

September 2021 Minutes

The meeting took place 5:30-6:30 pm, via Zoom, Monday, Sept. 13, Dawn Duncan presiding.

Members present: Robyn Alspach, Joanne Beer, Judy Bosland, Kelly Carvlin, Linda Cox, Dawn Duncan, Carol Ezell, Cyndi Haber, Miguel Marquez, Denice Mittelstaedt, Bart Polin, Nancy Sharp, Judy Stuart

After the welcome and ice breaker, the following reports and discussion proceeded (see September Monthly Meeting presentation for slides):

Comparison of Like Cities—Carol Ezell

Carol provided information on the 100 cities nationwide that compare to Las Cruces in population. Of all 100, 40 have emergency services within 25 miles due to proximity to large city, 57 have their own emergency services, and only 3 have none at all (like Las Cruces). Some of these comparison cities have a greater median income than LC, but some also have less. Carol also shared the over 14% growth rate in population in LC in the last 10 years. We discussed that the median income will likely rise as more retirees move to LC, which has been designated on many social media platforms and in magazines as a top retirement location. Many of these individuals also have pets and are willing to pay for services. Joanne mentioned that Trader Joe's reason for not opening a store here some years ago was due to lack of education in the overall population, given that higher education correlates to customers. However, times are changing and that might not be an issue for veterinary services. Carol also shared that Blue Pearl is a corporation specializing in emergency care for animals that is located across the nation and might have interest in coming here if we approach them. We agreed that our preference would be a home-grown consortium of our vets, but that we are open to this possibility if our vets are resistant to sharing rotations and profits. At least such a corporation would bring everything that is needed. We also discussed checking with El Paso to see how they managed. There is some caution here as we are given to understand that one of the two El Paso emergency clinics had actually purchased the one here that is now closed.

Locating Regional Veterinary Clinics—Dawn Duncan

Dawn described how we mapped the region and towns we would cover, marking half-way points between Las Cruces and hospitals in our region which are located in El Paso, Albuquerque and Silver City. Towns that fell closer to us than these towns or within better driving time were then researched to discover if they has veterinary emergency services, or indeed any services at all. In total we researched 63 towns and entered our results in a spreadsheet prepared by Carol.

Survey of Veterinarians and Spreadsheet Data—Judy Bosland

Using the spreadsheet data, Judy prepared two surveys, one for veterinary clinics in the towns beyond Las Cruces and one for our veterinarians in Las Cruces. In the week since the “beyond” survey was sent, she has received 4 out of 11 answers (the 11 indicative of how few towns actually have any services). Of those, all reported recognizing a great need for such a hospital and 3 of the 4 definitely would send to Las Cruces and the 4th maybe, depending on the level of care we could provide.

Connecting with News Sources—Dawn Duncan

Dawn reported that contacts had been made with *Las Cruces Sun News*, *The Bulletin*, and *Neighbors* magazine. While the Sun News has not responded, Editor Dave Burge of *The Bulletin* is interested in following our work. Editor/Publisher Cheryl Fallstead of *Neighbors* was willing to run a short piece in November or a longer story in January. Dawn opted for January, when we will have more information/success and as a nice kick off story for the new year with this new initiative.

Logo Creation—Kelly Carvlin

Kelly designed 8 different takes for a logo and shared all with the working team of 7 people, who all agreed on one design. Kelly has now created different color versions of that design for our website, for print material, for shirts, etc. She will add the logo to our new website.

Website Design: the Big Reveal—Miguel Marquez

Miguel reported on his work to design our website, which is now hosted on the GoDaddy platform. Dawn paid \$285, which covers the domain name, the building of the website, the hosting of the website, and security for 2 years. Other members indicated they would be willing to help defray some of the cost. Miguel has created the following pages: Home, About Us, Mission and Goals, Research and Data, Meeting Minutes, Media and Events, Contact Us. After revealing the website in its beautiful green and white design with wonderful photos of some of our pets and items to populate all pages except for Media and Events at the moment, we published the website. It is now available for you to peruse and to share at <http://animalcompanionsoflascruces.org>

Further Discussion:

- There was some discussion about whether we could become a 501(3c) non-profit. A number of members expressed doubt, given the complications of doing so and whether we actually want to manage finances/donations or leave the funding to however the hospital is organized (local consortium or corporate). Denice is sure that we could manage it, depending on state regulations. Denice and Nancy will work together to research what is necessary.

- Kelly will begin work on a brochure that we can share. Dawn will begin work on a presentation that could be used, consulting with Kelly and Nancy. Once we have a unified presentation, Dawn asked that we each contact our veterinary clinic and see if we might have 15 minutes during a staff meeting to present our material. In the meantime, members can point their veterinarians to our website and urge them to complete the survey they should have received via email.
- Dawn has set our meetings for the second Monday of each month (unless that Monday is a holiday in some traditions), 5:30-6:30 pm, via Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84827518033> Please note that in October, due Indigenous Peoples Day/Columbus Day, our meeting will be on the third Monday, October 18.

REMEMBER TO CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: <https://animalcompanionsoflascruces.org/>

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