MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2004
10:00 AM

BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES
COMMISSION ROOM
12th Floor
419 S. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Commissioners: Paul Jolly, President
Ken Metz
Kathleen Riordan, Vice-President
Alex Rubalcava

Members of the public are invited to address the Board of Animal Services Commissioners on any item on the agenda prior to action by the Board on that specific item. Members of the public may also address the Board on any matter within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. The Board will entertain such comments during the Public Comment Period. Public comment will be limited to (1) minute per individual for each item addressed and (3) three minutes on any item during the public comment portion of the meeting, unless the limitation is waived by the President of the Board.

Members of the public who wish to address the Board must complete a Speaker card and submit it to the Board Secretary prior to final consideration of the matter.

It is requested that individuals who require the services of a translator contact the Board Secretary no later than the day preceding the meeting. Whenever possible, a translator will be provided. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities.

Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend.

Si require servicios de traduccion, favor de notificar la oficina con 24 horas por anticipado.

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING, 10:00 A.M.
Commissioner Riordan convened the meeting at 10:21 AM. Members present were Commissioners K. Metz, K. Riordan, and A. Rubalcava.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
   A. Feed Hoppers: Assistant General Manager, Regina Adams reported that technicians at each shelter will not put the dog feed hoppers out until feeding time. Adams will make sure the hoppers are removed until feeding time. General Manager, Jerry Greenwalt reported that he would notify Commissioner Rubalcava when this situation has been resolved.
   B. Shelter Care Pet Insurance: Greenwalt reported that that the Department has requested 10,000 leaflets to be placed in our Adoption Packages. The City Attorney is still preparing the disclaimer
language. Commissioner Riordan confirmed that Department staff would let people know that the service is available. Riordan requested cost information about the signs and volunteered to pay for them.

**Public Comment:**
1. **Phyllis Daugherty, Animal Issues Movement:** Asked if the Department is still using the new Iams in the adoption packages?
2. **Zsuzsa Blakely:** Stressed that the feed hoppers need to be removed when the dogs are not feeding. Feels Department staff at South Los Angeles can make signs using Department computers. Feels that if disclaimer language is being posted, then signs should also be made to promote the availability of the service.
3. **Pamelyn Ferdin, Concerned Citizen:** Based on the Department’s budget, Ferdin feels there is no need to question the existence of funding for signs to promote the Shelter Care service in both Spanish and English. Stressed that the feed hoppers should be removed and that screens only allow air and rain to get into the food.
4. **Mary Catalano:** Feels that dog feeders should be removed when the animals are not feeding because they cause dogfights and encourage kids to feed the animals. Feels that nursing mothers should have constant access to food.
5. **Jo Ann Wagner:** Requested that the feed hoppers be removed. Stated that some rescuers have a special relationship with pound personnel. Alleges that she has been vilified and her name has been placed on these rescuers’ website accusing her of throwing food into the kennels, causing dogfights, getting animals placed in isolation, and euthanized.

**2. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. **Approval of Minutes for the meeting of February 9, 2004** – Commissioner Metz moved to approve the minutes for the meeting on February 9, 2004. Commissioner Rubalcava seconded the motion. The minutes for the meeting of February 9, 2004 were approved by a 3:0 vote.

B. **Approval of Minutes for the meeting of February 23, 2004** – Commissioner Metz moved to approve the minutes for the meeting on February 23, 2004. Commissioner Rubalcava seconded the motion. The minutes for the meeting of February 23, 2004 were approved by a 3:0 vote.

C. **Meetings/Events Attended** – None to report.

D. **Consideration of Future Agenda Items** – Commissioner Rubalcava requested that Customer Service Training be discussed at the April 12, 2004 Commission Meeting. Rubalcava requested that Disease Notification Procedures be included in the April 12th discussion.

