



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Monday, March 13, 2006
10:00 A.M.
CITY HALL
200 N. Spring St.
Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012



Commissioners: Kathleen Riordan, President
Tariq Khero, Vice President
Marie Atake
Glenn S. Brown
Deborah A. Knaan

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL HEARING, 10:00 A.M.
(CONTINUED FROM MARCH 8, 2006)

Commission President Riordan called the Administrative Appeal Hearing to order at 10:14 A.M. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Khero, Atake, and Knaan. Commissioner Brown was absent.

- 1. Appeal of the General Manager's Decision in Dangerous Animal Case – DR 05329NC**
Appellant: Jeffrey De La Rosa
Complaining Witness: Marjorie Kaye
District Manager, North Central Animal Care and Control Center: Karen Stepp
- 2. Appeal of the General Manager's Decision in Dangerous Animal Case – DA 05331NC**
Appellant: Jeffrey De La Rosa
Complaining Witness: Tatiana Edwards
District Manager, North Central Animal Care and Control Center: Karen Stepp

Due to the absence of Commissioner Brown, Christopher Blaxland, Attorney for the appellant, suggested that the appeal hearings be rescheduled. Mr. Ross Pool, Management Analyst II, said he would coordinate with the appellant and his attorney and with the three commissioners to reschedule the continuation the hearing.

COMMISSION MEETING

Commission President Riordan called the Commission meeting to order at 10:18 A.M. Commissioner Brown joined the meeting at 11:10 A.M.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

- The General Manager thanked volunteer Mary Cummins for her work in assisting the Department staff on updating the features of the Department's new Website.
- The General Manager gave an update on shelter statistics. For February 2006, there has been a significant increase in adoptions (11%), and a decrease in New Hope placements (39%) compared to

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- February 2005. For February 2006, 23% of dogs and cats brought to the shelters were euthanized.
- The Department is finalizing its Foster Care Program documents and training, and is informing the community of the need to respond to the upcoming puppy and kitten season.
 - The General Manager met with the Department of Health and the County to revitalize the Hoarding Task Force and gather the necessary resources to assist individuals afflicted with the condition.
 - The Department has been working with the Parks Department, radio stations and the Amanda Foundation to develop a calendar of events to provide the community with adoption, spay/neuter, micro chipping, and vaccination services.
 - The Senior 4 Seniors Program has been successful, averaging one adoption per day.
 - The Department is developing a methodology for reporting on the transfer of animals.

Commissioner Riordan inquired about the testing of animal diseases at the shelter. She proposed that the Department investigate the costs of performing a variety of testing for the animals, finding veterinarians willing to perform the procedures at low costs. The General Manager said that the Department would look into the issue.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Most 55 year-olds are working citizens and should not receive animals for free. Suggested that the Anti-Cruelty Task Force be more involved in monitoring the Senior 4 Seniors Program.

Mary Catalano: Senior citizens adopting animals may be tempted to sell animals they received for free.

Jane Garcia: Mentioned an incident in which an individual delivered a dog to the shelter in a garbage bag.

2. OLD BUSINESS

A. Board Report: Increase in the Number of Cats Allowed (Held Over from Feb. 27, 2006)

Questions between staff and the City Attorney were still undergoing administrative review. The staff would have the three board reports ready to present by the next Commission meeting on the evening of March 28.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Many organizations are moving away from the large number limits on pets due to the hoarding issue. Permits carefully monitor the situation.

B. Board Report: Procedure for Handling Abused or Neglected Animals Impounded at Shelters (Held Over from Feb. 27, 2006)

The General Manager informed the Board that Captain Keith Kramer had been designated to write the Board Reports. Captain Nancy Moriarty, Director of Shelter Operations, added that although the report was not ready, training for staff had been implemented four months ago. Staff has been advised to contact the Medical Team and the Anti-Cruelty Task Force immediately when questions of abuse or neglect arise. Commissioner Knaan asked for a listing on investigations conducted within the past six months on animals turned into the shelters with signs of abuse or neglect.

Public Comments

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Mary Catalano: Asked that two forms of identification be documented for individuals turning in animals to the shelters. Wanted to know how many Officers in Charge are available on weekends.

Lisa Edmondson: Pleased with the performance of the new Animal Control Officers. The South Los Angeles shelter has made a number of improvements. Feels that intake procedures and training are lacking.

Jane Garcia: Frustrated with the interdepartmental inconsistencies with investigation procedures.

C. Board Report: Alternative Proposals to Eliminate Animal Auctions (Held Over from Feb. 27, 2006)

The Board Report would be ready by the next Commission meeting on the evening of March 28, 2006.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Recommendation For New Agenda Items

- Commissioner Knaan wanted a marketing report on the Senior 4 Seniors Program and concrete examples of advertisements.
- Commissioner Knaan requested that Ms. Linda Gordon, Sr. Management Analyst II, come to the April 10 Commission Meeting to present the shelter blueprints.
- Commissioner Knaan requested a listing on evidence animals impounded by the shelters during the past six months along with their respective case status.
- Commissioner Knaan wanted to follow-up on the motion requiring publications to include the breeder's license number in the text of advertisements offering animals for sale.
- Commissioner Riordan asked for a monthly listing of Department expenditures over \$1000.
- Commissioner Knaan requested that Ms. Rachel Paap come to the April 10 Commission Meeting to report on the spay/neutering performed by the Sam Simon Foundation.

Public Comments

Tiffany Krog: Overabundance of pit bulls and rottweilers. Proposed to the Board that the Department implement a screening process for individuals wanting to adopt these dogs.

Lisa Edmondson: Requested that the presentation on the shelter blueprints include the rabbit holding areas.

