



MINUTES
BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



Monday, June 26, 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

COMMISSION MEETING

Commission President Riordan called the Commission meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. Present were Commissioners Riordan, Atake and Knaan. Commissioners Khero joined the meeting at 10:17 A.M. Commissioner Brown joined the meeting at 10:18 A.M.

1. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER – EDWARD BOKS

- The Commissioners must complete their National Incident Management Systems training by Friday, June 30, 2006.
- There is a new feature on the Department Website that features a “Pet of the Week.” The feature can also be taken and used on personal and business Websites, helping the Department.
- The Department was recently recognized for its “transparency” by the Maddie’s Foundation in gathering and publishing its shelter statistics.
- 53 organizations have signed up to be a part of the New Hope Program. Starting July 1, organizations must have a contract with the Department in order to remain a part of the program.
- For cats during the month of June to date, impounds decreased 5.5%, New Hope placements decreased 48%, and euthanasia decreased 6.4%. With respect to dogs for June to date, impounds increased 6.4%, adoptions increased 3%, New Hope placements increased 3.8%, and euthanasia is down 0.7%. Year to date, adoptions are up 5.5%, New Hope placements are down 21%, and euthanasia is down 17%.
- Hooters had approached the Department with hosting a fundraiser event on July 17.

Public Comments

Phyllis Daugherty: Cannot create an evacuation plan without having any idea of how many animals there are. The animal census study would be a good way to get animals licensed, and to have accounting done for the animals in a legitimate way.

Jane Garcia: The Hooters event would be a good opportunity for the Department. The Red List for the New Hope Program comes out at 10:00 A.M. Animals on this list may have already been euthanized before the list comes out.

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2. OLD BUSINESS INCLUDING MATTERS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. None

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Commission Recommendation For New Agenda Items

Commissioner Knaan said that she would forward her requests by email to Commissioner Riordan and Mr. Ross Pool.

4. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Minutes for June 12, 2006

Commissioner Atake motioned to approve the minutes for June 12. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and passed on a vote of 4-0. Commissioner Knaan abstained.

B. Meetings/Events Attended

Commissioner Atake volunteered at dog adoption events on June 17, and June 24. Commissioners Riordan, Khero, Brown, and Knaan had nothing to report.

5. GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FOR BOARD ACTION

A. Board Report: Recommendation to Support Pending Legislation on Animal Issues

- California State Senate Bill 1578: This Bill, with specified exceptions would prohibit a person from tethering, fastening, chaining, tying, or restraining a dog to a doghouse, tree, fence, or other stationary object.
- California State Senate Bill 1349: This Bill, that addresses cockfighting would increase the penalty for misdemeanors and makes second offenses a possible felony.
- California State Assembly Bill 2862: This Bill would establish minimum standards for the care and housing of animals in pet shops, including space, exercise, socialization, handling, feeding, cleaning, vet care, and euthanasia.

Officer Tranzow, Special Operations Supervisor, reported that the Permits Section deals with the pet shops. The Permit Unit conducts annual spot-checking, along with follow-up investigations. They will also respond to complaints from citizens. The Permit Unit does not notify owners of the pet shops when they come to investigate, and spot-checking visits are conducted at random, especially for pet shops that they have had problems with in the past. All records of investigations are kept in the Permits Unit Office.

- California State Assembly Bill 450: This Bill would require the State Office of Emergency Services to approve and adopt, and incorporate the California Animal Response Emergency System program into the standardized emergency management system.

Public Comments

Jane Garcia: Inquired if there is a way to develop a grading system for pet shops much like the one used for restaurants. Felt that newspapers should publish the violations of pet stores.

Laura Beth Heisen: Asked that the reports be posted on the Department Website.

(The General Manager responded that they had been available on the Website over the weekend.)

Phyllis Daugherty: Asked if the Department was working with the City Legislative Analyst. Needed to monitor the changes with policies to insure they were what the Department wanted to support. Commented that the Bill on cockfighting would pass. Mentioned the County has a grading system for pet shops.

Tina Clark: Why was SB 1806 not considered for Commission support? SB 1806 would strengthen the animal cruelty laws for leaving animals in unattended vehicles.

