COMMISSION MEETING

Commission President Riordan called the Commission meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Atake and Brown. Commissioners Khero, and Knaan were absent.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

- The month of May ended with an unprecedented number of neonate euthanasias at North Central, with over 100 in the last week. East Valley showed a 17% decrease in euthanasia. Harbor showed a 29% decrease. South LA showed a 1% increase. West LA experienced a 2.5% decrease, and West Valley had a 0.5% increase in euthanasia. Year to date, there was still a 17% decrease in euthanasia.
- The Department is developing its Safety Net Program to help provide pet owners with information, education, and resources they need to provide care for sucklings until they become weaned. The program will also provide spay/neuter services for the animals to eliminate the cycle.
- The Department is working to strengthen their Big Fix Program to provide spay/neuter services throughout the community. They will focus on creating more spay/neuter events for the winter season to help address the problem earlier.
- On Friday, June 9, members of the Department had the opportunity to honor Dr. William Marvin Mackie and his contributions to the Department and to the City of Los Angeles.
- With respect to dogs, there was a 70% live release rate during the month of May. The live release rate for cats was 40%.
- The New Hope Program had been struggling, but now appears to be catching on. There has been an 18% increase in dog New Hope placem ents in May. Cats have not fared as well as dogs, but the Department is optimistic in turning that around.
- The General Manager has been meeting regularly with the Rescue and Humane Alliance to discuss various issues such as cleaning protocol, the weaned program, grants, unaltered animals and follow-ups, and handling community complaints.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Wanted a report on the specifics of the monitoring of the animals being taken out of the shelters. Also wanted public disclosure on the issues that arise and on the disciplinary actions taken.

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Jane Garcia: Asked Mr. Boks to speak with Systems staff about reformatting the online New Hope Program. Mentioned that there has not been a memo sent out by the Department inviting the community to sign up for the New Hope Lists.

Daniel Guss: Referring to the last General Manager Report on May 22, Mr. Boks indicated that commercially made shelter signs are now and always have been at the shelters. Commented that an email dated May 24 from Mr. Jim Bickhart, indicated that the signs were not made available yet.

2. OLD BUSINESS INCLUDING MATTERS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Board Report: Mandatory Spay and Neuter Ordinance

The Department recommended to the Board that they direct the Department to draft an ordinance, similar to the one recently passed by Los Angeles County, regarding the mandatory spay and neuter of all dogs. Commissioner Riordan expressed her concern that the report needed to include more detail on licensing, projected licensing, and on enforcement and its fiscal impact. She commented that the success of the licensing differential has been the Department’s continued growth in providing spay/neuter services to the community. Moving ahead with drafting the proposed ordinance, she wanted to see that these issues would be addressed.

Public Comments

Jane Garcia: More people from the County are bringing their animals into the City shelters. The biggest problem is enforcement. Felt that Commander Diliberto was projecting on the second page of the report.

Daniel Guss: Rejects the use of the word euthanasia. The word euthanasia needs to be replaced with the word killing, killing for inventory purposes. Wanted to know the Department’s specific plans to market the spay/neuter program to the Spanish language, Korean language, and Chinese language communities.

Teri Austin: This ordinance cannot be successful without providing the most spay/neuter services the Department can provide. The missing link is education. The public needs to know where to receive spay/neuter services and why it is so important.

Phyllis Daugherty: In the County, a general request for the ordinance was made, and then they asked for written submissions so that all ideas could be reviewed and examined carefully. Cats have become in issue because the programs the Department wishes to implement have devalued them. Ownership is not required.

Laura Beth Heisen: Asked to help with the preparation of the report, but did not hear back from Commander Diliberto. Wanted a companion piece of legislation to require spay/neuter at the time of sale for pet stores and backyard breeders. Also wanted to see enforcement on the current policy to inform the public that pregnant animals can be spayed.

Commissioner Riordan expressed her desire to include the increase in vaccination services.

Commissioner Brown motioned to direct the Department to draft an ordinance, similar to that passed by the County, regarding the mandatory spay and neuter of all dogs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 3-0.
3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Recommendation For New Agenda Items

- Commissioner Atake suggested to make a motion that the Department of Animal Services institute a “rabbit care fee” of $10 per rabbit adoption transaction, and that the Department take steps to insure that all rabbits are spayed/neutered in accordance with adopted policy, prior to being released to members of the public, and that records be kept on file.
- Commissioner Riordan asked for a report on the unsterilized animals that had been adopted out of the shelters and what the Department has done in terms of a follow-up on enforcement provisions.
- Commissioner Brown had requested to put illegal dog fighting back on the agenda.
- Commissioner Riordan expressed a desire to hold an evening Commission meeting in the near future.
- Commissioner Riordan requested to have a link on the Website regarding the number of approved policies and motions made.

