





Documentation of Commission Member Kristen Hassen observations of visiting Austin Animal Center

Monday, August 1

- I went to AAC to visit Chewy, a dog deadlined to be killed for behavior on Friday, August 5. Viewed kennel card, asked a staff member for assistance, and walked Chewy to play yard. I observed friendly, playful behavior. Chewy was easy to walk on a leash. Was calm and friendly in the play yard, choosing to wallow in the pool and rest beside me. Did not react to other dogs barking around him. Ran up to the fence when another dog walked by but no unusual reactivity. I noted inflammation, redness, swelling, and open wounds on his paws and redness and swelling on his face, eyes, and ears - indicators of allergies. I noted he has been in the facility for approximately a year, has positive notes on his kennel card, and was told by two staff members he is easy to walk and loves people, and is 'everyone's favorite.'










Scan to Apply for Adoption 



***Chewy**
Microchip: 982126060052508

\$0.00
ADOPTION FEE

 Custom Code: A843523	Microchip: 982126060052508
 Spayed/Neutered: Yes	 Size: Large, 66.25 pounds
 Age: 2 years old, Adult	 Sex: Male
 Species: Dog	 Breed: American Bulldog

Pet Info

Chewy is an affectionate, easy-going dog, who enjoys getting away from the noise and hubbub of the kennels and hanging out with a friend. In a quiet play yard, Chewy checks out all the interesting smells and then will be snuggling with his person, watching the world go by. He is a true gentleman on walks, preferring to walk right alongside you. An Easy Walk harness is helpful when he sees another dog. He has made friends across the play yard fence, so has the potential to live with a confident, well-mannered dog after an appropriate introduction. He is treat motivated and is learning "heel."



- I did a walk-through while I was there and found 15+ dogs with almost no light in a storage container marked 'adoptable dogs inside.' Dogs appeared to be disoriented or sedated. Very dirty conditions and one window AC outside of unit read 'mobile modular portable storage.' No indication temperature was being externally monitored.





- I noted dirty conditions throughout the dog kennels including dirty bedding, food items, and trash piles in various places in the kennel areas. I noted very few staff or volunteers present and the staff members I did see did not talk to me. I noticed broken or beds worn down to the extent they can no longer be sanitary. I noted dogs sitting and standing on beds with urine puddling in the middle. I noted a number of dogs with visible allergies.
- When walking through the area with small dogs, I noticed a dog that appeared to be geriatric and very sick or sedated. The dog had feces on his legs and body and I was concerned he may be dying. I opened the door to the behind-glass area and asked a staff member if I could meet him. She said I could not because he may have an upper respiratory infection. I asked if he was eligible for foster care and she said he was not, that dogs with symptoms of upper respiratory infection could not be fostered. I asked if he was okay and she stated he was fine. I asked if I could adopt him and she said he was not eligible at this time.



- I left and returned a few minutes later and asked again if there was a reason dogs with URI could not go to foster. She said that this dog was not eligible but some dogs with URI may be. She asked if I had other pets and I said yes but that I could keep them separate. She said there was a 'no other pets' rule for URI dogs because it is 'airborn.'

- Following this, I went to the front desk and asked to find out if “French Fry” (the little dog I had just seen) was available for foster. The clerk told me she did not have time to answer my question because she was “doing six million other things” and directed me to scan the QR code and “wait over there behind all those people.” I told her I just wanted to know if the dog was available before I waited in line and she said she did not have time to tell me.

Other things I observed on this walk-through visit:

- Many kennels with dogs with a sign saying they were unavailable and had a home (at least 20 dogs)
- Ringworm kennels looked unattended and litter and food were scattered everywhere
- Dogs with no food bowl but food piled on the floor or on the bed



- Trash and discarded kennel parts and other large items were strewn about
- Dogs in multi-purpose room and in shipping container appeared lethargic and disoriented
- Very little to no information on kennel fronts
- Disarray and unkempt conditions throughout the facility

- The intake/pet resource areas were barricaded off, and the door was locked. A couple was there attempting to surrender a dog and they appeared to be hot and frustrated. They said they had to stand at the door waving for a long time and that eventually, someone did come outside.





