

Meeting Minutes

City Council Neighborhoods Subcommittee Meeting

October 29, 2024 | 2:30 p.m.
City Hall 5th Floor Large Conference Room
175 S. Arizona Ave., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m.

Roll Call

Subcommittee Attendance

Councilmember Angel Encinas
Councilmember Matt Orlando
Councilmember Jane Poston

Staff Attendance

Andy Bass, Deputy City Manager
Leah Powell, Neighborhood Resources Director
Guy Jaques, Neighborhood Preservation Manager
Priscilla Quintana, Neighborhood Preservation Programs
Manager
Erica Barba, Neighborhood Services Program Manager

Discussion

1. Community Cat Management Program - Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR)

LEAH POWELL, Neighborhood Resources Director, introduced the item and presented information on the Trap, Neuter and Return Program. She prefaced the challenges with the feral cat population and progress of the TNR program, including the need for state regulation, coordination, funding, and education.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how long the program had been in the Neighborhood Resources.

MS. POWELL replied since 2014.

MS. POWELL explained that there is a lack of state regulation on cats that contributes to the complexity of the issue, as they are not required to be licensed. She stated that cats reproduce quickly and although there is a TNR program in place, colonies grow when pet owners abandon or fail to spay/neuter. Complaints have been received surrounding feeding and waste. Inquiries are often made by residents about feeding the cats. She stated that feral cats often suffer from malnutrition, disease and injuries resulting in a poor

quality of life. She stated the importance of welfare of the cats. She recognized that residents often disagree on how to handle feral cats; some want to feed and protect while others view them as nuisances. She gave an example of a homeowner's association that sought legal action to prohibit the feeding of cats.

MS. POWELL broke down the components of the TNR program that include the coordination between government, non-profits, volunteers, and residents, funding and education for volunteers. Additionally, there are feeding stations and seasonal shelters which require ongoing maintenance, locations for cats to recover from surgery and care for sick and injured cats.

MS. POWELL turned the presentation over to Priscilla Quintana, Neighborhood Preservation Programs Manager.

PRISCILLA QUINTANA, Neighborhood Preservation Programs Manager, elaborated on the role of Maricopa County Animal Care and Control (MCACC). She stated that MCACC has resources listed online but does not retrieve cats nor provide Trap, Neuter, and Return services. If an injured or sick cat falls into their care, they can provide some medical assistance.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what the Chandler Police Department does regarding animal control.

MS. POWELL answered that the police department has a contract with Maricopa County relating to stray dogs, however, if there is a report on an insured or sick cat, the County would be contacted.

MS. QUINTANA stated that the police department would pick up the injured or sick cat and place it in a kennel temporarily until the County can take the animal for the care or services that they need.

MS. QUINTANA provided an example of a recent situation where cats and a dog came into the Neighborhood Resources Department injured and dehydrated. She explained that the police department was involved due to it being deemed an animal cruelty case. The police department worked in conjunction with their animal partners on the custody of the animals.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if there is a dedicated person to handle animal cases at the police department.

MS. QUINTANA answered yes, there is one specific person that oversees the program.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if only temporary care is provided until the county or other rescue organization partner picks up the cat.

MS. POWELL stated correct.

MS. QUINTANA explained that cities have different approaches to TNR programs, with varying budgets and staff resources. The City of Mesa has a budget of \$1 million with three full-time employees and an additional \$300,000 with an agreement with two TNR partners. The City of Tempe has a budget of \$500,000 with a dedicated facility and staff for TNR.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked for clarification relating to the City of Mesa and City of Tempe TNR programs.

MS. QUINTANA stated that the City of Tempe has a facility that will host the animals until they are adopted or taken into services. The City of Mesa utilizes volunteers to house the cats after treatment as they do not have a facility.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how many animals that the City of Mesa and City of Tempe take in.

MS. POWELL answered that both cities use volunteers. In Tempe, volunteers handle the TNR portion and city staff manage the facilities and oversee recovery of the animals.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON commented on the large budgets of the other cities and asked if they were acting as animal control like the county or if they were focusing solely on TNR.

MS. POWELL answered that the City of Mesa has a budget of \$1,000,000 for animal control with an additional \$300,000 dedicated to TNR and the City of Tempe has a budget of \$500,000 just for TNR. She stated that last year, the City of Tempe reported 300-400 identified colonies, had divided the city into 57 territories, had 20-30 volunteers who were trappers and kitten feeders twice a day, and they have a mobile partner that traps 60-70 cats per month.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked how long these programs had been in place.

