

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.

I

- 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?**

I was the Council Member that proposed there be an Adoption Center at the Davenport Building. I'll work to ensure it happens.

- 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?**

Given our current budget constraints, I cannot commit at this time to having a full-scale second shelter at the downtown site.

- 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?**

Possibly, pursuant to available funding.

- 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?

I will commit to working with city staff to explore implementation of new programs, or improvement of existing programs, to help increase our adoption rate. I can't make a budget commitment at this time, but I do believe we need to be using any available resources to continue to improve our adoption rate.

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 think our goal could be less than 20% but I would need more information before I could commit to 10% as a realistic goal.

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?

Generally, I believe there may be some Shelter operations that could improve but I'm not prepared to say that a consultant is necessary; I would rather see City staff conceive of and execute a plan for improvement first.

- 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.**

Hiring, firing and compensation of City staff is the function of the City Manager in our form of government. Accordingly, I would defer to the City Manager's perspective on questions of performance standards and bonuses.

- 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.**

Yes, I would like to understand more about this. I know there always need to be available cages but don't know why it would need to be as many as you have described here.

- 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.**

I oppose "convenience killing."

- 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.**

Yes, I would support an audit if it were clear that there were unanswered questions about expenditures.

- 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?

I need more information to respond definitively. Again, I'm committed to using any available resources to increase adoptions and reduce euthanasia numbers. I think the partnership with ASPCA Mission Orange has provided successful spay/neuter clinics.

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?

Like every citizen commission, I believe the Animal Advisory Commission should provide the City Council and City staff with reliable independent analysis and realistic recommendations on improving City operations that are under their purview. I appoint citizen commission members who I believe are capable of performing that function.

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

Yes, I have a rescue cat that my wife and I brought home from Nebraska.

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