



FixAustin.org

Dear City Council Candidate,

As you are likely aware, FixAustin.org is Austin's only non-profit organization dedicated to ending the killing of Austin's lost and homeless pets through the use of proven, cost-effective policies that have ended shelter-killing in communities across the country. In less than two years, FixAustin.org has garnered the support of more than seven thousand Austinites, hundreds of donors, and roughly five hundred subscribers to our animal-welfare e-mail alerts.

To educate the community on the animal-welfare preferences and records of candidates for the upcoming City Council Election, we have put together and attached a short questionnaire for each candidate to answer. After reviewing the answers and animal-welfare records (where available) of each candidate, we will be distributing an Animal Welfare Report Card to our supporters, the Austin community, and the local press.

We understand your time is valuable and have therefore kept our questionnaire very brief. Please return the answers to Ryan Clinton at ryan@fixaustin.org by Wednesday, April 23rd. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ryan at the above e-mail address or by phone at (512) 294-5003.

Thank you and warmest regards,

The FixAustin.org Team

[Attachment]

1. **In October 2007, the City Council voted to relocate Austin’s animal shelter from the shores of Town Lake to a mostly industrial area on the eastern edge of the City. Do you support the decision to relocate the shelter? And if the issue comes before the Council again, how will you vote?**

I don't support the decision to relocate the shelter, and expect I would vote against relocation should it come before the Council again. It is possible that we could make a new location work, but frankly, we won't achieve success in any location until we focus our attention on increasing pet adoptions rather than on divisive east-side versus west-side, developer versus neighborhood, etc. debates.

2. **When the Council voted to relocate the shelter, the Council purported to adopt a “compromise” that would keep part of the current shelter on Town Lake open as an adoption center. But the shelter’s management has expressed great confidence that an adoption center on Town Lake will not actually materialize once the shelter is moved.**

- A. **Assuming the shelter is relocated, what is your position on whether an adoption center should remain on Town Lake?**

Again, assuming our focus is to increase the number of pet adoptions and to decrease the number of pets killed, it seems clear we'd benefit from adoption centers, particularly one located in a high visibility convenient place like the current Town Lake location. We should plan to keep an adoption center open at Town Lake.

- B. **What steps, if any, will you take to stop shelter management from thwarting the Council’s decision to keep open an adoption center at the current site?**

I will take whatever steps are necessary and will be sure to stay on top of this issue if I am elected. I will also do everything I can to work with all community stakeholders and to keep the public informed on an ongoing basis.

- C. **What do you envision the Town Lake adoption center to look like? Would it be open during all regular shelter hours? And what percentage of the animal-services budget do you believe should be allocated to the adoption center?**

I envision the adoption center to be an open, welcoming place that encourages volunteer participation and that is easy for anyone to access. It should be open more on the weekends and in evening hours than current regular shelter hours offer. It should be a place for educational programming and other activities to foster more traffic. I'd also be interested in exploring a retail component to help generate additional resources while also further increasing traffic and visibility. Without more information, I can't say what percentage I would allocate to the adoption center at this time.

3. **Each successful “no kill” community in the United States— San Francisco, CA; Ithaca, NY; Reno, NV; Charlottesville, VA; Ivans County, UT; and Orange County, VA—has become “no kill” by implementing shelter expert Nathan Winograd’s No Kill Equation, which, unlike Austin’s “Mission Orange” plan, places focus on getting animals out of the shelter alive through increased adoptions. Would you commit to demanding the implementation of shelter practices that increase adoptions—like off-site adoptions and volunteer foster programs? If so, would you be willing to direct budgetary expenditures towards these programs?**

Yes. Absolutely.

4. **Since 2000, Austin’s pound has sheltered roughly the same number of animals (around 24,000) and killed roughly the same number of animals (around 12,000) each year. During the same period, the pound’s annual budget has nearly doubled to nearly \$5 million. Do you believe that killing roughly half of Austin’s lost and homeless pets—while other communities kill less than 10%—is evidence of effective government and strong shelter leadership? If not, what will you do to change the management of the pound?**

It is unacceptable that our City has seen no change in the number of animals sheltered or in the number of animals killed over these last several years. The fact that the operating budget has nearly doubled during the same period makes it all the more unacceptable, but as has been mentioned elsewhere in this questionnaire, until the focus shifts towards increasing adoptions we are not likely to see a significant change. It is the job of our Council Members to set the public agenda, and what gets measured is what gets done. I will advocate changing what gets measured and making sure resources are allocated so management can be successful if they are willing to work towards achieving new results. If those results are not achieved then I will be an advocate for management change.

5. **Would you support the implementation of performance standards that tie management performance to salary increments or bonuses? If not, why not?**

Yes.

6. **The shelter management has discretion to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual donations to the shelter, yet it is unclear—in public documents—where that money is spent. Would you support an audit of the City’s animal-services budget—including all discretionary funds? If not, why not?**

Yes. I believe the public should have access to this information just as is the case with documentation required of independent nonprofit organizations.

7. **No City in America has achieved “no kill” success—defined as killing less than 10% of pets sheltered at the community’s open-admission pound—by implementing a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. In addition, such ordinances require increased enforcement costs, taking money away from life-saving programs that are correlated with reducing shelter killing. Would you vote for or against a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance for Austin? And why?**

A mandatory spay/neuter ordinance is not the answer to Austin's animal-killing problem, so I would vote against it.

8. **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 view the City's boards and commissions as being the best way to get interested citizens involved in our City's governance. I will seek appointees who bring best practices and real world perspective to the table, and I will actively seek as diverse a pool of candidates as possible for appointments. I envision appointing a person to serve on the Austin Animal Advisory Commission who is passionate about increasing pet adoptions and who has the management expertise to work well with others and get results. The role of AAAC is advisory with respect to animal services issues facing our City, but citizens who serve are also responsible for keeping fellow citizens informed and involved.

9. **Do you have pets? If so, where did you get them?**

I currently have a 15 year-old apricot miniature poodle named Teddie. She was adopted by my partner Kayla in 1993, so Teddie didn't come into my life until Kayla did. We became a happy family in 2002:-)