



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday December 11, 2006
10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL
200 N. Spring St.
Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Commissioners: Tariq Khero, President
 Kathleen Riordan, Vice-President
 Marie Atake
 Glenn Brown

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL HEARING

Commission President Khero called the Administrative Appeal Hearing to order at 10:09 A.M. Present were Commissioners Khero, Riordan, and Atake. Commission Brown was absent.

- 1. Appeal of the General Manager's Decision in License Revocation Case – BD 05534NC**
Appellant: Donald & Julie Butcher
Complaining Party: Charles Settle
District Manager, North Central Animal Care and Control, Karen Stepp, Captain
Hearing Coordinator, Department of Animal Services, Helen Brakemeier, Captain

Commander David Diliberto, Director of Field Operations, represented the Department in the absence of Captain Brakemeier, and presented the case to the Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Commissioners took the decision under submission and suggested that the decision for the appeal hearing be issued January 8, 2007.

COMMISSION MEETING

Commission President Khero called the Commission meeting to order at 10:35 A.M. Commissioner Brown was absent.

5. DISCUSSION ITEM

D. Review of Animal Cruelty Task Force (Taken Out of Order)

Officer Annette Ramirez gave an oral report on the Animal Cruelty Task Force, updating the Board on their recent successes and accomplishments. The joint efforts of the Department, the LAPD, and the City Attorney's Office have established animal cruelty cases as serious crimes, and have insured that they are prosecuted accordingly. Working with the LAPD has been a great education, benefiting Department officers who now have a better understanding of the arrest and booking procedures, and of the criminal history of the individuals who commit such crimes. Currently, the Task Force is developing a Power Point presentation to be used as a training tool for the shelter staff, LAPD officers, and other City agencies. The presentation is designed to provide an understanding of why animal crimes should be taken seriously and reported to break a cycle of violence and help build a safer city for the animals and community. LAPD had recently launched a program to deter from drawing guns in situations involving animals and to greatly lower the number of shootings in such situations. To help attain a better understanding, LAPD requested if the Department could provide training for their officers in helping them recognize characteristics of hostile animals.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Indicated that the District Attorney's Office and the LAPD had already received training on cock fighting and dog fighting issues. Concerned that the Task Force officers mainly work day shifts. Most crimes occur at night, and the officers need to be in a position where they are the first responders.

Daniel Guss: Thanked members of the Task Force for their responsiveness. Suggested that there be some clarification on issues handled by the Task Force and by non-Task Force officers. Hoped to see harsher penalties established. Felt there should be more media coverage on the accomplishments of the Task Force.

1. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

- The General Manager announced that former Commissioner Deborah Knaan would begin serving as the Assistant General Manager of Operations for the Department.
- "The Pet Place" television show cited the Department as one of their honorees during a recent awards luncheon for their efforts over the past year.
- The Department participated in the National Project Homeless Connect Day on December 6, targeting Downtown's Skid Row.
- The General Manager gave an update on the recent RFP that was sent out. The Department received one response from a vendor interested in providing spay/neuter services for the South Los Angeles shelter. The Department would re-release the RFP in February with a few revisions.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Requested the final figures for the Project Homeless Connect Day event. Felt there was

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not a large response from the community in bringing dogs in for vaccination.

Daniel Guss: Surprised he did not hear about the Project Connect Day event. Offered the services of his charity in helping to provide care for the dogs and cats of the homeless. Wanted to recognize the Downtown Dog Rescue organization for their efforts.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Martin Waterman: Proposed that the City pass an ordinance to require pet stores to notify the Department on the sale of animals in their possession. This would allow the Department to inform all new owners to license and sterilize their animals, and about the other services the Department has to offer. The ordinance would also produce increased revenue for both the City and the Department.

Tina Clark: Concerned that healthy animals continue to die while there are empty cages at the North Central shelter. Indicated that there needs to be lids for the outside kennels to protect the dogs from the rain.

Daniel Guss: Added to Mr. Waterman's comments to consider assessing the license fees at the point of sale in the pet shops. Commented on the confusion among the rescue community about the various Kill Lists, Red Lists, and New Hope Lists. Also commented on the confusion with the Mobile Adoption Program.

Scott Sorrentino: Encouraged the Department to spend all of the money in the Trust Funds to benefit everyone and the animals. Expressed appreciation for the Mobile Adoption volunteers for their work in developing the adoption programs. Felt that canceling the adoption events killed momentum. Concerned about the number of animal transfers recorded in the Department's report.

Jane Garcia: Best wishes for former Commissioner Knaan in her new position with the Department. Supported the resolution on Employee Safety, but pointed out that the volunteers also needed to be protected from false allegations and intimidation from the staff.