MS. POWELL stated that the City of Mesa recently revamped their TNR program, and it is just getting started. She was not sure how long the City of Tempe's program had been in place.

MS. QUINTANA explained the history of the City of Chandler's Trap, Neuter, and Return that began in 2014 and expanded in 2016 based on a proposal from residents. She expanded on the requirements of the program as follows: neighborhood must be registered with Neighborhood Programs, TNR activities are limited to approved boundaries, and the limit per neighborhood is \$1,000. Between 2019-2023, the rate per surgery was \$35.00 through the Animal Defense League of Arizona. In FY24/25, the City Council approved an additional \$30,000 for the TNR program, and in March 2024, the city contracted with Saving One Life to manage all aspects of the TNR program due to limited city staffing. This includes education, trapping, spay or neuter and returning cats to colonies.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the amount was a total of \$65,000 over the span of four years, not per year.

MS. QUINTANA stated that the \$65,000 is the total amount for FY 19/20 through FY 22/23.

MS. QUINTANA continued explaining the history of the initial TNR program. She noted that the city worked in conjunction with the Animal Defense League of Arizona to trap, spay/neuter, clip, and return feral cats.

MS. QUINTANA summarized the city's current TNR Program including the requirements and the scope of work for the new contractor, Saving One Life. She noted that the opportunity for cats to be adopted out was a significant factor in selecting Saving One Life.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked for a scenario example.

MS. QUINTANA explained that once a resident who wants to apply for the program and the neighborhood is registered, the resident would work directly with Saving One Life for the entire process in addition to notifying their neighbors that this is taking place.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the resident would be doing all the work.

MS. QUINTANA stated that the resident would be working directly with Saving One Life, which works with volunteers to set up feeding stations, trap, take cats to clinics for treatment and return them to the neighborhood colony where they were trapped.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what if the neighborhood is not registered.

MS. QUINTANA said that Saving One Life will confirm neighborhood registry and refer the resident back to the Neighborhood Programs to get registered if they are not.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if Saving One Life picks up the animals.

MS. QUINTANA said that Saving One Life works with volunteers to go out and feed, trap and return to the colonies.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if they complete all of this through volunteers.

MS. QUINTANA stated yes, unless the resident is willing to take on the steps of feeding, trapping, and taking cats to the clinic for procedures then returning them to the colony.

MS. POWELL reassured councilmembers that the program is heavily volunteer-based.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if Saving One Life asks the city for volunteers.

MS. QUINTANA stated that Saving One Life has volunteers that work directly with them.

MS. POWELL stated that if there was an influx of need but not enough volunteers, the program could not function. She also stated that Saving One Life educates the residents in the neighborhood to increase their volunteer base.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked about the expense.

MS. POWELL stated that the feeding of the animals falls on the volunteers and the TNR is covered by the contract with Saving One Life.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked how many volunteers Saving One Life has on hand.

MS. QUINTANA stated that there were about 40 volunteers at the start of the contract, however, that changed in March 2024 as the contractor is overwhelmed with work and the updated information has not been provided.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked how many people are turned away due their HOA or apartment complex not allowing it or they are not registered. She also asked how long it takes to become a registered neighborhood.

MS. QUINTANA said that exact data is not currently available regarding HOA's. She mentioned that there are more participating HOA's now than were and attributes that to education being better on all sides. She stated that if entities are saying no, it is due to previous challenges. She explained that neighborhood registration processing time is currently 10-15 business days depending on other staff projects, workload, the information based on the Maricopa County Assessor to verify boundaries, and whether an HOA or management company responds to their email confirming registration.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked what the process was previously.

MS. QUINTANA explained that the process always included registration of the neighborhood and was considered a grant, now referred to as the Neighborhood Assistance Program. Once a neighborhood was registered, the neighborhood leader would complete the application and it would be reviewed to determine if the boundaries matched and approval had been obtained from the residents living in said neighborhood. She stated that once the application was approved, they would work directly with Animal Defense League of Arizona, which would provide the education on the feeding and trapping process.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked how long verification would typically take.

MS. QUINTANA stated that it depended on whether calls were returned and stated that applications were returned due to them being submitted by residents who did not live in the neighborhood, resulting in a delay in the process. She explained that the process typically takes 10-15 days.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if the resident would work directly with Arizona Defense League of Arizona (ADLA).

MS. QUINTANA stated that once the application was approved, the resident would work directly with ADLA and they would provide traps or connect the resident with an expert volunteer.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS stated that there is still a responsibility on the resident to manage that.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked why a neighborhood needs to be registered.