Public Comments

Jane Garcia: Mentioned that the North Central shelter had sent unaltered rabbits to the Best Friends adoption event. Requested that Capt. Karen Knipscheer to come in and report on what she is doing to reach out to different communities and different languages.

Daniel Guss: Had been providing solutions for years. Things turn angry, hostile, and submissive when there is no response from the General Manager. Needs to be a better forum than the minute allowed to express concerns. Wanted Capt. Knipscheer’s Korean, Chinese, and Spanish language plans for communicating with those communities, beyond simple event announcements.

4. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for April 24, and May 22, 2006

Commissioner Riordan indicated that she had made a comment to change the Do Not Adopt Policy to be called the Adoption Policy.

Commissioner Brown motioned to approve the minutes for April 24, and May 22, 2006 with inclusion of Commissioner Riordan’s comment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 3-0.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Atake volunteered at dog adoption events on May 27, June 3, June 10, and also at the Best Friends Pet Adoption Festival on June 4. Commissioner Brown attended the Walk For The Underdog event on May 7 at the La Brea Tar Pits. Commissioner Riordan attended an event at the Sherwood Country Club on June 9 honoring Mr. Bob Ferber.

5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Board Report: Trap Neuter and Return

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In June of 2005, the Board had approved, in concept, a Trap, Neuter and Return Policy to help control the feral cat population in the City. Since that time the Department has been made aware of the need to develop a report on how implementing the TNR Policy would be in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and what the environmental impact might result if the Department and City were to adopt such a policy. The Department, working with Mr. Mark Dodge and other City departments with similar community interests, would draft the report. Commissioner Riordan indicated that the biggest benefit of the TNR Policy is how the removal of feral cats would enhance the environment.

Public Comments

Mark Dodge: Commented that TNR does not devalue cats. Need to address the practical problem of having over a million feral cats. TNR manages colonies and ends feline homelessness.

Teri Austin: Supports the TNR Policy. People in the community can solve their own problems now, helping their landlords and the community. Property owners will be in favor for reducing the number of animals.

Mary Catalano: There are people in the public that are willing to do the work, renting traps and spending their own money. Many businesses downtown have taken in feral cats to solve their rat problems.

Phyllis Daugherty: Wanted outside input on TNR because of the Department’s slant on the environmental impact to suit its needs. Not everyone wants feral cats on their property. Prohibiting the public from keeping their property free of disease, nuisance, sanitation issues, by forcing them to poison, shoot or dump the animals in someone’s feral cat colony is not a solution.

Daniel Guss: Feral cats can be domesticated. Need to loosen the rules to allow the public to borrow traps. Asked to put in basic guidelines for non-traditional rescuers on how to use the traps and what to do after.

Commissioner Atake motioned to direct the General Manager to prepare a report in compliance with CEQA, outlining the effect of a TNR program on the environment with the change of “Release” to “Return.” The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown and passed on a vote of 3-0.

B. Board Report: South LA Spay/Neuter Clinic and Mobile Spay/Neuter Van

The General Manager reported that the Department had formulated a solution to allow both the Sam Simon Foundation and the Amanda Foundation to move forward in their respective fields of expertise in providing spay/neuter services for the City of Los Angeles. The agreement reached between the three parties would allow the release of the Sam Simon Foundation from their current contract with the City, allowing the Amanda Foundation to assume the Mobile Spay/Neuter Van contract. In an interim position, the Sam Simon Foundation would then enter into a new contract to operate the existing South LA Spay/Neuter clinic, which has remained unutilized for several years. This would be done in concert with the Department putting out an RFP to allow anyone in the community to come in and operate the spay/neuter clinic. Commissioner Brown was concerned about having the Sam Simon Foundation operate the South LA clinic after failing to meet the numbers that they had projected in their current contract. If the Amanda Foundation were to assume the existing contract, they would be required to meet the expectations established by the Sam Simon Foundation. He questioned why the Amanda Foundation could not simply take over the South LA clinic, and allowing the Sam Simon Foundation to finish their contract. The General Manager responded that the solution was what both parties agreed upon. The benefit to the Department would be that the underserved residents of the
South Los Angeles community would receive spay/neuter services immediately, also saving the Department money since they would no longer have to send South LA animals to veterinarians throughout the City. Commissioner Riordan commented on the importance of reviewing the Mobile Spay/Neuter Van contract in the future, and suggested that an additional RFP be sent out for other vendors to apply. The General Manager recommended reviewal of performance. If the numbers did not meet expectations, the contract could then be concluded.

Ms. Austin commented that the Amanda Foundation sought to assume the Mobile Spay/Neuter Van contract because they were confident in meeting the expectations of the contract and that no one would be able to perform better at providing the mobile services.

Mr. Sam Simon indicated that the Sam Simon Foundation’s biggest difficulty was getting the numbers. They did not have the outreach. He said that they had the right people to take over a stationary clinic and succeed, and that the Amanda Foundation would be able to do what they do best, which is to reach out to the community.