Michelle Kelly: Commented that animals are transferred from one shelter to another because there might be a particular rescue person living by the shelter, waiting to pick the animal up. Suggested that Trust Fund monies be used to create spay/neuter coupons for rabbits. Wanted to work with the Department on marketing for rabbits. Wanted to see the West Los Angeles shelter go "No Kill" on cats due to their large vacancy in their cat room. Felt that the Department should concentrate on improving its volunteer/staff relations.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Disturbed by the management at the South Los Angeles shelter who have expressed that the animals are better off dead. Commented on the struggle to get animals out and reach the goal of "No Kill" with the Department's counter-productive attitude of accepting the killing of the animals.

Phyllis Daugherty: Questioned the function and productivity of the Task Force. Mentioned the honoring of Dr. Vasquez at a recent holiday parade in Highland Park. Felt the signed resolution on Employee Safety was insulting to the staff because former Commissioner Erica Brunson did not sign it. Informed the Board that the City of Bakersfield was moving to pass a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. Concerned about the waiver of fees for individuals continually breaking the law for having a number of citations.

Mary Catalano: Supported Mr. Waterman's proposal. Advised the Department to remove "Saving Animals' Lives" from the staff shirts and the Website. Believed that a kitten, auctioned for \$800 at the South Los

Angeles center, went out unsterilized. Suggested that the Department take advantage of free public service announcements. Commented on being protected against false accusations. Wanted the Department to look at Nathan Winograd's "No Kill" solutions.

3. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2006 (Held from November 13, 2006) and November 13, 2006

Commissioner Riordan motioned to approve the minutes for October 23, 2006 with her requested changes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Riordan motioned to approve the minutes for November 13, 2006 with her requested changes along with those from Commissioner Atake. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 3-0.

B. Oral Report by the Commission on Meetings and Events Attended

Commissioner Atake volunteered at dog adoption events on November 18, November 25, December 2 and December 9. She also attended the Bark N Bitches fundraising event on November 18. Commissioner Riordan gave an update on the public service announcement and on the progress of the spay/neuter commercial. Commissioner Khero had nothing to report.

4. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Request for Devising and Distributing a List for Animals Pending Euthanasia

Captain Nancy Moriarty, Director of Shelter Operations reported on the procedures for animals listed under the New Hope program's At Risk and Red Alert categories. Under the new initiative, euthanasia would only be practiced for irremediably sick or injured animals, or animals deemed to be a threat to the public. In the past, the Department had published a list of animals that were "signed off" to be killed in a short period of time in the hope to motivate rescuers. This list however, was not developed with strict criteria about medical and behavioral conditions. Under the New Hope Program Alert, rescuers would be able to see the specific deterioration of conditions, as the animals' special needs are highlighted when escalated from the At Risk category to the Red Alert category. A firm seven-day maximum period for Red Alert animals would provide additional time for rescuers and New Hope partners to make arrangements to save animals from euthanasia.

Commissioners Atake and Riordan expressed their concern in making it clear to the public when animals have been signed off. They felt there was still a very large interest among the public to simply have a 24-hr sign off list available.

Public Comments

Tina Clark: Stressed the importance of knowing when animals have been signed off. Confused about the "At Risk" classification. Asked if it was possible to list the animals' condition and specific illness.

Jane Garcia: Questioned why the public was not allowed to place an "IP" (Interested Party) on a "Red Alert" animal as the animal must be adopted immediately due to the animal status or condition.

Mary Catalano: Agreed on the 24-hr sign off list. The staff needs to explain isolation and shelter care to the public, and should inform them about the group HELP, who offer to pay for half the medical costs on animals that are ill. Commented on the need for better assessments of animals coming into the shelter.

Zsuzsa Blakely: The sign off list is the same thing as the old Kill List. Disagreed with the proposed program of the "At Risk" alert because it allows the animals to be killed more quickly.

Jeffrey De La Rosa: Against the use of the term "euthanasia." Commented on his involvement in the rescue of five dogs, all of whom would have been killed under the New Hope Program Alert. Felt the Department needed to use more human discretion and intelligence instead of going by a calendar.

Scott Sorrentino: The sign off list was what the public had been asking for. However, no reasons are given as to why it had been discontinued. Wanted to see the concrete reasons why it no longer exists.

Commissioner Riordan felt the seven-day allowance would be a good guideline to use to give rescuers ample time to come to the shelters. She agreed on the importance of having a sign off list available to the public. The General Manager responded that the purpose of the New Hope Program Alert was to notify New Hope members on animals that would be available to them at no cost. Commissioners Riordan and Atake expressed their desire to take action on the item and reinstate the Kill List. Deputy City Attorney Dov Lesel advised the Board on the conflict of interest with Commissioner Atake's status as a New Hope member.

The Commission Meeting was put into recess at 12:45 P.M.

The Commission Meeting reconvened at 1:00 P.M.

