favor of exploring expanded inter-local agreements between surrounding municipal entities. Stray animals, like other public health vectors, are not bound by geographic boundaries, and as such adjacent communities need to work together to solve this issue.

Partnerships

13. Would you support a partnership with local animal welfare organizations to address the growing issues relating to animal welfare? What specifically would you propose?

Yes. I would waive fees associated with the use of public facilities for spay & neuter, adoption, or educational programming in Houston. I would partner to promote these events and look for other incentives for people to participate, like hours that are more accessible for working families or helping with the transportation of animals to these events.

14. Are you familiar with the six key impact areas of Houston PetSet? How would your administration support Houston PetSet's impact areas?

Yes.

Spay & Neuter: Help waive costs of using city facilities for spay/neuter events.

Transport & Rescue: Donate to purchase more buses for transportation.

Community Service & Education: Pay for promotion of education programming and events.

Cruelty Prevention: Support the education of officers to enforce more citations for cruelty and support anti tethering laws.

Research: Support research goal at TSU in 2019.

Advocacy: Support town halls or working groups at City and County levels for proactively solving animal welfare and stray animal issues.

City of Houston Ordinance/Advocacy

15. Would you support a local ordinance that prohibits apartments or home owners' associations from banning specific dog breeds?

Yes. I don't think breed necessarily dictates aggression.

16. Will you support the creation of a local ordinance that better defines and creates a higher standard of shelter for animals?

Yes. As long as there are resources as well to help people achieve those increased standards who could not otherwise afford to do so on their own.

17. Will you support a local ordinance that bans the sale of dogs from breeders and puppy mills in retail locations within the City of Houston?

Yes. Although I would allow a breeding exemption for hunting, service animals, or other specialized animals with appropriate certification or permit process through the City.

18. Would you support mandatory microchipping for dogs and cats in the City of Houston?

Yes. Absolutely. This is one of the policies I tried to pass as state legislation in 2015. I believe this would help unify stray/lost animals and owners or hold owners accountable who willfully abandon or abuse their animals.

In future, please contact Houston PetSet if you would like information or educational materials relating to the subjects above.

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