MS. QUINTANA said that the requirements for neighborhood grants were established in 2000 by Mayor and Council.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what would happen if that requirement was to be eliminated.

MS. POWELL responded that information will be addressed later in the presentation.

MS. QUINTANA continued with the presentation explaining program challenges and potential solutions.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked how the education piece is dispersed to the public.

MS. QUINTANA stated that a request was made to the contractor to increase their education and they are working on an effective approach and staff have given them suggestions. She said they have increased their social media presence and the desire to bring back classes that teach the TNR program.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if the social media output component is coming out of their marketing budget assigned to them.

MS. QUINTANA answered yes.

MS. QUINTANA continued with the challenges and potential solutions portion of the presentation.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the solutions are included in the contract and if not, would they increase the scope of the contract.

MS. QUINTANA said that they are part of the scope of the project. The contract provides more detail. Some of the potential solutions were proposed by the contractor, including mediation between residents who are not in agreement related to the program.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what metrics are being used.

MS. QUINTANA explained that the data being captured is the date the process was started, whether the neighborhood is registered, approximate location of colonies, how many cats are being brought in, who is helping if there is a volunteer, who is helping with the process, date of completion, and the dollar amount per cat.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how the program is doing.

MS. QUINTANA stated that there are currently 10 neighborhoods participating in the new process and there are 36 applications scheduled. The process is still in the early stages.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the company has only done 10.

MS. QUINTANA added that they have done 10 neighborhoods, but they are waiting on reports of the number of cats that have been trapped, neutered, and returned.

MS. POWELL stated that to be reimbursed, Saving One Life will need to send the neighborhood information and number of cats that have been spayed or neutered.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what the baseline dollar amount of the contract is worth.

MS. POWELL responded that the contract lists \$30,000 as the budget. Most of the budget is for the spay and neutering costs, while the remaining is for marketing and administration.

MS. POWELL explained that staff has had meetings with Saving One Life discussing their challenges with the program. One of the biggest things that we heard from them has to do with the commercial properties and the residential registration. Another challenge is that we expected to see higher numbers of cats being spayed or neutered. She stated that this might be an invoicing issue.

MS. QUINTANA added that there are currently 58 spay and neuter appointments scheduled with Saving One Life within those 10 neighborhoods.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked for clarification on the numbers of cats spayed and neutered versus what has been invoiced.

MS. POWELL clarified that the organization should invoice us periodically based on the number that were spayed and neutered. For example, if we received an invoice from them, it would summarize that this neighborhood had five cats spayed/neutered, and this other neighborhood had 20 cats were spayed/neutered. We have not received any invoices thus far; therefore, we have not paid them for the services yet. Saving One Life is doing the work based on the appointments, however, they have not invoiced us yet, so we do not have the numbers associated with each neighborhood.

MS. QUINTANA shared the breakdown of the scope of work listed within the contract.

MS. POWELL added that because the contract is still in the infancy stage, there could be a variety of challenges that the organization is facing with invoicing and reporting.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if the work is actually being done by the organization.

MS. QUINTANA responded that the animal welfare organizations typically run lean. She added that invoices were requested by the tenth of every month and they have yet to receive one. However, they know that they are active because they have a shared spreadsheet that shows the appointment dates.

MS. POWELL added that staff would like to propose contract amendments to simplify the process. Proposed amendments include increased marketing, a streamlined application process for registered neighborhoods, putting responsibility onto the nonprofit contractor to ensure that private property owners have given permission, stipulating that the contractor is responsible for mediation should any disputes arise, and expanding the program to commercial properties.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if that would take away the grants that Council previously put forward.

MS. POWELL responded that this would take it out of the Neighborhood Assistance Program and it would not be tied to the neighborhood registration, but a standalone initiative.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked for clarification on how the process works if a resident were to call Saving One Life directly with the proposed amendments in place. For example, if a resident called the organization directly, would they work with volunteers in a Chandler neighborhood to start the TNR process?

MS. POWELL responded yes, they would start the process and determine what would be the best way to do TNR in that area.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if Saving One Life works with other cities.

MS. QUINTANA responded that they work closely with the City of Tempe.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked if the City of Tempe is contracting with Saving One Life to do most of the work with their \$500,000 budget.

MS. POWELL said that the City of Tempe partners with multiple organizations including Saving One Life.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what the role of the City of Tempe staff is if they are contracting their TNR program out.

MS. QUINTANA responded that the role of the City of Tempe staff is to assist with care after the cat has been spayed/neutered. She noted that they do not know if their staff assist with volunteer recruitment.

MS. POWELL said that Tempe has 20-30 core volunteers that they tap into, as well as the two full-time staff.

MS. POWELL continued with the presentation and highlighted future program idea suggestions, which include a mobile unit to provide no-cost/low-cost spaying/neutering to dogs and cats, shot clinics and educational sessions at neighborhood events, and increased marketing.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if our current contract already has a mobile clinic aspect written into it.

MS. POWELL said that it was listed in the original RFP, but the mobile clinic was not included in the response.

MS. POWELL spoke on the proposed timeline for TNR within the next 30-60 days.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked how a resident who was interested in trapping would go about the process if they called Saving One Life.

MS. POWELL responded that the resident would call the contractor, and they would walk them through the process. This includes providing information on scheduling the cat(s) for an appointment with their partner clinic, taking the cat to the clinic, responsibility for the cat after the fact, and education on how to trap, feed, etc.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if the contractor would update their numbers and submit an invoice after the process.

MS. POWELL said yes.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked what would happen if a resident did not want to be responsible for the cat after the spay/neuter.

MS. POWELL said that is where volunteers would assist. If there is a shortage of volunteers, the process would be put on hold until a volunteer is able to assist.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked if we were no longer partnering with ADLA.

MS. POWELL responded that is correct, however, staff is still working through a few transitions with them as some neighborhoods are moving from the original assistance program with ADLA to the new program.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked about the number of cats spayed/neutered and returned with ADLA compared to the current contractor.

MS. POWELL responded that about 30% of neighborhoods return and go through the process again. She noted that because the invoices from Saving One Life have not been provided yet, the data is limited. In the past, the average number of cats that went through TNR with the \$1,000 neighborhood grant was 28 cats per neighborhood. It is estimated that this number is higher now.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if residents would then call Saving One Life directly, rather than speaking with City staff.

MS. POWELL responded yes and no. When residents call regarding TNR, staff provide education and call Saving One Life. Staff will always take phone calls and provide education; however, residents will not have to contact staff to register as a neighborhood. Additionally, staff would not check on permissions from HOAs.

COUNCILMEMBER POSTON asked if Saving One Life has the capability to take those phone calls if they are running as a lean organization.

MS. POWELL said that they have indicated to staff that they have the capacity to do so.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked how we make this a robust program within the 30–60-day timeframe.

MS. POWELL responded that at this time, our option is to direct residents to Saving One Life. If the resident does not want to do the trap, neuter, and return themselves, then we have to rely on the volunteers working with Saving One Life.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO asked what would happen if there were not any volunteers available to help.

MS. POWELL said that we would not have any other options at this point as the resources are limited. With that, the contract has more funding tied to it for TNR than what was available under the Neighborhood Assistance Program. She further elaborated that staff do not have the capacity to manage the program on their own.

COUNCILMEMBER ORLANDO suggested to look at other agencies to partner with to address TNR.

COUNCILMEMBER ENCINAS asked how effective the vendor is compared to the previous contractor in terms of data and responsiveness.

MS. POWELL replied that staff has given the contractor deadlines for data. She suggested that a formal letter of non-performance and a request for data by a specific date could be an option.

The consensus of the Subcommittee was to have staff reach out to our nearby cities for options and to get more data from our contractor as soon as possible.

Public Comments

SUE HARRINGTON stated that the contractor is not performing as outlined in the presentation. She noted that the educational campaign might be more effective coming from the City. She supports removing the neighborhood registration aspect to streamline the TNR process. She echoed the challenge with finding volunteers. Additionally, she agreed with the suggestion to partner with nearby cities.

LESLIE MINKUS asked if the definition of spay and neuter could be provided and if there is a responsibility of pet owners to control animal diseases for the benefit of public health in the community.

NANCY BARKER commented that she has a concern with an elderly Chandler resident who participates in TNR and does not have ready access to volunteers that can help her. She is also concerned about cats that are trapped and left unattended for several days.

DEBBIE GIANNECCHINI commented that the breakdown of funding for the TNR program is not adequate to serve all of Chandler. She did not agree with Saving One Life being the sole provider of the program. She commented that she did not agree with the openness of the neighborhood registration data, the microchipping program and police's ability to read those chips, the unresponsiveness of Saving One Life, and limited education to residents on registering their pets as an Emotional Support Animal (ESA).

