DRAFT

San Francisco Animal Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
October 8, 2026

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Chair Michael Angelo Torres; Vice Chair Irina Ozernoy; Councilmembers: Risa Beckwith; Mark Ryle; Rebecca Schwartz; Dayna Sherwood

Absent: Councilmember: Mikaila Garfinkel; Department Representatives: Deputy Director Amy Corso, SF Animal Care and Control; Officer Greg Sutherland, SF Police Department; Dr. George Han, SF Department of Public Health

2. General Public Comment

A community member welcomed the new councilmembers, recognized longtime animal advocate Eric Mills and encouraged members of the public to send him messages of support. The speaker also expressed concern about rodeo advertisements appearing at bus shelters and encouraged residents to contact the advertising company.

A community member welcomed the new councilmembers and announced an upcoming Commission on the Environment meeting related to the proposed artificial turf project at Crocker Amazon Park, encouraging public participation.

3. Approval of Draft Minutes from the April 2026, May 2026, and July 2026 Meetings [Discussion/Action Item]

Chair Torres stated that the draft minutes had been distributed to councilmembers. Approval of all three sets of minutes was continued to the November meeting. No vote was taken.

4. Chairperson's and Councilmembers' Reports [Discussion Item]

Chair Torres welcomed the newly appointed councilmembers and reported that this was the Council's first meeting since July due to vacancies affecting quorum. He noted that all seven voting seats were filled for the first time since January 2025.

Councilmember Sherwood reported that Assembly Bill 2010, referred to as the "SNIP Act," had passed and suggested discussing it when the Council next considers spay/neuter issues.

Public Comment

No public comments were received on this item.

5. New Business

A. Welcoming New Councilmembers [Discussion Item]

Chair Torres welcomed Councilmembers Risa Beckwith, Mark Ryle, and Rebecca Schwartz and invited each to introduce themselves and identify issues of interest.

Councilmember Schwartz described 11 years of volunteer work with San Francisco Animal Care and Control, including work with shelter dogs and accompanying animal control officers on field responses. Her interests include pet licensing, spay/neuter, and rodenticides and glue traps.

Councilmember Beckwith described her background in health psychology and public health and her current studies in animal welfare, ethics, and law. She discussed the "One Health/One Welfare" approach, research concerning veterinary professionals' mental health and veterinary care shortages, and her interest in disaster preparedness that accounts for companion animals. She also described her participation in a UC Davis emergency response team and interest in evidence-based policy.

Councilmember Ryle described his work with San Francisco's Head Start program and his family's longtime involvement with local animal shelters and rescue organizations. He identified shelter overcrowding and the mental health of veterinary professionals as areas of interest.

Chair Torres welcomed these areas of interest, particularly the opportunity to examine pet licensing administration and the use of licensing revenue, revisit animal-related disaster preparedness presentations, and continue examining shelter overcrowding and spay/neuter policy.

During Council discussion, a question was raised about the status of proposed giant pandas at the San Francisco Zoo. Chair Torres summarized previous Council consideration of concerns, including the Council's 2024 support for recommendations by animal welfare advisors to the Joint Zoo Committee. He noted the Zoo's lack of a clear timeline and discussed possible future presentations from Panda Voices and San Francisco Zoo representatives. He indicated that the panda issue could return to the agenda in the new year.

Public Comment

A community member requested that councilmembers use their microphones so attendees and remote viewers could hear. Councilmember Ryle briefly repeated his introduction in response to the microphone concern.

A community member welcomed the new members' interests and encouraged the Council to develop partnerships and practical paths for turning recommendations into policy.

6. Items to Be Put on the Agenda for Future Council Meetings [Discussion Item]

Chair Torres announced that the next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2026. Tentative agenda items included San Francisco Animal Care and Control shelter updates and quarterly reports for the April–June and July–September 2026 time periods, and election of Council officers for the coming year.

Councilmember Ozernoy suggested holding an additional meeting on December 10, 2026, given the meetings canceled earlier in the year. Chair Torres agreed to research room availability and member schedules and consider placing the proposal on the November agenda.

Public Comment

A community member encouraged participation in the November 3 election, discussed ballot measures and candidates of interest to animal and environmental advocates, and asked about a ballot measure concerning city commissions.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM.