

DRAFT
San Francisco Animal Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2026

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Chair Michael Angelo Torres; Vice Chair Irina Ozernoy; Commissioners: Mikaila Garfinkel; Dayna Sherwood; Deputy Director Amy Corso, SF Animal Care and Control

Absent: Commissioner Michael Reed; Department Representatives: Natural Resources Manager Christopher Campbell, SF Recreation and Parks; Officer Greg Sutherland, SF Police Department; Dr. George Han, SF Department of Public Health

2. General Public Comment

The Commission received one written comment in support of a retail sales animal ban.

Public Comment:

- A community member presented concerns and data regarding euthanasia practices involving cats at SF ACC, including holding periods and treatment of fearful cats.
- A community member raised concerns about animal sacrifice practices and the possible connection to live animal markets.

3. Approval of draft minutes from the April 2026 meeting [Discussion/Action Item]

The Commission postponed approval of the April 2026 draft meeting minutes until the June 2026 meeting.

4. Chairperson's and commissioners' reports [Discussion Item]

No commissioner reports were presented.

5. Retail Animal Sales Ban in San Francisco [Discussion/Action Item]

Presenters: Kitty Jones, animal rescuer and volunteer with Compassionate Bay; Liz Cabrera Holtz, Senior Campaign Manager with World Animal Protection US.

The Commission discussed the impacts of the retail sale of exotic and companion animals in pet stores and considered a recommendation letter supporting a retail animal sales ban in San Francisco.

Key discussion points included:

- Holtz discussed the conditions in commercial breeding mills supplying pet stores, including documented neglect, illness, overcrowding, and inadequate veterinary care.
- Presenters described how many reptiles, birds, fish, amphibians, and small mammals sold in pet stores originate from large-scale breeding operations and wildlife trafficking pipelines.

- The presentation highlighted concerns regarding invasive species, biodiversity impacts, and abandonment of exotic animals into local ecosystems.
- Jones discussed the burden placed on rescues and shelters caring for abandoned or neglected animals originally purchased through pet stores.
- Presenters emphasized that most San Francisco pet stores already operate successfully without selling live animals and instead rely on supplies, grooming, boarding, and adoption partnerships.
- Commissioners discussed reptile expos and concerns regarding inadequate oversight, animal welfare conditions, and public health risks.
- Commissioners and presenters discussed California regulations, feeder animals, online animal sales, and comparisons to existing bans on fur sales and puppy mill sales.
- Commissioners discussed advocacy efforts underway in Albany, Oakland, Emeryville, El Cerrito, and other area pursuing similar retail animal sales bans.
- Commissioners also discussed the relationship between retail animal sales, live animal markets, and wildlife exploitation.

Public Comment:

- Multiple community members spoke in support of a retail animal sales ban and thanked the Commission for addressing the issue.
- Speakers discussed concerns regarding animal suffering in breeding mills, poor conditions in pet stores, abandonment of exotic animals, and the strain placed on rescues and shelters.
- Community members emphasized that many pet stores primarily profit from supplies and services rather than live animal sales.
- Rescue representatives discussed improper husbandry information provided by pet stores and long-term concerns for birds and other exotic animals.
- Public commenters encouraged San Francisco to become a leader on comprehensive retail animal sales bans and urged follow-up advocacy with the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission voted unanimously in support of sending a recommendation letter supporting a retail animal sales ban in San Francisco to the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and City Administrator.

6. Items to be put on the agenda for future commission meetings (Discussion Item)

Commissioners discussed having the Zoo audit on the agenda for the next meeting, and continuing follow-up and advocacy related to the retail animal sales ban recommendation.

7. Adjournment - 6:43 PM PST