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jolicea Barber", written over a horizontal line.

Recording Secretary

**Received 10/29/2024 at City Council
Neighborhoods Subcommittee meeting**

Fw: Neighborhood Registration

From: sueh001@aol.com (sueh001@aol.com)
To: priscilla.quintana@chandleraz.gov
Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 03:07 PM MST

Hi Priscilla,

Anita asked me to contact you to ask you about the boundaries. Not sure why she doesn't want to call you.

My number is 602-550-8568.

Thank you!

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Anita Davison <neet_zee@msn.com>
To: Sue Harrington <sueh001@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 11:58:19 AM MST
Subject: Fw: Neighborhood Registration

Hi sue , i can't provide my phone number. Can you respond thanks

From: Priscilla Quintana <Priscilla.Quintana@chandleraz.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 10:38 AM
To: sueh001@aol.com <sueh001@aol.com>
Cc: Michon Javelosa <michonj@me.com>; neet_zee@msn.com <neet_zee@msn.com>
Subject: RE: Neighborhood Registration

Thank you, Sue.

Anita, please give me a few dates and times that you are available to take my call. We are preparing for an event this week and will be in and out of the office; if we cannot connect this week, we can try next.

Thank you.

Priscilla Quintana
Neighborhood Preservation Programs Manager
235 South Arizona Ave. Chandler, AZ 85225
Phone: 480-782-4363|Fax: 480-782-4350
priscilla.quintana@chandleraz.gov
chandleraz.gov/neighborhoods

Webform Submission from: Neighborhood Registration Form

From City of Chandler <no-reply@chandleraz.gov>

Date Mon 10/14/2024 1:53 PM

To Neighborhood Programs <Neighborhood.Programs@chandleraz.gov>

Submitted on Mon, 10/14/2024 - 01:53 PM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Name of Neighborhood

Pepperwood

Year Built

1980

Approx. Number of Homes

113

Is Your Neighborhood a

Traditional Neighborhood

Name

Anita Davison

Phone

(303) 827-8467

Position on HOA Board

na

Email Address

neet_zee@msn.com

Address

305 N Country Club Way
Chandler, Arizona. 85226

Name

Trudy Crable

Phone

(480) 734-5811

Position on HOA Board

Email Address

truejoye@gmail.com

Address

215 N Country Club Way
Chandler, Arizona. 85226

Identify surrounding streets**North**

Tyson St

South

W Chandler Blvd

East

Metro Blvd

West

N Country Clb

Cat Management Community Services

If you are reading this you probably have free roaming cats on your property. Wandering, fighting, yowling, spraying and reproducing. We can help you implement an aggressive, non lethal, comprehensive cat management plan. We know that as a property/business owner it is crucial that you protect your property or, customers, equipment and supplies.



What is your present cat management protocol?

When we ask that question the answer is usually "We don't have one".

The awkward fact is, many land managers/owners simply ignore the cats until some controversy requires them to act. We also believe "sterilization is better than doing nothing. If "nothing" is what was happening before a cat management specialist appeared on the scene, going back to doing nothing is not a logical, legal, or humane option.

What is a cat management plan?

We advocate a population reduction through sterilization cat management plan, also known as TNR (Trap Neuter Return). This includes:

1. Trapping members of the cat colony. Aggressive reduction programs over a short period of time prevent additional cat reproduction.
2. Sterilization includes general health check and ear tipping (universal sign that the cats are part of a managed colony and sterilized).
3. Returning cats to the original colony site.
4. Providing long term management/monitoring.

Why do you offer only a nonlethal approach?

We offer a non-lethal approach for numerous reasons. We want to ensure a cost effective, legal and long term solution. In the State of Arizona it is illegal under Statute 13-2910 to intentionally, recklessly, or knowingly inflict any animal to physical harm, injury, cruel mistreatment, neglect or abandonment. There are legal risks of euthanizing free-roaming cats that could belong to someone (a lost pet), as pets are property in Arizona, and collars, tattoos, microchips and other methods of identification are not always visible.

The "catch and kill" method of population control (trap a cat, bring it to a shelter, have the cat euthanized), has not reduced the number of free roaming cats. The cat may be gone, but now there is room for another cat to move in. This results in an endless treadmill of "catch and kill", "catch and kill". By creating that hole in a neighborhood cat colony, we encourage fighting, spraying of territory and breeding. In addition, female cats in distressed colonies tend to produce more offspring than those in stable colonies. So, "catch and kill" actually makes the problem worse.