



Animal Companions of Las Cruces Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2022
Via Zoom

Attendees: Mayor Nora Barraza, Julie Basile, Dawn Duncan, Carol Ezell, Carrie Greer, Cherri Hudson-Brown, Linda Mandel, Miguel Marquez, Becky Mills, Nancy Sharp, Candis Stern, Judy Bosland

Meeting began: 5:33pm

Dawn presented the slide show. Highlights included the following:

- Interviews with FOX and CBS news channels - continuing outreach efforts.
- 14 veterinarians and managers attended our Roundtable on March 8, 2022; there was agreement regarding the need for an emergency animal hospital, and interest in a televet service.
- Dawn and Nancy participated in KTAL's "Speak Up Las Cruces."
- Miguel sent letters to local politicians including Mesilla Mayor Barrazas (in attendance) and City Councilman Yvonne Flores, setting a standard for all of us for outreach efforts.
- The Doña Ana County Commission has asked to talk with Dawn – awareness of Animal Companions continues to grow!

Nancy thanked Julie for designing our new business cards and thank you cards. Tony Poe has been writing thank you cards from the beginning with Miguel's donation of cards. Nancy also encouraged everyone to fill out a volunteer form and send it in (it's on our website and will be submitted directly to Nancy) if they would like to help Animal Companions in any way.

Miguel informed us that donations have reached \$5,505 since February 3, 2022 from 16 people and couples. He encouraged everyone to donate what they can afford. Miguel then discussed the many additions and changes he's made to our website. Highlights include the following:

- Julie redesigned our logo to be white which better matches the website.
- There is now a button on the homepage for Facebook and Instagram.
- "About Us" has been updated to list all the donors.
- "Media and Events" includes links to all the interviews Dawn has done. Her excellent communication skills have helped with "getting the word out" about Animal Companions.
- Miguel described each of the donation levels on "Donate," and reminded us that clicking on each will take us to the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico's donation page as they are managing our donations at this time.
- "Get Involved" has the volunteer form. Once you click on "Sign me up!" the information will go to Nancy who will then contact you.

Carol then discussed the televet call line for after hours emergencies for pet owners. Highlights include:

- The role of a televet service is to be the first interaction, an interim step, to bridge the gap between care needed and a hospital visit or getting in to see the patient's clinic.
- It consists of a video chat with a licensed veterinarian (most likely not in Las Cruces). The pet parent would be charged directly; our local vets would not be charged any fee. There may be "coupons" available to cover the fee for our rescue organizations.
- Benefits of this type of service include triaging the 60-80% of calls that do not need to see a doctor or rush to the hospital immediately. This also provides options for our local vets and allows for cooperation with local resources.
- Our choice right now has been narrowed down to VetTriage. We presented information on VetTriage to our vets at the Roundtable on March 8. The founder of VetTriage will present to our vets on March 24 and the vets can directly talk with him.
- If we get positive consensus from our vet community, we will move forward with promoting the service.
- While this is not an emergency hospital, if we can save one life, or if this effort keeps one more vet in our area, it will be worth it. This is exciting, and we're looking forward!

Dawn opened the meeting to discussion. Highlights of the conversations are below:

- Recruiting vets – donation funds can be used towards such an action. We can do the groundwork to get more vets to come here as we continue to work towards a 24/7 emergency hospital.
- Julie, retiree from the NMSU Department of Animal & Range Sciences, volunteered to connect with that department. Because of its strong pre-vet program, this might provide connections to both vet schools and interested pre-vet and vet students.
- We have a category within our budget for offering financial aid to vet students. Details will need to be worked out.
- Thus far, our expenses have included stamps, business cards, thank you notes, and \$199 membership fee to Grant Watch for one year.
- It was noted that volunteers are needed to look at grants that might be applicable to Animal Companions.

The next meeting of Animal Companions of Las Cruces is **Monday, April 11 from 5:30 to 6:30 MDT** at the same zoom address.

Meeting adjourned: 6:18pm