Mr. Jeff Brill, Sr. Management Analyst II, commented on the Budgetary issues. There were budgeted monies available for that contract when the contract was approved. If the Sam Simon contract were to be terminated and a new RFP were to be issued, those budgeted funds would not be able to be assumed.

Mr. Lesel clarified that the transition would have to be approved first by the Board and then City Council.

**Public Comments**

**Phyllis Daugherty:** If the spay/neuter van stops operating and the South LA clinic is not put up, that South LA area faces the possibility of not having any spay/neuter services available for months. Sam Simon simply over-projected what they could realistically accomplish.

**Daniel Guss:** Two separate issues; the Amanda Foundation taking over for the current vendor, giving Sam Simon a new piece of business. Mr. Boks should hire a veterinarian with decades of experience to run the clinic rather than a vendor who failed in their contract with zero years of experience.

**Laura Beth Heisen:** Why did Sam Simon only offer to do four days a week? If they have the easier schedule, they should do more days a week. The Department needs to figure out how to pay veterinarians more or hire an executive recruiter to bring in veterinarians to handle the other days.

**Mary Catalano:** The spay/neuter clinics need to be going all the time. People are turning down adoptions if they cannot go to the clinic to pick up their animal. They need to make it closer and more than four days.

**Evelyn Walton:** One of the main problems is bringing animals to the mobile clinics. Having a centralized place for spay/neuter services can only be a positive. There have been a number of veterinarians offering to perform spay/neuter services pro bono, especially for rabbits.

**Teri Austin:** Ms. Jennifer Connelly and other veterinarians might be interested in helping at the South LA clinic on the days they are available. Urged the Department to look into raising the salaries for veterinarians. The Department currently offers $68,000 while most other veterinary hospitals offer $75,000.

**Jane Garcia:** Having a clinic at South LA would be very helpful. It would also be a way to get the word out.
that there are free vaccinations available for people’s pets.
Commissioner Atake motioned to approve and authorize the General Manager to execute (1) an agreement with the Sam Simon Foundation to operate the existing South Los Angeles Spay/Neuter Clinic for the interim period and (2) an agreement with the Amanda Foundation to assume the existing mobile Spay/Neuter Van Contract, with Commissioner Brown’s comments to search for the rationale, the discovery of the rationale, and his acceptance of the rationale with reservations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown and passed on a vote of 3-0.

6. **REGULAR AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM**

A. None

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

**Phyllis Daugherty:** County received a $100,000 grant for the mandatory spay/neuter program. Veterinarians do not want to do spay/neuter. It is boring, they do not make very much money performing them, and it is physically demanding. The County will be paying veterinarians a starting salary of $92,000, moving up to $96,000 with approval of the new budget. Surveys have been completed in El Serino, Echo Park, and Hollywood on animal issues. Cats continue to be a problem. Many have been thrown into the streets.

**Evelyn Walton:** There continues to be an overflow of rabbits from the Fashion District. Consider getting volunteers to record whom in the community has licenses. The air-conditioning situation continues to be a problem at the North Central shelter.

**Teri Austin:** There has been a huge increase in people calling in to ask about free spay/neuter and microchipping. Consider offering a low cost price to non-City residents at the South LA clinic. The mobile program is now offering free microchips with all sterilizations performed, thanks in large part to Found Animal Foundation.

**Daniel Guss:** Read an excerpt from the following blog of Mr. Boks:

“While a few self-described ‘revolutionaries’ and so-called ‘activists’ do little more than rattle off hate-filled emails from the comfort of their living rooms and occasionally get off the couch to harass and terrorize public servants under cover of night and ski masks...”

Commented that he did get off his couch to take pictures of trespassing by unlicensed businesses. Mr. Boks did not acknowledge the problem. Wanted to know why Mr. Boks published two BooBoo Reports without conferring with another eyewitness to the incident.

**Laura Beth Heisen:** Suggested that the South LA shelter inform owners turning in pregnant animals that they can have them spayed at their clinic. There are 484,000 unlicensed dogs in the City, with just about half needing to be spayed/neutered. The spay/neuter capacity among the shelters based on the ’06-’97 Budget is 25,000. Need to use scarce spay/neuter resources to target medium and large sized dogs.

**Jane Garcia:** Commented on the absence of the Euthanasia List. Has not seen a solution. Mentioned that Mr. Warren Eckstein had offered his services to the Department. Wanted to know more about training for the staff. Also wanted a banner announcing that the Department is offering free vaccinations at the clinics.
Mary Catalano: Concerned about the early release follow-up on animals. Emphasized the importance of establishing fines or penalties for individuals who fail to bring in their animals to be sterilized. Urged the Department to consider using the disinfectant Rocal to prevent the spread of infection and diseases.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:28 P.M.