Commission President Riordan called the Commission meeting to order at 10:10 A.M. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Atake, Brown, and Knaan. Commissioner Khero was absent.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

The General Manager was pleased with the positive feedback he received from the February 9 meeting at the Beverly Garland Hotel. He reported on what he and the Department have done during the past thirty days.

- General Manager attended a press conference with Council Member Eric Garcetti to accept a $5000 donation from Ralph’s and to promote the Sam Simon Foundation.
- General Manager attended a press conference with comedian Kevin Nealon to promote shelter adoptions with 1-800-SAV-A-PET.
- The committee of Commissioner Atake, Laura Beth Heisen, Scott Sorrentino and others had worked with the Department on the development of the Big Fix Program.
- Volunteer Mary Cummins was working to redesign the Department’s website to make it more intuitive and user-friendly.
- A Senior 4 Seniors Program would be held on Valentine’s Day to help senior citizens adopt animals. The program would include free spay/neuter, license, microchip, and vaccination.
- Employees attended the Animal Care Conference in Pasadena, CA on February 13.
- The Department was continuing to work with the City Attorney’s Office to meet the Budget needs and staffing increases for the new shelters. The Department is filling all vacant positions to have properly trained staff available when the new shelters begin operating later in the year.
- City Council would begin featuring a “Pet of the Week” at the opening of their meetings at the City Council Chambers to be adopted by those in attendance.
- The Kennel Card issue was resolved and the new training procedures for the staff have been fully implemented.
- The three winners of the Plus 1 Minus 1 Program would be awarded with plaques. The awards recognized the shelters that had the largest increase in adoptions, the greatest decrease in euthanasia, and the greatest increase in placements with the New Hope partners.

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Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty:  Asked about how the house inspections would be conducted for the Senior 4 Seniors Program.  Also asked how property owners would handle situations in which the seniors passed away.

2.  OLD BUSINESS

A. Board Report: Increase in the Number of Cats Allowed

The fiscal impact of the increase in the number of cats allowed would be a decrease in costs to the City in providing care for the cats at the shelters, as well as an increase in revenue.  The increase addresses the hoarding issue of cat owners, who in the past have concealed the number of cats they had on their property in trying to meet the legal limit.  Responsible cat owners would no longer have to hide their cats.  Commissioners Knaan and Riordan suggested that the Board Report include mention of the mechanism in place for inspections and the penalties that would be assessed if violations occurred.  Additions and rewording to requirements #3, #5, and #8 would also be needed.

Commissioner Brown read the following letter from Council Member Dennis P. Zine:  (Letter attached)

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty:  Not a good plan for the City of Los Angeles because there is no die-out period.  There is no way to enforce the ordinance or ensure that the cats are spayed and neutered.

Zsuzsa Blakely:  Thanked the Commission for addressing the cat issue.  Optimistic that the increase in cats allowed would reduce the number of cats coming into the shelters and being killed.

Curt Steindler:  Wanted to bring the issue to the attention of the community before taking action on the issue because of the implications it would have on renters and the rent control laws.

Mary Cummins:  Although she is limited by caging requirements with her wildlife permit, she has not experienced any problems.  She spoke with Council Member Zine and he said that he had not received a copy of the entire report.

Laura Beth Heisen:  Concerned with enforcing spay/neutering of cats.  Asked that consequences for violating mandatory spay/neutering be put in place.

Action Item:  Approval of the Board Report on the Increase in the Number of Cats Allowed to be tabled as an agenda item for the next Commission Meeting on 02/27/06.

3.  NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Recommendation For New Agenda Items

•  Commissioner Knaan asked for plans on customer service training for the near future and animal breed identification training at the shelters.
•  Commissioner Atake wanted procedures set in place to deal with employee misconduct.
Commissioners Knaan and Riordan asked to have copies of the shelter blueprints available to view the new spay/neuter clinics.

Commissioner Brown asked for a comparison with other options to reduce euthanasia and increase adoptions, exploring ideas that would generate more community involvement.

Commissioner Riordan asked for an update on the fees for livestock and how they compared to market slaughter prices.

**Public Comments**

**Zsuzsa Blakely:** Felt that the public needed access to view Chameleon information, and that there should be more notice given on the animals placed on the kill lists.

**Jane Garcia:** Wanted an update on the situation of staff denying adoptions at the shelters.

4. **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. **Approval of the Minutes for January 9 and January 23, 2006**

Commissioner Knaan motioned that the minutes for January 9, 2006 be accepted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and was passed on a vote of 4-0.

**Action Item:** Approval of the Minutes for January 23, 2006 to be tabled as an agenda item for the next Commission Meeting on 02/27/06.

B. **Meetings/Events Attended**

Commissioner Atake attended dog adoption events on January 28, February 9, and February 11. Commissioner Brown attended the dog adoption event on February 9. Commissioners Riordan and Knaan had nothing to report.

**Public Comments**

**Zsuzsa Blakely:** The Department needs to be more involved with staffing at the upcoming Washington Mutual mobile adoption event on February 19.

