

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM: Vice-Mayor Kristen Rosen Gonzalez
DATE: March 9, 2022

SUBJECT: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS THE CAT POPULATION AND THE NEED FOR TRAPPING OUTDOOR CATS TO KEEP THE POPULATION UNDER CONTROL AND GIVE THEM THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

It is estimated that there are at least 25,000 stray community cats in the City of Miami Beach. The stray community cat population is growing at a rate that is outpacing the current rate of trapping with an "all-volunteer" part time trapper group. In addition, the attrition rate of trappers in this economic climate is overwhelming. One female cat can produce 12 kittens a year. Extrapolate this one female birth rate out over a 5-year period, and you have 11,801 cats.

TNVR (Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return) is the solution, however, without enough trappers this cannot be executed. In the past we had as many as 15 part time volunteer trappers working on the beach; a North, Mid and South team each consisting of approximately 5 trappers. We currently have only 3 trappers working on resident requests and difficult or problem areas. SoBe Cats and the City of Miami Beach have been reaching out via social media, word of mouth, meetings with Associations, and passing out flyers to try to get community involvement and to recruit new trappers, to no avail. This is at a time, when the cat population is exponentially growing due to the COVID based shutdowns of free spay neuter clinics all over Miami Dade and surrounding areas. When the clinics finally re-opened, they were operating with limited access hours, short-staffed and some didn't allow any TNVR (Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return) activity.

We are currently in a position where we need to put "all hands-on deck" to gain control of this issue or the costs associated with managing this population explosion will be astronomical in years to come. We have already been seeing a backlash from unhappy residents, Condominium Associations, businesses, and Homeowner Associations with the increased cat population. The tone of all parties is that the growing cat population is an issue the City needs to address.

A highly skilled full-time trapper can trap as many as 1,000 cats in one year. This position would be a field position with off hours as trapping usually occurs late at night or early in the morning when the cats are out. This job not only entail trapping, but they would also help to educate, recruit and train new volunteer trappers. This position would work in conjunction with the non-profit team that operates the 100% volunteer run Kitty Campus to assist with helping to get community cats off the street.

SUPPORTING SURVEY DATA

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?

Yes

Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?

No

Legislative Tracking

Vice-Mayor Kristen Rosen Gonzalez