Mary Catalano: Suggested public service announcements for free spay/neutering and mobile adoption events. Proposed to have a screening process put in place for individuals wishing to adopt kittens or puppies.

Zsuzsa Blakely: A screening process for adult pit bulls and rottweilers will prevent them from being adopted at the shelters. Agreed that the screening process should be in place for kittens and puppies.

4. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for January 23, 2006 (Held over from Feb. 27, 2006)

Commissioner Knaan motioned to approve the minutes for the January 23 meeting. The motion was

seconded by Commissioner Khero and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

B. Approval of the Minutes for February 13, 2006 (Held over from Feb. 27, 2006)

Commissioner Knaan motioned to approve the minutes for the February 13 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

C. Approval of the Minutes for February 27, 2006

Commissioner Knaan motioned to approve the minutes for the February 27 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

D. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Atake volunteered at the dog adoption event on March 11 and helped transport two elderly dogs to the Best Friends Sanctuary in Utah. Commissioners Brown, Khero, and Knaan attended the special Commission meeting on March 8 to hear appeals. Commissioner Riordan had nothing to report.

5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR NEW BOARD ACTION

A. Board Report: New Hope Program

The General Manager thanked the committee of Commissioner Atake, Ms. Laura Beth Heisen, and Mr. Scott Sorrentino for working with the Department to enhance the New Hope Program. He proposed that the Board serve as an oversight committee to assure that the program is functioning in the best interest of the animals and the organizations it was designed to serve. All animals under the program would be required to have their microchips registered with the placement groups before being released. The placement groups would then have the option of transferring registration of the microchips to the new adopters. The New Hope Program aims to eliminate any difficulties to partner groups in getting animals out of the shelters and trying to find them appropriate homes.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Needed clarification on animal availability. Enforcement issues need to be handled by the Department and its enforcement officers.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Asked about the kill list being separate from the New Hope list. Also asked if the New Hope Program would make animals unavailable to rescue groups.

Jane Garcia: Wanted clarification on when animals on the New Hope list would be euthanized.

Mary Catalano: Questioned if animals are scanned for microchips before being euthanized.

Commissioners Knaan and Riordan responded that the publication of the euthanasia list would need to be addressed separately from the New Hope list.

Commissioner Knaan motioned to approve the New Hope Program concept and that the Department would make changes as necessary while proceeding with the program, and return to the Board for final approval at

a later date. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

Action Item: Discussion of the Euthanasia list and the 24-hour phone holds on animals to be tabled as future agenda items.

REGULAR AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM

B. Discussion: Customer Service Training

The General Manager presented an outline of the Department's Customer Service Plan. A team of staff members had been formed to work with the Pet Orphans organization to develop a training program focused on adoptions and counseling. Captain Moriarty commented that breed identification problems have much to do with quality control and getting staff to take the time to carefully identify and record the breed of the animal. Staff needs to be monitored more regularly on how they perform their duties and communicate with the public. Commissioner Knaan requested that the Board be updated in two months at the May 22nd Commission meeting on what training programs have been implemented by the Department.

Public Comments

Mary Catalano: Commented on past experiences of ACTs discouraging individuals from adopting sick or injured animals without really knowing the condition of those animals.

Zsuzsa Blakely: There needs to be a direct line for adoptions available. Do not deprive the public from receiving the kill lists information.

Action Item: Update on Customer Service Training to be tabled as an agenda item for the Commission Meeting on 05/22/06.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Phyllis Daugherty: Felt that there should be more Anti-Cruelty Task Force reports and media attention about the employees. Requested that she be included on any committee dealing with pit bulls.

Zsuzsa Blakely: Abuse of 24-hour holds on animals is fiction, and may have occurred in the past. The public needs to know what animals are being killed and which animals are at risk. Wanted more accuracy in the shelters' numbers. There is great risk in killing unborn puppies when spaying pregnant animals.

Lisa Edmondson: The public needs be given more information on how to care for their animals and what they are doing wrong. ACTs need to be empowered to take more action.

Jane Garcia: Bilingual individuals at the shelters would greatly help in counseling the public. Questionnaires are only available in English. Asked that the animals be given names to help in identifying animals on the Website. Disagreed with Ms. Blakely that pregnant animals should be spayed.

Tiffany Krog: Advised that the 24-hour credit card holds be kept as part of adoption procedures.

Laura Beth Heisen: Reminded that a policy existed that when the public calls the shelter to report a pregnant animal, the Department representative must educate that the animal can be spayed with veterinary consent

and advise on services that are available to do the procedure.

Mary Catalano: Questioned about having a mandatory spay/neuter citation issued. Commented on sanitizing measures at the shelters to prevent the spread of disease. There are no longer shelter care insurance brochures at the shelters. Requested to have another evening Commission meeting. Agreed that pregnant animals should be spayed. Suggested to investigate on the possibility of getting corporate donations for the Department.

The General Manager made several comments to address the public's concerns:

- Operation: Safety Net targets owners of pregnant pets and would receive support from the Department to keep the newborns until they are weaned. The General Manager assured that pregnant animals would not be spayed if the procedures were not in the best interest of the animals' health.
- The General Manager mentioned that the Department is developing its Call Center by April 15 so that staff would be better able to handle a wide variety of issues and not transfer phone calls to other individuals at the shelters.
- The Department's Safety Committee to track all of the Department's accidents to better train staff and increase awareness.
- There would be a new section on the Department's Website, dedicated to Cruelty issues present in the community.
- The General Manager restated his commitment to transparency and that the Department would not operate in secrecy with the community. The Department would be accountable for its actions.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 1:03 .PM.