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

A. **Board Report: Procedures for Handling Abused or Neglected Animals Impounded at Shelters**

Commissioner Knaan wanted an update or listing from Commander David Diliberto at the next Commission meeting on the investigations conducted within the past three months, in which animals have been turned into the shelters with signs of abuse or neglect. The General Manager responded that measures and initiatives were going to be put in place to restructure and reorganize the Department. Exact protocol and procedures would be established for staff to follow in properly documenting such cases.

**Public Comments**

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Lisa Edmundson: Dogs require more in-depth investigations and examinations, especially at the South Los Angeles shelter. Fleas have been a major problem.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Citizens always try to avoid being accused of abuse when they bring animals to the shelters by saying things along the lines of “That’s not mine, I just found it like that.”

Jane Garcia: Agreed with Ms. Edmundson that fleas and infections have always been a major problem. Claimed that the animals are not receiving the proper care and water after they arrive at the shelters.

Action Item: Report on Procedures for Handling Abused or Neglected Animals Impounded at Shelters returns to the Commission on 2/27/06.

B. Board Report: Alternative Proposals to Eliminate Animal Auctions

Commissioner Knaan felt that the lottery alternative was not a good idea, and suggested that the Department follow the example of the County, which handles potential adopters on a priority and first come, first served basis. Commissioner Atake added that the lottery alternative also devalued animals to a form of property. The General Manager responded that the Department would take more time to look at the issue and develop a report that better addressed the concerns of the Board and the community.

Public Comments

Jane Garcia: The Department should not have a problem following the priority model of adopting animals.

Laura Beth Heisen: Favored the lottery alternative because it brought more people into the shelters.

Phyllis Daugherty: Lotteries objectify and devalue animals to gambling prizes. The auctions bring in the best potential adopters because these individuals are often the most committed, investing a great deal of time and money to care for the animals.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Agreed that auctions bring in committed adopters who have no difficulty providing care for the animals. Felt that the auctions however, focused on puppies/kittens. Suggested that only the rescue groups be able to adopt and care for these animals.

Curt Steindler: Disagrees with the change to a lottery system because most of the animals in question, mainly companion animals, do not fall under the LAMC section 53.11.

Action Item: Report on Alternative Proposals to Eliminate Animal Auctions returns to the Commission on 2/27/06.

REGULAR AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM


Lieutenant Michelle Roache, District Manager of the Harbor Animal Care and Control Center, presented to the Commission the Chameleon impound records from all of the shelters, covering the period of June 2005 – December 2005. She also presented a set of procedures for filling the empty cages available at the shelters, as well as a means of documenting when and where transfers are executed. The protocol established by Lt.
Roache would increase accountability between kennel supervisors and serve as a way to better evaluate the success of the transfer program. The most common problems encountered in dealing with transfers are containing the spread of illness and minimizing the level of stress placed upon the animals in transition.

**Sue Freeman:** Suggested that the best candidates for transfers among cats are those turned in by owners who have been current on their shots.

**Zsuzsa Blakely:** Asked that animals not be transferred to the South Los Angeles Center because their numbers were often deceptively low. Need to observe the shelter trends in terms of adoptions and capacity.

### 6. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

**Jacky de Haviland:** Requested that the rescue community be reimbursed by the City’s Animal Welfare Fund for the resources that were used to provide care for the animals recovered from Angel Puss Rescue.

**Zsuzsa Blakely:** Emphasized the importance of assisting with the upcoming mobile adoption event on February 19. Asked to extend the shelter hours for the general public. Restated the importance of providing the public with access to Chameleon information on the Website to track animals placed on the kill lists.

**Lisa Edmundson:** Commented that the fees for rabbits at the shelters have been inconsistent. Many male rabbits have been placed on the kill lists due to natural male rabbit behavior. Upset that many rabbits were given away for free during the past year.

**Curt Steindler:** Agreed with Ms. Blakely that information needed to be made more accessible on the Website for the general public. Wanted to see the Commissioners and the Department build better relationships with the neighborhood councils. Reminded the Commission that the issue of credit card license renewals was still pending for an update.

**Jane Garcia:** Thanked the General Manager for his recent efforts. Commented on two misleading pictures of dogs that appeared on the Department’s Website.

**Phyllis Daugherty:** One of the largest banks in Hollywood is interested in working with the Department to host dog adoption events. Currently the president is willing to display licensing material and have an animal control officer available to answer questions in an attempt to help educate the public and bring exposure to the Department. Enforcing the spay/neutering of cats would not be possible, and the increase in cats would affect many other jurisdictions. Property owners have no recourse.

**Lila Brooks:** Submitted a proposed ordinance to outlaw pit bulls in the City due to the breed’s violent nature. Presented a list of 75 pit bull attacks on innocent citizens. If the proposed ordinance could not be enacted in its entirety, she suggested that all pit bulls be spayed or neutered, and that they be muzzled at all times.

**Sue Freeman:** Pleased with the Department’s Senior 4 Seniors Program. Questioned why the age for considered seniors was 55 when many 55 year-olds are still employed individuals. The City is losing out on a large revenue source.

### 7. ADJOURNMENT
Meeting was adjourned at 1:05 P.M.