

## MINUTES



BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
Monday November 17, 2008  
6:00 P.M.  
**HARBOR ANIMAL SHELTER**  
**957 North Gaffey Street**  
**San Pedro, California 90731**



---

Vacant, President  
Kathleen Riordan, Vice-President  
Tariq Khero  
Irene Ponce  
Archie J. Quincey, Jr.

### COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting called to order at 6:15 PM. Present were Commissioners Ponce, Quincey, and Riordan. Commissioner Khero joined the meeting at 6:23 PM.

Dolores Canizales, District Director CD 15, welcomed everyone to the Harbor District on behalf of Councilmember Janice Hahn.

Harbor Animal Care Center Manager, Cpt. Danny Pantoja, welcomed everyone to the Care Center and thanked the Pedro Pet Pals for the food and hospitality at this meeting.

Officer Jordan read an Annette M. King-Tucker poem entitled, "I am an Animal Rescuer."

#### 1. ORAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

General Manager Boks thanked Cpt. Pantoja, the staff and volunteers at the Harbor Animal Care Center, and Theresa Sardisco and the Pedro Pet Pals for all the great work they do for the animals at Harbor and for hosting tonight's meeting.

- **SPAY DAY LA**

LA Animal Services October 25th SPAY DAY LA ADOPTATHON event was a huge success. The event was the result of a partnership with Social Compassion, YogaFit, Animal Alliance, Coalition for Pets & Public Safety, and FOCAS-LA. This special event provided free spay/neuter services to more than 500 cats and dogs from every part of the city. The public/private partnership-sponsored event was in celebration and support of the City's landmark spay/neuter law that became enforceable on October 1, 2008.

LA Animal Services also held a pet Adopt-a-thon at all six City Animal Care Centers offering more than a 60% savings off regular adoption fees. These low adoption fees included spay/neuter surgery, microchip, vaccinations, and in the case of dogs a license. The event resulted in 250 pet adoptions and more than 500 spay/neuter surgeries. Some surgeries were scheduled to be performed at a later date.

The spay/neuter surgeries were done thanks to the participation of many local private veterinarians, the Amanda Foundation, the Sam Simon Foundation, the Clinico Foundation, and the FixNation Foundation. The adoptions were the result of the efforts of an extraordinary group of volunteers and employees.

- **All American Adopt-A-Pet Extravaganza!**

This event took place at the East Valley Animal Care Center on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup> and resulted in a 176% increase in adoptions compared to the same day last year. Last year, 25 pets were adopted (7 cats and 17 dogs). This year 69 pets were adopted (44 dogs 25 cats). This event was a partnership with the Found Animals Foundation.

- **Bulletin Board**

On October 16, 2008, the Department launched a new communication tool for staff - an Intranet Bulletin Board. When any staff member clicks on the Internet Explorer Browser icon, the first thing that appears is the Department Bulletin Board. After reading any messages that may pertain to the person logging in, he/she can exit to the Department's Intranet web page. The Bulletin Board was created to give supervisors, managers, and other key employees a tool that will enable them to communicate with all employees at any or all locations.

- **Fiscal Year 2009 – 2010 Budget**

The City continues to project declining revenues in the current fiscal year and for the upcoming fiscal year. The Mayor is requesting Departments to tighten their belts even more, with reminders that employees can take unpaid furlough days, cutback in vehicle use and overtime, review existing contracts, continue a hold on most hiring, etc. The Department met with the CAO and Mayor's staff regarding the upcoming 2009-2010 budget and explained that any new cuts would require layoffs. We further explained that the recent threat to layoff 31 employees was a serious blow that has damaged morale and should never have happened since funding was found to maintain all of the positions. This should not be repeated. No additional officers or filling of vacancies can be expected in the short term, despite the increased workload resulting from the new spay/neuter ordinance.

- **Fires**

The Department's Emergency Response Coordinator/Manager, Officer Chris Carroll, and the General Manager attended the City's Annual Emergency Response Conference in Lake Arrowhead following the Sesnon/Marek fires.