Tuesday, August 2

- I returned Tuesday to check on both dogs. French Fry was no longer in his kennel and I spoke with a staff member who said she believed he went to a foster home.
- I went to get assistance to get Chewy out of his kennel but could not find a staff member so I put his harness on and took him to a play yard. I sat with him for about 30 minutes. He was sedate and appeared to be withdrawn - mostly laying on the ground beside me. A behavior team member eventually came into the yard to say hello and he became excited and happy to see her. She talked at length about what a great dog he is and that she hoped they didn't kill him. She said two people had reached out to foster them but that he could not go to foster. She said 'management' was going to come and tell me I could not take him on a foster outing. She left, and about 10 minutes later came to apologize that no one had come out.



- A few minutes later Rebecca Monte and someone named Kelsey came to the play yard fence. They appeared to be angry and defensive and told me that because I am not a volunteer, I could not get Chewy in and out of the kennel and I had to find a staff person. I told them there were no staff members around and they said I should go to the front desk, ask them to 'radio someone' and wait. I asked if I could take Chewy on a foster outing for an hour or so to get him away from the noise and stress of the shelter. They said I could not and that Chewy was not eligible for foster. They said they also do not allow foster outings because they 'don't have enough staff.' I asked if he could be adopted and they said he could only be adopted into an 'approved home on a strict management plan with a rescue group.' I told them I'd like to see him away from the shelter and that I felt

comfortable walking him off the property and that I was not worried about his behavior. At this time, Kelsey stated, "That's because you're seeing him on 800 milligrams of Trazadone." I then asked if I could get re-instituted as a volunteer and foster caregiver so I could help out more and they directed me to the website. They walked away. About five minutes later, unable to find a staff member or volunteer to assist me, I walked Chewy back to the kennel.

- I e-mailed Director Bland after I left and asked if I could be a volunteer and foster caregiver. I did receive a response saying he could 'FastTrack' my foster status but that I would have to wait three to four weeks for the background check process for new volunteers.

foster and volunteer and could easily get reinstated
and 1:03 comfortably safely handling the



Please let me know if you can help. I will be back
over tomorrow given that his deadline is Friday.



Bland, Don Aug 3



to me, Jason, Rebekha ▾

Ms. Hassen,

While we can fast track your foster application when completed, we will be unable to do the same for your volunteer application. You have not been in the volunteer program for some time and the city does require a CBI to be completed, which is taking around 3 to 4 weeks at this time.

We will also not allow anyone to take Chewy off campus, as it could create a liability issue for the City due to his history. We also have a rescue organization arriving sometime this afternoon to evaluate him.

If you are interested in fostering Chewy, we can provide your information to the rescue groups, like we have others that have expressed interest, and you can foster through them.

Regards,

Don

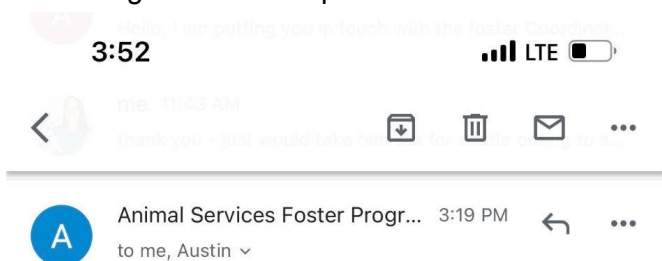
From: Kristen Hassen <kristenehassen@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 2, 2022 4:28 PM

To: Bland, Don <Don.Bland@austintexas.gov>

Subject: Aac

- I also received an e-mail from foster coordinator Erin Herren who stated Chewy was not eligible for foster placement.



Kristen,

Thanks for reaching out!

Per shelter leadership, we are not able to place this pet via our foster program. However, if you are comfortable with us sharing your contact information, we would be happy to put you in touch with any rescue partners that come forward for Chewy, as you may be able to foster or provide enrichment opportunities via their organization(s).

Let us know your thoughts.

Thank you,

Erin Herren

Foster Coordinator

Austin Animal Center

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