



CITY PUBLIC SERVICES AND NEIGHBORHOODS DIVISION REFUTES RECENT ABC 24 STORIES

15 pit bulls currently up for adoption; recent Rotary Club report "not a factor"

ABC 24 recently aired audio ostensibly recorded inside Memphis Animal Services (MAS) by an MAS employee. The story suggested that MAS was euthanizing all the pit bulls within the facility and was doing so in response to a Rotary Club report.

Approximately 16,000 animals come into MAS every year. The shelter hosts weekly adoption specials, and volunteers post adoptable animals to Facebook; both are done in an attempt to find new forever homes for the pets within its walls.

MAS is not a no-kill facility. It's not pretty, but every day, MAS finds that it must euthanize animals because, every day, more strays are picked up and more pets are surrendered to the facility by their owners.

Said Janet Hooks, director of Public Services and Neighborhoods:

"During the time this audio was recorded, the shelter was at capacity. The facility had closed for the evening and field officers continued to bring in additional animals. It is not uncommon for there to be an abundance of pit bulls at the facility; pit bulls and pit bull mixes represent the largest proportion of animals who enter MAS. The possibilities for adopting the breed into loving homes – largely due to their perceived image – are limited.

As of yesterday, in fact, MAS had 15 pit bulls available for adoption.

But to say that it had anything to do with the Rotary Club report or that it was an attempt to cover something up is a complete fabrication."

ABC 24 also ran a story that MAS is starving animals in its facility and that one of the employees filed a police report earlier this month about shelter conditions.

The City cannot speak to an ongoing investigation. However, rounds are done daily by the veterinarians to address all medical issues, including weight. Animals that require increased feeding are appropriately documented and fed by the techs.

Said Director Hooks:

“It is not unusual for an animal to lose weight when held in our care for a prolonged amount of time due to stress; in those instances, the vet makes a determination and documents the need for an increased amount of food. We know that Ms. Benson is anxious to get her dogs back, and MAS will comply with any court order that allows the release of the dogs.”

Pictures of the dogs in question, both at intake and current, are available.

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