During the Sesnon/Marek fires, approximately 350 horses and 154 small animals (primarily dogs and cats) were evacuated by staff. All small animals were housed and cared for at our West Valley and North East Animal Care Centers. Horses were taken to several stables, including Pierce College, Hansen Dam, and LA Equestrian Center. A debriefing meeting was held with staff to gather feedback and recommendations to further improve our response and evacuation processes.

The Sayre fire soon broke out and burned over 2,600 acres, forcing the evacuation of over 10,000 people and over 300 pets (117 of which were horses). The magnitude of the damage caused by the fires led the Mayor to declare a state of local emergency and the Department continues to cooperate with the City's Emergency Operations Organization, LAFD, and LAPD. The Mayor gave a gracious "call out" to the Department's commitment and expertise to disaster response at a live news conference that was covered nationally.

- **Golden Guardian**

The Department participated in The Great Shake Out Earthquake Preparedness Drill on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. A complete pet evacuation center was erected at Balboa Park with portable kennels and our mobile kennel on site. More than 25 employees took part in the drill, providing the Department with an excellent training opportunity to further improve our disaster response capabilities.

**Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalServices.com](http://www.LAAnimalServices.com)**

- **Overcrowding**

AGM Davis is working with Center Managers on Weekly Population Assessment to actively manage pet population through increased intra-Center transfers, adoptions and adoption events, Heart to Heart meetings, and other strategies. Their combined efforts have resulted in the abatement of the overcrowding situation in spite of a 29% increase in intakes in October (3897/5019). A 35% increase in adoptions helped (1408/1906) mitigate a greater euthanasia rate (44% - 1495/2164) which could have been much worse.

- **Medical**

Admin staff is working with the medical team to decrease amount of AFE expenditures. This may include having one of our vets work a later shift each day. This would allow for staff at other centers to be able to transport animals to the center where the vet is working on a particular night.

The Department is working with our medical team to increase our ability to do in-house spay/neuters, starting with the "abnormal" cases (i.e. cryptorchids, hernias, pregnant, etc.). This would help to make these animals more adoptable as the potential owner would not have to pay for an additional surgery. The Goals include spaying/neutering some normal cases as well, especially male cats and male dogs.

Dr. Hockman is performing a significant number of spay/neuter surgeries at our West Valley Animal Care Center. She will continue to meet weekly with staff to select cats and dogs and perform surgeries as time and staff is available.

Dr. Prupas is training Center Managers on how to identify shelter diseases, mitigate transmission, and implement prevention protocols. He also met with Pierce College to discuss having RVT students spend 8 hours at a center during their senior year. Dr. Prupas is scheduling a presentation to the students regarding shelter medicine.

The Department met with County Veterinarians to discuss emergency response. In conjunction with the County, the West LA Animal Care Center is going to begin a surveillance program designed to help the County get earlier warning of any problems in the air, food or water, as animals are generally affected faster than humans.

Commissioner Riordan thanked the staff for their efforts during both the Sesnon/Marek and Sayre fires.

#### Public Comment

Judy Cairns- Thanked everyone who worked on Spay Day LA. She stated that Focus LA still has not reimbursed the Pedro Pet Pals for the food purchased for the event.

Elizabeth Mercado- Stated that Focus LA took \$500 worth of donations given by Centinela Feed & Pet Supplies that had been designated for the Harbor Animal Care Center.

## **2. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- A. Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes for August 11, August 25, and September 22, 2008.

Commissioner Khero made a motion to approve the minutes for August 11, 2008.  
Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Quicey made a motion to approve the minutes for August 25, 2008.  
Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Ponce made a motion to approve the minutes for September 22, 2008.  
Commissioner Riordan seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

**B. Oral Report by the Commission on Meetings and Events attended.**

Commissioner Ponce attended a Pet Symposium and helped the North Central Animal Care Center raise funds for a new commercial washer. She also met with Cpt. Figueroa at North Central.

Commissioner Riordan attended a party for Proposition 2.

Commissioner Quincey met with Cpt. Dedeaux at the West LA Animal Care Center.

Commissioner Khero had nothing to report.

