Commissioner Riordan called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Members present were Commissioners E. Brunson, T. Khero, and K. Riordan. Commissioner A. Rubalcava was absent.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

General Manager, Sharon Morris, reported as follows:

A. General Manager Sharon Morris reported on the number of Complaints and Complements received by the Department. There were 21 complaints from all of the Shelters during the period April through June 2004. During the same period there were a total of 65 compliments. All of the items have been resolved. Most of the complaints dealt with customer service. The Department is looking toward providing additional customer service training.

B. The General Manager reported on the Request For Proposal (RFP) sent out by the Department for the new Mobile Spay and Neuter Van (Spaymobile). The RFP received only one response. The Department believes it can do better so it is taking a look at the RFP. Furthermore the Department will re-issue the RFP and advertise in different publications.

C. The General Manager discussed the statistics for the Credit Card Program. She announced that the program was doing really well. The Department believes that the number of adoptions will increase through the use of credit cards and the problem of bad checks will be reduced.

D. Five items listed on the Action Item Status Report are scheduled to be heard by the Public Safety Committee today, August 9, 2004. The items are Rabbit Fee Increase, Pocket Pet Fee Increase, Animal Welfare Trust Fund Update, Animal Sterilization Fund Status Report and Care and Maintenance of Companion Animals. The increase in the donation level that can be accepted by the General Manager has passed the Budget and Finance Committee and is scheduled to be heard by the full City Council at a yet un-specified date.
2. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. The City Attorney’s Office is reviewing the minutes of the Meeting of July 26, 2004 pursuant to the case of Parisi v. City of Los Angeles.

B. Meetings/Events Attended: There were no events or meetings attended.

C. Consideration of Future Agenda Items: The written report for the Auction Policy will be moved to the meeting of the August 23, 2004. Commissioner Riordan requested a report on the number of abuse cases handled, filed, etc. Commissioner Brunson agreed. The General Manager indicated the Department will begin to provide this.

3. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. The General Manager introduced the new Volunteer Coordinator Heidi Heubner. Ms. Heubner indicated that she was excited to be here and had a lot of new ideas. Commissioner Brunson questioned the number of Volunteers working with the Department. The General manager indicated that there were 400 on the books but not all were active. Aram Samasi indicated there were about 500 volunteers but only 100 were active.

B. An update on the License Canvassing Program was presented by Sr. Administrative Analyst II Agnes Ko. Ms. Ko reported on the history of the program, the number of employees assigned, training and lessons learned during the first months of the program. In Fiscal Year 04-05 the Department has authority for 3 supervisors and 15 canvassers. Commissioner Brunson questioned the effect of 15 canvassers would have in canvassing the entire City. Jackie David reported on the effect the dog license insert in the DWP bill had on licensing. A discussion on the different methods for renewing dog licenses and the various methods used to renew licenses took place. The general Manager explained that licensing is about rabies control and not revenue. The senior and disabled Licenses being issued by the canvassers have no revenue, but they do license dogs. In response to a question from Commissioner Brunson regarding where residents can go to license their dogs, Ms. Ko reported that they could go to a shelter, veterinarian offices provide licensing forms and by mail.

Public Comment

Phyllis Daugherty, Animal Issue Movements – Commented on the requirement to have a valid rabies certificate to maintain a current license. Also suggested a license system to register puppies under 4 months of age.

Scott Sorrentino, Rescue and Humane Alliance – Agreed with Ms. Daugherty regarding the registering puppies under 4 month of age. He also recommended that the canvassers stress the need to alter pets while licensing the animal.

Bobby Dorafshar, New Lease on Life – Recommended the greater use of volunteers to assist in the licensing of dogs. Also commented on the charge of $100 to rescue groups. Asked about placing people on the “task force’ who are actually doing rescuing and adoptions.

Zsuzsa Blakely – Licensing is just a money making process unless the need to spay and neuter is discussed. Mentioned that anyone who believes that you can spay and neuter your way to a no kill

Please join us at our website: www.LAAnimalservices.com
policy is mistaken. The pound must stop the killings.

D. Update: LAAS STATS. Assistant General Manager Regina Adams reported on a new Department program where management staff and shelter managers meet to discuss goals that will make shelters more accountable. Oftentimes policies are consistent at all shelters. Other times policies work better at one shelter and not another. The meetings would evaluate ways that the success of one shelter may be transferred to another shelter. The initial thought is for the G.M and A.G.M. and possibly the Director of Field Operations will meet with the shelter manager to inform them as to their responsibilities. In addition the Commission will receive periodic updates as to the progress of the meetings.

Public Comment

Scott Sorrentino, Rescue and Humane Alliance – Agreed with the idea. Suggested the shelters work with the rescue groups that do rescue. Evaluations of shelters should include groups that are doing rescue at the particular shelters. District managers should identify the groups they work with and meet with them individually or in a group.