5. DISCUSSION ITEM

A. Status Report on Animal Transfer Program (Held from November 13, 2006)

Commissioner Khero questioned the disparities in the transfer numbers from September to November 2006. Captain Moriarty responded that the disparities were due to the opening of the new North Central facility. She added that the transfer and evidence memos had been manually entered in Chameleon in the past, and that some of that information had been lost. Chameleon Coordinator Kathy Mooney had worked to resolve the problem so that the transfers would no longer be recorded manually. Captain Moriarty indicated that now she would be able to print a daily report on the number of transfers taking place between the shelters, as well as a daily inventory of all animals.

E. Oral Report by the General Manager on Mobile Adoptions (Taken Out of Order)

The General Manager clarified that the Mobile Adoption Program had not been cancelled. Several of the low volume Petco events had been eliminated due to their low adoption numbers. As a result, staff had been charged with finding more high volume events in an attempt to increase the chances of getting animals adopted out. The General Manager indicated that most individuals coming into Petco already have pets and are coming mainly to purchase pet supplies. He mentioned that Erica Meadows would be meeting with staff and evaluating the entire Mobile Adoption Program.

Captain Moriarty gave a brief overview of the Mobile Adoption Program that began in 1994 following the Northridge Earthquake. At that time, the Department held two major adoption events per month, gathering

adoptable animals from all five of the shelters. During the other two weekends in the month, the Department had smaller, off-site and on-site events. Annual estimates of about 1,200 animals were being adopted. The success of the program was attributed to every shelter having its own Volunteer Coordinator.

The General Manager commented that in addition to getting the animals out of the shelters, the off-site mobile events provided opportunities for the Department to recruit new volunteers, raise donations, publicize the Department's message, and inform the public on issues such as the Lease Law and tethering.

Martin Waterman: Felt that location was the key to success. Areas with heavy foot traffic attract more people. The problem with Petco is that their events typically reach individuals who already have animals. Public parks such as Griffith Park are terrific locations. The challenge is finding people who manage high traffic areas and get them to sponsor animal adoption events.

Jane Garcia: Commented on the value of outreach that the mobile adoptions provide. People need to know about the services offered by the Department.

Anne Scharz: The mobile events would attract more people if there were a larger variety of animals to view. Requested that volunteers be included added in the decision making process in regards to the program.

Zsuzsa Blakely: One of the impositions used with the program is that they can only bring as many animals as there are volunteers. The key to attracting more people is bringing more animals for the public to look at.

B. Hearing Process Overview (Hold to January 8, 2007)

C. Discussion of Off Budget Funds – Explanation of Department Trust Funds:

Assistant General Manager Linda Barth gave a brief overview on the Department's four Trust Fund Accounts. The Veterinary Medical Trust Fund was designed primarily to capture payments and expend money for sterilization services. It is the only Trust Fund governed by the California Food and Agriculture Code. The Animal Sterilization Trust Fund was established to subsidize the surgery cost of sterilization and pay veterinarians. The Animal Welfare Trust Fund, unlike the previous two, could be used for anything from capital improvements to equipment purchases. Currently, the Department is looking to use the balance in this Trust Fund to cover for expenses not part of the construction process. The Spay and Neuter Trust Fund was established to pay for the spay/neuter van and additional sterilization services. Also, another account known as the Electronic Animal Identification Device Fund, not a Trust Fund, was created with the sole purpose to receive payments for and make purchases of microchips for animals.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Requests from Commissioners For Future Agenda Items

- Commissioner Atake requested for an update on the services of Ms. Erica Meadows.
- Commissioner Atake requested a discussion item on puppy placements.
- Commissioner Atake wanted a discussion item on medical record accuracy to be placed on the agenda for the January 8, 2007 Commission Meeting.
- Commissioner Atake wanted discussion item on temperament testing to be placed on the agenda for the January 8, 2007 Commission Meeting.

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- Commissioner Atake requested to have a discussion item on the Appeal Hearing Process to be placed on the agenda.
- Commissioner Atake requested to have a discussion item on the Do Not Adopt List, including the Department's policy and procedures.
- Commissioner Atake asked that a list be made of all the items requested by the Commissioners.
- Commissioner Riordan wanted to see a volunteer resolution put in place.
- Commissioner Riordan wanted to see if the Trust Fund could be used to provide vouchers for testing.
- Commissioner Riordan asked about the Department's authority in conducting investigations in public events that featured wildlife animals.
- Commissioner Riordan requested that a No Kill Plan be developed and placed on a future agenda.

Commissioner Riordan wanted to clarify that the Board had asked for the Resolution on Employee Safety to sign, but that they had not received it until recently.

Public Comments

Zsuzsa Blakely: Suggested that TNR be revisited. A program needs to be established to bring the animals in and have them sterilized before their release back into the environment.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Riordan motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 3-0. The Commission Meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.