**Public Comment:**
1. **Zsuzsa Blakely:** Referencing the $96 Licensing Fee Issue, Blakely stated that there is nothing for the Department to work on. Feels the Department’s current policy is illegal. Feels people are demanding that the item appear on the agenda for the next meeting.
2. **Mary Catalano:** Stated that dogs are dying. Expressed her disagreement with the Department’s delay in rendering a report on the $96 Licensing Fee issue.
3. **Scott Sorrentino, Animal Avengers:** Requested an explanation of the protocol used in the hiring of the new Department General Manager. Requested that the Commission address an agenda item relative to the extent to which the Commission will be able to influence the search committee appointing the next General Manager.
4. **Daniel Guss, STAND Foundation:** Concurs with the statements made by Scott Sorentino. Feels it is imperative to have the humane community’s input in the selection and appointment of the
new General Manager. Feels this will make for better relations between the Department, the Commission and the humane community.

3. **REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS**

**GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION**

A. **Board Report: Attacks on Service Animals — Penal Code Infraction:** Greenwalt requested that the matter be received and filed. Commissioner Metz feels that owners of pets who attack service animals and their handlers must be held accountable, comply with leash laws, and keep their pets under control. Metz asked where the jurisdiction lies and how can the Department speed up and intensify the penalty process? Metz explained that legislation in New York places much more emphasis on holding animal owners responsible for the actions and harm caused by their pets during such incidents. Greenwalt will contact New York Animal Care and Control and see how the Department can implement stronger enforcement.

**Public Comment:**
1. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Stated that any support of SB 1801 has time limits. Recommended that the Department pay attention to deadlines relative to this matter.
2. **Zsuzsa Blakely:** Suggested that the Commission keep in mind that if an animal is accused of attacking another dog, it will be euthanized. Feels it is not safe to get the Department involved in this matter.

Commissioner Metz moved to table the matter until May 10, 2004 so that the Department can look at SB 1801, speak with New York Animal Care and Control, and the City’s Department on Disability. Rubalcava seconded the motion. The motion to table the matter was approved by a 3:0 vote.

B. **Board Report: Revised Auction Procedures:** Assistant General Manager, Regina Adams, reported that the current auction procedure overemphasizes profit and devalues animal placement. Adams recommended that a new lottery system be implemented at each shelter to move toward establishing a policy of fairness and to help more animals find a home.

Commissioner Riordan asked if the Department would be able to perform “home checks” on people who we suspect are purchasing animals for inhumane purposes. Greenwalt stated that the Department does not have sufficient staff to carry out such a task. Commissioner Metz expressed concern that the auction process can be used as a legal way to discriminate. Metz suggested that a reference check be made for those suspected of adopting the animal for inhumane purposes. Adams stated that if the Department had the resources to perform such checks, it should be done for all of the animals.

**Public Comment:**
1. **Scott Sorrentino, Animal Avengers:** Suggested that the Department use a short application to determine who can adopt an animal. Recommended that the application establish basic criteria for suitability and not be based on who has the biggest checkbook.
2. **Zsuzsa Blakely:** Stated that puppies and small dogs are the biggest sellers at Department auctions. Feels that large mixed breed animals should also be promoted at the auctions.

Please join us at our website: [www.LAAnimalservices.com](http://www.LAAnimalservices.com)
Feels the Department can do “home checks” because Animal Control Officers do it all the time.

3. **Stephanie Anderson:** Feels screening auction participants is the real solution. Supports the auction process because it provides some chance of protecting the animal.

4. **Daniel Guss:** Works with an organization that provides pets for the homeless. Feels income should not be the deciding factor as to the quality of care that the dog is going to get.

5. **Phyllis Daugherty:** Believes State law prohibits the Department’s recommendation to implement the lottery system. Feels the lottery system does not provide protection for the animal. Supports the auction system and feels it encourages responsible people to come in and adopt animals. Feels unfair auction procedures discourage good people from coming into the shelter and adopting animals.

6. **Jo Ann Wagner:** Is aware that the money that is generated at the auctions goes to the City and not the Department. Feels that the money that the Department gets for a dog or cat should go back to the Department.

