

November 2023 minutes of Animal Companions Quarterly Meeting Via Zoom

Attendees: Dawn Duncan, chair; Nancy Sharp, vice chair; Miguel Márquez, treasurer; Cherri Hudson-Brown, secretary; Linda Mandel, director; Kelly Carvlin, interim director, to become a director Jan. 1. Others attending were Candis Stern, Geri Wheelis, Jennifer Bonalumi, Carrie Greer, Kathe Starke, and Julie Basile.

Dawn reviewed our mission and welcomed new board member, Kelly Carvlin. Kelly introduced herself by saying she had a background in marketing, graphic design and real estate. She hopes to bring her marketing and public relations experience to the board. Dawn pointed out that Kelly designed the organization's logo when it first started.

Veterinarian Recruitment---Dawn said she has been heavily involved in attending job fairs at Iowa State University and the University of Florida, Gainesville. Dawn said that one of our recruiting tools was a book of photos promoting Las Cruces and the region and put together by Candis. Because Dawn is a former English professor, the UF asked her to meet with students to go over their resumes, so she got to spend more time with them. She also pointed out a couple things she thought were helpful that the UF did. Students each had a sticker which showed what year they were so she could tell if they were also immediately ready for the job market or not. The students also had a paper for Dawn to sign showing that they had spent time chatting with her.

Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico Spirit of Giving Gala—Kelly reported that she and Dawn were Black Jack dealers at the charity event. She said she learned many new things about our organization. A highlight was our founder and chair, Dawn, receiving the Gerald H. Deabel Award for Outstanding Volunteerism. Miguel pointed out that Dawn generously donated \$5,000 to Animal Companions out of the \$20,000 award.

Update on Legislative Efforts—Dawn said that a bill to expedite veterinarian licenses from people moving from out of state to New Mexico passed earlier this year. State Sen. Doreen Gallegos was instrumental in this. Changes in the non-compete clause passed at the initial committee level but didn't go any further. Dawn had spoken to the legislative committee about how we are losing veterinarians to other states including Texas because veterinarians prefer to move to places where they don't have to sign non-compete clauses. Dawn is optimistic that a new bill, with the help once again of State Rep. Joanne Ferrary, will move successfully through the January 2024 legislative session. Dawn encouraged people to write their legislators.

Quarterly Financials—Miguel gave a financial report that covered up to Sept. 30, 2023. Donations totaled \$72,619.57 with \$4,554.57 coming in the first quarter (Jan.-March); \$30,853 the second quarter (April-June) and \$37,212 the third quarter (July-Sept.). Expenses increased from \$3,012.04 the first quarter to \$8,756.06 the second quarter but dropped to \$4,952.64 the third quarter. Expenses reflected increased presence at veterinary job fairs and the American Veterinary Medical Association annual convention. Administrative fees paid to the Community Foundation were \$877.14 the first quarter; \$1,042.23 the second and \$835.94, the third quarter. Total donations for this year were \$72,619.57; expenses, \$14,721.64 and administrative fees, \$2,755.31, for a total of \$55,142.62.

Online Auction Results—Miguel said our recent on-line auction raised \$1,984.51. All 66 items sold and there were 34 buyers. New Mexico Estate Sales provided the computer platform for free. Linda reported that Dawn, Miguel, Wanda Berryman, Heidi Alvarez and herself as well as Terri Pease, David Rice, Jeff Brown and Cherri Hudson-Brown helped with the setup or pickup at the Community Foundation.

Website Updates—Miguel said among the various additions to the web site is information on financial help for pet parents. This includes Frankie's Friends, which Candis made Dawn aware of, and help also from the Doña Ana County Humane Society. There is information now on how people can donate to us in memory of people or pets.

Cherri pointed out information was added on the veterinarians' page about the ASPCA poison information service. Julie said with the holidays approaching we should emphasize the emergency clinics in El Paso and the poison information service. Julie said she would post on her social media links to our web page information.

Miguel said that our site on Go Daddy has had 9,093 visitors in 12 months. Our online presence score is 71, which is great compared with other sites.

Volunteers and Outreach—Linda said that six new people attended our Oct. 21 volunteer appreciation event. There was an air show that day as well as the public library's volunteer appreciation program which may have affected attendance. Nancy added that we had volunteers who worked at a two-day event sponsored by Funky Karma and Miguel provided information about our organization during a pet vaccination program in Mesilla.

Volunteers will continue to check in with veterinary clinics every quarter instead of monthly to learn of vacancies and changes and to show appreciation.

Another article in Stroll magazine has appeared, this time about Linda and her dogs in Picacho Hills. Last year there was one with Miguel and the Sonoma Ranch area.

Upcoming Board Needs—Dawn reported that Miguel and Cherri's one-year terms will end at the end of December. Miguel will remain as web master until we get someone trained in that role. Dawn said she'd like to have seven people on the board so that would include an additional board member at large. There is a three-step process: someone fills out an application, the board reviews the application and if the next step is approved, board members meet with the applicant. The final step is deciding on whether to approve the applicant and asking the applicant to fill out a "contract" of expectations.

Dawn asked that people consider applying or think of people they know who might make good board members and have them contact her. Dawn emphasized that those who serve must pay attention to communication on their devices and be able to respond in a timely manner.