**C. 2009 Commission Meeting Schedule**

Commissioner Ponce made a motion to approve the 2009 Commission Meeting Schedule.  
Commissioner Khero seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

**5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION**

**A. Request for Proposals for the Operation of a Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic**

**That the Board direct Staff to release a Request for Proposals (RFP), substantially in the form as on file, for the operation of a Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic, subject to approval of the City Attorney as to form.**

AGM Barth gave an overview of the RFP process for the Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic. She explained that the City had a previous contract that expired in August, 2008 with the Sam Simon Foundation and the Amanda Foundation (3-year contract: Sam Simon Foundation for 2 years and Amanda Foundation for 1 year.) Recently, the Controller did an audit of the Department's Spay/Neuter programs to determine whether the mobile spay neuter clinics or the coupons were more effective. Last year, the Mayor, CAO and City Council approved cutting money from the Department's spay/neuter funds in order to help balance the City's budget and therefore, it was not prudent to issue an RFP for a mobile spay/neuter contract.

In August, it appeared that the Amanda Foundation was the sole source in the City for a spay/neuter van. Since that time, more than one organization has expressed interest in bidding on the RFP to perform mobile spay/neuter services for the City. The contract would be written for \$500,000 for 3 years contingent on how much money the City has each year of the contract. While the City's future funding situation is unknown at this time, the Department wants to identify a mobile spay/neuter contractor. This would be a personal services contract and the

contractor would own and operate their own spay/neuter van and ask the Department for reimbursement of funds for each animal altered.

#### Public Comment

Teri Austin- Amanda Foundation, she would like the contract to be expedited. She stated that the Controller's report did show that the van targets the neediest neighborhoods. She also is concerned that another vendor would not have the staffing in 6 mo. to be fully operational.

Phyllis Daugharty- She expressed her support for the Amanda Foundation and does not think she should lose the contract.

Pam Wilkinson- She believes that the mobile spay/neuter clinic contracts should be for 3 years and asked the Commission to find funding for 2 mobile spay/neuter clinics.

Commissioner Quincey made a motion to direct Staff to release a Request for Proposals (RFP), substantially in the form as on file, for the operation of a Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinic, subject to approval of the City Attorney as to form. Commissioner Khero seconded the motion.

Commissioner Ponce requested additional discussion on the matter.

AGM Barth explained that both the Amanda Foundation and Sam Simon Foundation are currently performing surgeries and are being reimbursed \$70 per animal. Sixty to 70 vets in the City also are doing surgeries on an as-needed basis and we can continue this way. She further explained that we can not offer a contract at this time because more than one person/group is interested in bidding on the RFP. A contract would allow for a financial commitment for 1 year. Without a contract, the vendors are paid on a month-to-month basis. With or without an RFP and contract, there may not be enough money to fund all 3 years proposed.

Commissioner Riordan asked what was the best option and AGM Barth stated that the cleanest option is to issue the RFP.

The Commission voted and the motion passed 4-0.

#### **B. Six-Month Agreement for a Pet Health Insurance Sponsorship Agreement**

**That the Board award a six-month Agreement, with five additional six-month renewals, to Pets Best Insurance Company for a Pet Health Insurance Sponsorship, and direct Staff to transmit the proposed Agreement to the Office of the City Attorney for approval as to form, and authorize the General Manager of the Department of Animal Services to execute the subject Agreement upon receipt of necessary approvals.**

AGM Barth reminded the Board that in the spring they approved the idea to issue Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to allow the Department to select potential sponsors. The first RFQ was for pet health insurance in exchange for a donation and to add value to adoptions and special events. There were two bidders, Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) and Pet's Best. The panel reviewed the proposals submitted and Pet's Best scored the highest.

Pet's Best will provide a Safety Net Feature and pet training for adopted pets, as well as training for staff. Overall, the monetary value to the Department is not high (as low as \$1000) and some

pre-existing conditions may not be covered. Adopters who take advantage of the discounted insurance also have the option to donate the amount of the discount to the Department. The agreement would be for 6 months and renewed in 6 month increments. Although invited, VPI declined to make a presentation before the Commission.

Commissioner Riordan expressed her concern about the agreement and a discussion ensued.

Susan Tripp from Positive Pet Parenting Saves Lives made a presentation about the educational aspect of the Pet's Best proposal.

Commissioner Khero expressed his openness to the idea and asked for clarification on potential liability issues.

City Attorney Lesel stated that he would discuss the matter with the Risk Analyst.

