

AUSTIN NO KILL COALITION
2014 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

1. Since February 2011, Austin's open-admission municipal animal shelter has saved 90% or more of all impounded animals, making Austin the largest "No Kill" City in the United States. But success in the past does not guarantee success in the future, and there is always room for improvement. How important is the City's "No Kill" status to you? If the issue were to come before the Council again, will you commit to maintaining the City's resolve to be a "No Kill" community? Why or why not?

As the past founder and CEO of PetsMD and Book-a-Vet, I am firmly committed to maintaining our No Kill policy and continue our efforts to be a role model for cities across the U.S. Our community has not only maintained a successful program but has raised the standards in the industry and are now taking this expertise to other cities to deploy similar programs.

2. In 2007, the City Council voted to build a new animal shelter in East Austin but only upon the condition that an adoption center remain on the old Town Lake Animal Center site. The Council has repeatedly voted that it wishes the current tenant of the site, Austin Pets Alive, to remain on the site, but the building is old and deteriorating. Given that APA saves three to four thousand animals from Austin Animal Center each year (15-20% of AAC intake), and given that APA is willing to build a new, state-of-the-art shelter on the site at no cost to city taxpayers, will you commit to supporting APA signing a long-term agreement with the city to build and operate a new, streamlined shelter as its headquarters on the site with a two-acre footprint (cutting in half its current footprint of four acres)? Why or why not?

The efforts of good folks like, Dr. Jefferson and all of the countless loving volunteers has lead to the success of the APA and the TLAC center. I would support maintaining the facility and offering as much City support as possible for a long term relationship with the center. I was present at Council the night that hundreds of APA volunteers were advocating the Council only to have to wait until after midnight to be heard. Many volunteers had to leave to attend the shelter as a huge storm was underway. Their heroism was felt in those chambers that night and I was proud to pay witness to the hard work of our fine neighbors and residents.

3. In 2010, the City Council passed a "No Kill" plan for the City of Austin that has produced dramatic, measurable, and positive outcomes for Austin's shelter pets. The "No Kill" plan took a balanced approach aimed at both increasing "live outcomes" and decreasing shelter intake through proven and cost-effective policies and programs. However, some persons in town who oppose Austin's "No Kill" efforts want the City to instead pass a mandatory pet alteration law or a costly tax on owners of unaltered pets---even though such laws have proven ineffective across the country, are nearly uniformly opposed by national animal-welfare groups, and have frequently led to increases in shelter intake, killing, and animal-control costs. Do you support the current balanced "No Kill" approach embraced by the Council and "No Kill" advocates? Or, are you willing to risk the progress Austin has made by imposing a mandatory alteration law?

I would not support a mandatory spay/neuter as this may create a barrier to adoptions but rather continue to support programs that offer free or reduced costs procedure for pet owners. Anything we can do as a community and a city to promote the adoption and proper care of our pet family is a priority of mine and part of our city's

culture and expands adoptions to low income pet lovers that are ready to add a cherished member to their families.

4. The largest category of “savable” animals still not making it out of Austin Animal Center alive are high-energy large dogs in need of behavior training. These dogs often take the longest time to be adopted, and they are also often surrendered to the city shelter due to apartment or neighborhood housing restrictions that discriminate based on breed or size. Would you be willing to explore ways to change housing restrictions so that they are based on an individual animal’s behavior rather than on its size and apparent breed? At the least, would you be willing to condition city contributions (such as money or land) to residential developers on an agreement that they not discriminate based on an animal’s breed or size? Why or why not?

As much as I would love to pass a blanket ordinance to stop breed restrictions, there are legal logistics in the way such as private ownership hurdles and restrictive insurance regulations. We can however, place covenants on any group receiving economic benefits from the city and continue to lobby groups like the Apartment Associations and national insurance carriers to remove these unfair restrictions. Some apartment management firms have found a market niche by offering a “no breed restriction” as part of their advertised policies and I hope this pattern continues. As option come open for me as a Councilwoman to take action, you can count on it!

5. What pets, if any, do you have? Where did you get them from?

I have two rescue cats, one I have had for 13 years from his kitten days and the other was an overweight adult rescue that are typically hard to place. I look forward to finding a rescue dog to add to the family. My last rescue dog passed away a few years ago and I am nearly ready for another run around the park, so to speak!