

## Instructions

This document is a fill-in form. Tab through the document to type in your answers in the fields below. Don't worry about space, the text fields will expand if needed. When you're done, email the completed form to [REDACTED]. Thank you for your time.

Type Candidate Name: SHERYL COLE

- 1. In October 2007, the City Council voted to relocate Austin's animal shelter to the eastern edge of the City, but only if the newest building at the current shelter were kept open as an adoption center. Shelter staff, who did not support the adoption center, have not developed a plan for the center or allocated any bond money to prepare the building, currently used for administration, to house animals.**

- A. What steps, if any, will you take to ensure that shelter management fulfills Council's mandate for a downtown adoption center?**

Right now we are working with the YMCA of Austin and the West Austin Youth Association to develop a master plan for the area that the current animal shelter sits in and I know that our City Health Department and Parks and Recreation Department are planning for the adoption center and the fleet services to remain in the community building. They also are developing ideas to have joint staffing of this office. All of this work is the result of a resolution I sponsored and I hope to start showing these ideas to the community soon.

- B. Will you commit to supporting a downtown adoption center that is open the same hours as the main shelter, and where adoptable animals can stay full-time until they are adopted?**

I will commit to supporting a downtown adoption center that is open for people who work during the day and looking into whether adoptable animals can stay full-time.

- C. Would you support an expansion of the proposed adoption center to include more of the existing shelter buildings, such as the adoption dog kennels?**

Right now I support having the adoption center, fleet services, and other support offices for both Parks and Recreation and the Health Department at this location.

- 2. While there was a significant decline in the number of cats entering the shelter in 2008, the number of adoptions from Austin's pound has not seen a significant increase. The number of animals leaving through placement partner groups would have actually decreased last year if it were not for the**

**work of a single new nonprofit group. Would you commit to demanding the implementation of proven programs that have increased positive outcomes at other shelters---such as off-site adoptions and a large-scale foster program? If so, would you be willing to direct budgetary expenditures towards those programs?**

Although we are facing unprecedented budget challenges, I would be willing to look into investing in these programs.

**3. Since 2000 when the current shelter director took over, Austin's pound has killed an average of 52.4 percent of impounded animals (about 12,000 animals each year). During the same period, the annual budget has increased from below \$3 million to nearly \$6 million. Other communities across the country have implemented common sense and innovative methods to reduce their shelter kill rate to under 10% of all impounded animals, often in just one or two years.**

**A. Would you commit to making “no kill”—defined as killing less than 10% of pets sheltered at the community’s open-admission shelter—the official policy of Austin and support any laws or policy changes necessary to achieve this goal?**

I would support this goal and work towards this goal as a community.

**B. Given the track record of shelter management, do you believe it's time for a new direction? If yes, would you consider hiring a consultant with demonstrated experience in achieving “no kill” to evaluate Austin’s shelter?**

I believe that the hiring decisions are the authority of the City Manager and cannot weigh in the personnel matters as this is not the purview of the Council.

**C. Would you support the implementation of performance standards that tie management performance to salary increments or bonuses or continued employment? If not, please explain why not.**

Again, it is not the place of the council member to evaluate performance other than that of the officials that are directly evaluated by the Council. However, this evaluation is already done through our SSPR required by our Human Resources department for all employees.

**4. Two audits by the State of Texas, plus multiple independent checks, have**

**revealed that on most days, Austin's shelter keeps more than 100 cages empty and unused while it continues killing healthy, non-aggressive animals.**

**A. Would you require TLAC to explain this policy? Please explain why or why not.**

I will ask for an explanation.

**B. Would you commit to supporting a moratorium on convenience killing at Austin's shelter---i.e., the killing of animals that are neither suffering nor aggressive while dozens of cages sit empty? Please explain why or why not.**

We clearly have an over population issue and do the best we can with existing programs. I support doing as much as we can to shelter all animals and if there are improvements to be made, will encourage them.

**5. Shelter management has discretion to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual donations to the shelter, yet public documents do not make clear how that money is spent. Would you support an audit of the City's animal-services budget—including all discretionary funds? If not, please explain why not.**

We cannot have city auditors legally audit a donation fund, but I support making the expenditures public.

**6. No city in America has achieved "no kill" success by implementing a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. Some cities, like Los Angeles, have even seen an increase in shelter killing after introducing mandatory spay/neuter. In addition, such ordinances require increased enforcement costs, money that could be used for life-saving programs that are correlated with reduced shelter killing. As a council member, would you support mandatory spay/neuter, or would you support additional funding to increase access to low cost or free spay/neuter services?**

These two ideas are not mutually exclusive and to the extent possible I would like to see both things happen recognizing the budget shortfalls we see in our immediate future.

**7. What, if anything, do you envision as the role of the Austin Animal Advisory Commission? What kind of person will you appoint to the commission?**

I believe that we need a thoughtful analytical person who is looking for results to look at all animal issues in the City.

**8. Have you ever rescued or adopted a pet? If you currently have pets, where did you get them?**

Yes, our current pet is a rescued dog named Lightning from the Town Lake Animal Shelter.

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