E. Memo: Follow-up on Attacks on Guide Dogs: The General Manager reported on Shirley Manning. Ms Manning reported that her guide dog had been attacked and she had filed reports and had not received an administrative hearing. A search of the files found no record of a report being filed. It is recommended that the Department be extremely sensitive to this sort of report and await the passage of AB 1801.

F. Non-Agenda Item: Reconsideration of Motion in the Case of Parisi v. Los Angeles. City Attorney Frank Orozco recommended that the Commission reconsider its decision in the case of Parisi v. the City of Los Angeles. Mr. Orozco indicated that under the Brown Act, the Commission could reconsider a decision from a previous meeting. Mr. Orozco indicated that there was too much weight given to the audiotape and not enough consideration given to the witnesses who testified on behalf of the dog owner. Commissioner Khero made a motion to modify the Commission’s decision of July 26, 2004 and was seconded by Commissioner Brunson. Commissioner Khero read the following statement into the record:

“I now move to modify the General Manager’s Decision dated October 9, 2003. I move to delete the condition number two that the dog wear an anti-barking collar whenever maintained outdoors.

This motion is based on the Board’s review of the evidence. We have come to the conclusion that the General Manager gave too much weight to the audio tape that was presented by the complaining party and that the General Manager did not give enough consideration to the witnesses who testified on behalf of the dog owner. These witnesses indicated that the dog barking was not that frequent and they were not bothered by it. In view of this, the Board moves to modify the General Manager’s decision of October 9, 2003 to delete condition number two that the dog wear an anti-barking collar.

The Commission voted 3-0 to modify the General Manager’s decision of October 9, 2003.
GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

E. Board Report: Second Quarter Commission Meeting Schedule. The Board Discussed the meeting schedule for the second quarter. Council District 2 requests an offsite meeting on Nov 8, 2004 to discuss equine issues has bee requested by the Councilmember. The Columbus Day Holiday falls on the meeting day of October 11, 2004. Commissioner Brunson proposed a motion that the meeting of October 11 be moved to October 12. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and passed 3-0. A Second Motion by Commissioner Khero proposed that the Meeting of December 27, 2004 be cancelled due to the holiday season. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Brunson and passed 3-0.

F. Board Report: Auction Policy. Assistant General Manager Regina Adams reported on the Auction Policy. A written report will be presented at the next meeting. The Department is looking at the actual process and policy. When more than one person wants to adopt the Department holds an auction. Our auctions are not always held in the same manner. The Department is looking for a more consistent way to hold the auctions. A discussion on the various auction recommendations occurred. The proposed auction policy was clarified for the Commission members. The AGM reported the Income from auctions is approximately $100,000 per year.

Public Comment

Scott Sorrentino, Rescue and Humane Alliance – Spoke for Alliance and feel that auctions are wrong. He said that an auction places the animal in the category of property. Further the process is discriminatory in that it does not allow low-income persons from participating in the process. Request the Commission go for a non-auction policy.

Zsuzsa Blakely – Objected to animals being property. Animals are property by law and that is why they can be killed. Also questioned the Department giving weight to certain people who want special type of animal.

Bobby Dorafshar, New Lease on Life – Really a hard decision to make. Personally likes the idea of auction. Suggested people be able to place their name on a list as first right, second right etc.

G. Board Report: Wildlife Rehabber Policy Proposal II. Lt. Wendell Bowers and Officer Troy Boswell discussed the current status of the wildlife program. Lt. Bowers read the points into the record. Discussion regarding the different types of wildlife and the problems associated with each occurred. Problems with coyotes, opossums and raccoons were discussed. Different types of traps and cages, what to do with wildlife and educational opportunities were discussed. The item was held over to the next meeting.

Public Comment

Mary Cummings, Animal Advocates - Wants additional time for individual rescue groups to pick up the animals. Also, commented on trapping law that states people who trap wildlife must notify persons living within 300 feet.

Zsuzsa Blakely – Suggested a group of volunteers should be available to get wildlife from the shelters and hold them until the rescue groups could retrieve them from the shelter.
4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - (Comments from the public on items of public interest within the Board’s subject matter jurisdiction.)

Barbara Rogoff and Cindy Paul – Spoke on the Three Dog Bakery adoption effort. Objected to the adoption event being cancelled. Because of the success of the adoption effort, they have been offered a site at a new Three Dog Bakery in Sherman Oaks.

Scott Sorrentino, Rescue and Humane Alliance – Encouraged regarding the new ideas he has herd in the last couple of months. We are all looking to accomplish the same thing and the different volunteers agree on many issues. Rescue organizations are only here to save animals lives.

Joyce Forest, President H.E.L.P. – Requested a reversal of her suspension as a volunteer. Commented on the number of outstanding awards she had received over the years and the accomplishments she was responsible for over the years. Stated her case for reinstatement as a volunteer.

Zsuzsa Blakely – General comments on volunteer rules. Please pay attention to the volunteer program

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjoined at 11:50 a.m.