(The General Manager responded that Board had approved to support SB 1806 during the March 28, 2006 Commission Meeting.)

Commissioner Knaan motioned to approve SB 1578, SB 1349, AB 2862, and AB 450 as they were written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atake and passed on a vote of 5-0.

B. Board Report: Recommendation Regarding Rabbit Adoption Fees

On June 12, 2006, the increase in the adoption fees for rabbits from \$15 to \$50, was brought before the Budget and Finance Committee. After several meetings and discussions, they changed the adoption fee to be \$40 and approved the increase. The Department recommended that the Commission concur with the recommendation to increase the adoption fee by \$25, and that the entire \$40 be deposited into the Animal Sterilization Trust Fund.

Captain Nancy Moriarty, Director of Shelter Operations, commented that no animal is to leave the shelters unaltered, unless it has the proper D300 (Companion Animal Health Awareness Report) documentation. In the past, most of the unaltered rabbits that did leave the shelters were too young to sterilize. The Department has addressed this issue by now preventing the release of these young rabbits. Capt. Moriarty indicated that staff has been working diligently to sterilize all rabbits in custody and trying to get them adopted out.

Sr. Management Analyst II, Mr. Jeff Brill pointed out that the average cost of sterilization was \$65. The increased fee would not be applied until it was approved by City Council. Assistant City Attorney, Mr. Dov Lesel added that the Budget and Finance Committee had recommended the increase to be \$40 due to their concern that anything above that amount would prevent the rabbits from being adopted out, leading to an increase in euthanasia for rabbits. He indicated that the language in the City Code about the fees for the daily care and feeding of the rabbits also be considered for modification since it would add to the adoption fees.

Public Comments

Michelle Kelly: Thanked the administration, staff, and Mr. Jeff Brill for supporting the fee increase and

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putting together the report. It was Mr. Brill's idea to place 100% of the fee in the Animal Sterilization Trust Fund.

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented that the fees for fighting cocks need to be increased separately because they are more costly to house. They are dangerous to handle and require separate housing from other animals. Need to move toward declaring rabbits companion animals and establishing limits on the average possession.

Commissioner Knaan motioned to concur with the recommendations of the Budget and Finance Committee to increase the adoption fee of rabbits from \$15 to \$40, and that the entire \$40 be deposited into the Animal Sterilization Trust Fund (Fund 842 – Account 007A), to include language to the ordinance that is written in such a way that it gives the Department flexibility to set its own fees as it sees fit, to be reasonable and cannot exceed what the actual Department costs are, for the care and feeding of rabbits, in addition to and separate from the adoption fee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khero and passed on a vote of 5-0.

6. REGULAR AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEM

A. Report: Unsterilized Animals That Have Been Adopted

Officer Tranzow reported that according to State Law, animals should not be leaving the shelter unsterilized. However due to the age or medical condition of some animals, this did take place. Additionally, the follow-ups to ensure these animals were later sterilized were not always done properly. With their experience in dealing with licensing issues and issues with unsterilized animals and breeding, the Department felt that the Spay and Neuter Task Force be utilized as the leading unit in a field enforcement follow-up program. Under this program, animals released unsterilized would be issued a D300. The D300 would be forwarded to the SNTF, who would be charged with the task of conducting the follow-up investigation to see if the animals were in fact sterilized.

Commissioner Riordan suggested that they also consider attaching penalties for those individuals not in compliance with sterilizing their animal or not renewing their license on time. Capt. Moriarty responded that Chameleon had a way of automatically producing notifications based on the age and projected sterilization date of an animal. Officer Tranzow added that he would present a monthly report on compliance with New Hope Partners, rescue groups, and the general public.

Mr. Lesel commented that the Commission had issue with the \$100 license fee because in the past, it had appeared that the Department was bringing legitimacy to allowing unaltered animals to be adopted out by issuing a \$100 unaltered license.

Capt. Moriarty commented that most non-compliance are from the rescue partners that come in and take the unweaned. It was among this group that they would have to focus most of their attention on and follow-up with Chameleon tracking.