#### Public Comment

Dr. Jack Stephens- Pet's Best Insurance. Stated that the program is about adding value to the pet adoptions and that the program also would be available to pets already owned by the adopter. He clarified that the adopter must activate the insurance with a code they receive in order for Pet's Best to have access to their adoption information.

Dr. Rolan Tripp- Commented on the concern raised that informing the adopter about pet insurance would add to adoption processing times.

Phyllis Daugharty- Requested a formal opinion for the City Attorney and a report from the Attorney General regarding the legality of this agreement.

Judy Cairns- Stated that she thinks the agreement is a bad idea.

Teri Austin-Concerned that almost all shelter animals have pre-existing conditions and it is difficult to determine where the animal picked up the disease.

Pam Wilkinson- She believes that \$15 received from each policy should go to the Spay/Neuter Trust Fund and she believes that the behavioral training offered would be a plus for adopters and staff.

Commissioner Riordan further expressed her concerns about the legality of the agreement and requested a cost benefit analysis from the CAO and a report about potential liability issues from the City Attorney.

Commissioner Khero also expressed his interest in the City Attorney's opinion on the matter. He likes the idea of exploring public/private partnerships in these economic times and looking at creative ways to do something new. He is interested in trying the program as a pilot program on a 6 month basis.

Commissioner Riordan made a motion to hold the item pending the City Attorney's analysis and a cost benefit analysis from the CAO. Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0

**C. Requests for Recognition for Dog and Cat Registries and Associations, Third Round That the Board review and approve the applications for dog and cat registries or associations.**

The third round of recognition for dog and cat registries and associations was presented and asked to be approved. The Department received one application from The Cat Fanciers' Association, which met all of the requested criteria.

Commissioner Ponce made a motion to approve the application for The Cat Fanciers' Association. Commissioner Khero seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

**6. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A. Oral update on the New Hope Organizations which have or have not submitted revised paperwork as required

AGM Barth informed the Commission that the Administrative staff have notified all of our New Hope Partners by email and phone of the requirement to resubmit their updated New Hope paperwork in order to remain active. We have given the groups more than 2 months of extensions past the deadline to submit their paperwork or to contact the Department. There are still several groups who have not complied. These groups will be suspended until they submit their paperwork and not allowed to adopt under the New Hope program.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Teri Austin- Commented on the spay/neuter agenda item. Complained that the S/N coupons are not in Spanish and that the coupon program should be examined as to where the coupons are being distributed.

Phyllis Daugharty- Commented on the underwriters for Pet's Best Insurance.

Judy Cairns- She is concerned about the feral cat issue in the Harbor area and that people are dumping cats.

Pam Wilkinson- Commented that the S/N Coupon program is not as effective as the mobile clinics and the shelter S/N clinics because it does not factor in added costs such as vaccines.

Florence Yates- She gave her volunteer wish list: pre-sterilization of available animals to help get more animals adopted, training for volunteers on how to teach adopters how to introduce a new pet to their existing pets and training for volunteers on how to deal with the public. Asked if E-training can be worked into shelter adoptions independently of an insurance purchase program.

Theresa Sardisco- Suggested that a pet insurance representative have space to sell insurance at the shelters instead of staff providing the quotes at the time of adoption. Concerned about New Hope Coordinator at Harbor.

Karen Leyva- Questioned why there are no mobile adoptions in the Harbor area. Stated that the volunteer coordinator at the Harbor Animal Care Center needs training.

## **8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioner Ponce commented that staff recognitions should be done at the individual shelters with their Captain instead of at the Commission meetings.

Commissioner Riordan asked for a report on the underwriters and a SEC allegation against Pet's Best insurance. She also asked for a copy of the House is Not a Home packet and a copy of the licensing report and notification of when it is being presented to the City Council.

Commissioner Khero suggested that the Board continue to work of the list of impending agenda items.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Riordan made a motion to adjourn in memory of Cpt. Pantoja's father, Ignatio Pantoja. Commissioner Ponce seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0. Meeting ended at 9 pm

Next Commission Meeting is scheduled for 10:00 A.M., December 15, 2008, Los Angeles City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Room 1060, Los Angeles, California 90012