7. **Pamelyn Ferdin:** Feels the term “auction” hearkens back to the days when other beings were placed on the auction block because they looked a certain way. Feels the auction process is an archaic system. Does not feel race or income should be used to determine how well an animal would be cared for.

8. **Mary Catalano:** Complained that Department staff never tells people who lose in the auctions that there are other animals available for adoption in the shelter.

Commissioner Riordan asked how many rescue groups engage in the auction process.

Commissioner Rubalcava requested that the Department provide a breakdown of the following information:

- The % of animals that are adopted by the auction process today
- The breeds involved to see if there is a preponderance of any one breed
- The age of the dogs being auctioned
- The proportion of auction participants that are members of the public versus those that are bidding rescuers
- The average premium paid for a dog or cat sold at auction above the base price as well as the outlier cases

Commissioner Rubalcava motioned to table the matter until this additional information can be made available. Metz seconded the motion. The motion to table the matter was approved by a 3:0 vote.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

A. **Ron Lederkramer:** Shared an experience he had at the South Los Angeles shelter. Mr. Lederkramer adopted a dog that had parvo. He was not informed that the animal could have been tested. Asked why are dogs not tested for parvo before they are released? Asked why aren’t there people and posters in the shelter informing the public about parvo?

B. **Christi Metropole, Cat Alliance:** Requested that the Commission discuss the TNR issue as soon as possible. Reported that she will email Greenwalt and Adams bullet points for caring for feral cats.

C. **Michelle Doram, The Dog House Daycare:** Stated that Dog Daycare Centers thrive where

**Please join us at our website:** [www.LAAnimalservices.com](http://www.LAAnimalservices.com)
kennels cannot be placed. Informed the Board that no meeting has taken place to date to address this matter further with the agencies impacted by the Board’s previous decision.

D. Phyllis Daugherty, Animal Issues Movement: Reported that her agency was able to get the longest conviction for dog fighting in New York.

E. Daniel Guss, The STAND Foundation: Discussed allegations of animal cruelty, crime, and neglect in the shelters. Alleges that select staff members are bringing criminal elements into the Department.

F. Michelle Kelly: Raised issue with the Department’s handling of exotic pets. Feels Department staff and volunteers must educate the public on how to care for exotic pets. Asked if the Department would place a moratorium on rabbit adoptions during the Easter Holiday impulse purchase period.

G. Stephanie Anderson: Requested that the Department stop adopting and selling rabbits at least 1 or 2 weeks before Easter. Offered to provide reading materials on rabbit care. The materials can be placed in the rabbit adoption packages, they will educate the public, and discourage impulse purchasing.

H. Jo Ann Wagner: Reported that there is a cult of intimidation at the shelters. Feels that staff is tailing her in the shelters and are looking for a reason to have her removed from the facilities.

I. Vijay: Feels the use of auctions is archaic and equated to slavery. Stated that there must be a more viable solution. Requested more positive dialogue with the Commission and the public.

J. Scott Sorentino: Suggested that the Department set up a meeting with the City Attorney to see why it is taking so much time to receive written responses. Feels the best solution to the auction issue is to create a short application that is not discriminating. Does not feel the lottery system is the answer. Regarding the Low Kill Initiative, feels the humane community needs to have more dialogue and input in the matter. Offered to participate in the development of the program.

K. Mary Catalano: Reported that ShelterCare Pet Insurance leaflets are not in the shelters yet. Requested that staff be trained to encourage people to adopt other animals. Feels that owners who turn in their animals should not be allowed to redeem their pets.

L. Zsuzsa Blakely: Stated that most feral cats being caught are not feral, just scared. Opposes the placement of cats in isolation. Feels puppies are impulse purchase items in the shelters. Asked Commission Rubalcava to add: how many auctioned dogs return back to the shelter to be euthanized. Stated that the parvo test is offered at the South LA shelter for $15. Stated that vaccinations are causing puppies to die.

5. ADJOURNMENT
Commissioner Riordan adjourned the meeting at 12:20 PM.