Phyllis Daugherty: Agreed with reinstating the \$100 license fee with the opportunity for a \$90 refund when proof of sterility is provided within thirty days. It would force owners to do something and give the Department a chance to act promptly. Need to address animals the vets claim are unsafe to sterilize.

Laura Beth Heisen: When individuals bring in unweaned litters, suggested that staff offer to remind and follow-up with owners that they can spay/neuter their pets. Rescue groups found not to be in compliance spay/neuter should be put on a Do Not Adopt List for unsterilized animals.

Mary Catalano: Concerned private vets tell owners that they do not want to sterilize their animals until a certain age or time frame. Suggested that something be written to force owners to visit Department vets. Is it possible to retract unaltered animals released to individuals during the recent cat season?

Jane Garcia: Believe that individuals should only receive three letters. Asked if there was a way to issue a \$100 temporary license and have it morphed into an unaltered license and charge an additional \$100.

Commissioner Atake motioned that the Board of Animal Services Commissioners accept the program that the General Manager plans on implementing by utilizing the SNTF and Special Operations Division in actively doing an aggressive follow up program and enforcing the current State Law. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Knaan and passed on a vote of 5-0.

Action Item: The updated Report on Unsterilized Animals That Have Been Adopted to return to the Board for review for the Commission Meeting on 08/28/06.

B. Discussion: Animal Handling Training in Field and Shelter

Captain Louis Dedeaux, Animal Behavioral Health Program Coordinator made himself available to answer questions regarding animal handling training issues in the field and in the shelter. Currently, Capt. Dedeaux handles safety issues with proper animal handling with the staff and volunteers, and techniques in recognizing behaviors, involving body language and animal reaction. The courses he teaches include a course on mitigating the excessive use of animal control device; a course on animal safety for kennel staff, veterinarians, and ACTs; and a course for ACOs in the field. To date, he has trained 329 employees and volunteers in seventeen general courses and six animal control courses. He has just started the course on the animal control device, and is putting together a course on dog walking. Capt. Dedeaux said that he would provide packets on his training courses for the Commissioners. Commissioner Riordan clarified Department policy commenting that they wanted staff to note their observations of behavior and to provide disclosure without performing actual temperament testing on the animals. Capt. Moriarty commented on Capt. Dedeaux's ability and skill in behavioral assessment of animals. His techniques, using the least amount of physicality in dealing with the animals, have led to great success at the shelters. The General Manager added that Captain Keith Kramer and the Department are working to develop a Faculty Program to gather experts from the community to collect additional input on how to deal with certain animals and improve handling and care at the shelters.

Jane Garcia: Had taken Capt. Dedeaux's training course and was impressed. Felt that she was not seeing what Capt. Dedeaux had taught the staff.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Phyllis Daugherty: Commented on the toy manufacturer, Mr. David Gonzalez who had been distributing the fighting pit bull toys, and that they were still available for purchase. LAPD is also looking into the matter. She had been assigned to the Training Task Force for LAPD on human trafficking and animal control.

Michelle Kelly: Heartened to hear that the Department would no longer be releasing any unaltered baby rabbits. Cautioned to be careful when marketing baby rabbits to children. Rabbits are very breakable and children need to be well supervised around them. Asked if there was a way to require rabbits to be neutered

in pet stores. Announced that rabbit people have donated \$1500 in rabbit cages to be put in the new South Los Angeles room.

Jane Garcia: Commented on the kennel cards and how they need to be updated. Mentioned that an officer at the Animal Welfare Meeting claimed to have taken down over 200 feral cats. Was surprised to hear that some animals have gone untouched by the staff at the shelters. Thanked the General Manager and the Department for their work on the foster care program for evidence animals.

Curt Steindler: Objected on Brown Act grounds to the method the Department used to notify the public about agenda item 5A. Believed that the Department did not adequately inform the public in the agenda on the subject of the discussions. Asked for smaller web documents to be made available. Commented that AB 2862 is biased against reptile and amphibian enthusiasts. This also excluded feeder animals, but failed to exclude the amount of space available for feeder rodents.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 P.M.